

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 2  
[CABINET 2003 - 46]**

**CABINET**

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Sculpture Gallery, Bodelwyddan Castle, Bodelwyddan on Tuesday 29 April 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillors E C Edwards, Lead Member for Safeguarding our Communities; R W Hughes, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; G M Kensler, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire; D M Morris, Lead Member for Communications; E A Owens, Lead Member for Finance; J A Smith, Lead Member for Social Inclusion; W R Webb, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management and E W Williams, Leader and Member for Economic Wellbeing.

Observers: Councillors S Drew; M M Jones; R E Jones and N Hugh Jones.

**ALSO PRESENT**

Chief Executive; Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources; Financial Controller and the County Clerk.

**APOLOGIES**

Councillors P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing and Councillor M A German, Lead Member for Sustainable Development and Environment.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Deputy Leader welcomed to the meeting Andrea Garcia Balda, a Spanish student on the Leonardo da Vinci programme working in the Resources Directorate for two months.

**1 URGENT MATTERS**

Item 9 Brondyffryn Trust, Denbigh - to be considered in Part II.  
Item 15A Community Fund Capital Bid.

## **2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET [CABINET 2003 - 46]**

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 March 2003 were submitted.

Item 4 Best Value Review of Residential Homes: Councillor E A Owens asked that her concerns regarding releasing the requisite £1m be included as part of the penultimate paragraph.

Councillor G M Kensler asked that the TUPE regulations being likely to change be added to her comments in the third paragraph.

Councillor E C Edwards asked that his abstention on the vote be formally recorded.

Item 5 Best Value Review of Green Spaces: Councillor G M Kensler asked that “Education Scrutiny” be replaced with “Environment Scrutiny” in the Resolution. Councillor Kensler informed Members that she had asked to be represented on any meetings to discuss the report.

Item 11 Urdd National Eisteddfod 2006: Councillor E C Edwards reminded Members that a breakdown of associated costs was awaited. The Chief Executive informed Members he had received a letter of thanks from the Urdd with regard to the financial and other support offered by Denbighshire to the Eisteddfod in 2006.

Item 16 Capital Project Bids: Councillor R W Hughes asked that her declaration of interest in the first item be recorded. Councillor E A Owens said all Members would be advised of the capital project bids by June 2003.

Members took the opportunity to discuss the Arial 14 font used on the Cabinet papers. The Chief Executive explained that at the AGM of the Denbighshire Access Group reference had been made to the print size of Council papers. Following a brief discussion, it was ***RESOLVED*** that a report regarding print size of Council papers be brought to Cabinet at a future date.

***RESOLVED*** that subject to the above the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 March 2003 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

### **3 BODELWYDDAN CASTLE**

[Councillor R W Hughes, Chair of Bodelwyddan Castle Trust declared an interest in the item.]

Dr K S Mason, Director of Bodelwyddan Castle Trust gave a presentation on “Bodelwyddan Castle Trust ~ A Business Development”. Dr Mason outlined the history of the Trust and the lack of investment in the Castle since 1988, with the initial revenue budget of £304k now at £194k. He also explained the restrictions imposed by the lease on the Trust. He went on to outline funding received from the National Portrait Gallery and the Heritage Lottery Fund and the work done with the JAMES Partnership. £225k had been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £200k from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport to redevelop the first floors of the Castle as major and temporary galleries in North Wales. Visitor numbers had increased from 30826 in 1999 to 45408 in 2001. Continuous investment was required to improve the income potential and maintain the status of the Castle as a tourist and educational centre. The future projects for the Castle were to develop visitor facilities i.e. Cafe, toilets etc, and to realise the educational potential of the natural environment. The Trust hoped to secure additional partners to enhance the visitor experience.

Councillor E W Williams asked what level of funding the Trust hoped to receive from Denbighshire. Dr K S Mason said he hoped the level of funding from the Authority would remain at £194k. Other possible funding sources were Objective 1 and the Wales Tourist Board. The Heritage Lottery Fund would again be approached with a view to funding the development of an education facility on site.

The Chief Executive agreed that Bodelwyddan Castle was one of Denbighshire's jewels and reminded Members that later in the year Cabinet would be asked to consider the level of grant to be paid to the Trust to ensure the continuing development of the facilities at the Castle. He also said that the Authority would be prepared to consider the lease conditions with the Trust to see whether the conditions needed updating.

Councillor E C Edwards thanked Dr Mason for his informative presentation and took the opportunity to pay tribute to Councillor W R Webb as the Chair of the former Clwyd County Council Policy and

Finance Committee which had had the foresight to purchase the Castle for the then Authority. He also referred to the late Councillor Dilwyn Lloyd Williams, the Chair of the Trust who had, with Dr Mason, been instrumental in starting to turn around the finances of the Trust.

Councillor R W Hughes, speaking as Chair of the Trust said a new phase was commencing today, with the new gallery spaces being very important to Wales as a whole. Councillor Hughes thanked Dr Mason for his hard work at the Castle and for making the Trust a success. Councillor G M Kensler echoed Councillor Hughes' sentiments.

The Deputy Leader thanked Dr Mason for his informative presentation and also for the venue for the Cabinet meeting, which would allow Members the opportunity to tour the new galleries.

For information, the slides from the presentation are attached to the minutes.

#### **4 SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN [CABINET 2003 - 48]**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Cabinet approval for the School Organisation Plan and to recommend to Council that the plan be adopted.

Councillor E A Owens expressed her concerns regarding over-capacity, particularly in some schools in her Ward. This led to inequality. Schools also had to cope with building developments in Rhyl which stretched resources further and she said the Authority should support Lifelong Learning in whatever way possible.

Councillor G M Kensler asked that reference to the North Wales Hospital premises be removed from the report. The Chief Executive said some parts of the current report were historical and that the following year's report would include a timetable and schedule of work. He also said that the Review of the UDP should consider asking developers to pay towards school provision.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the School Organisation Plan and recommend to Council that it be adopted.***

## **5 REFURBISHMENT OF RHYL WEST PROMENADE [CABINET 2003 - 49]**

The Corporate Director: Environment presented the report for Members' endorsement of the feasibility study attached to the report to enable officers to seek funding opportunities in order to implement the final scheme. The ideas which had emerged from the consultation process could lead to a highly ambitious project. From the outline concept a properly costed project was required and further more detailed consultation with local businesses would be carried out.

Councillor E A Owens said the support for the refurbishment project from the Rhyl community was almost unanimous and the community saw this as the way forward and expected the development to take place. She congratulated the Corporate Director: Environment and particularly the Design Services team on all their hard work on the project.

Councillor G M Kensler said she welcomed the report but referred to the Financial Controller Statement regarding the revenue implications. It was important that money was set aside for the upkeep of such developments. The Corporate Director: Environment said the development was at the concept stage only and upkeep / maintenance of the proposed development would be addressed in the design process.

***RESOLVED* that:-**

- (a) *Cabinet note the report and officers pursue funding for further detailed design work and implementation, and*
- (b) *consultations on the feasibility stage be concluded.*

## **6 REGIONAL SPORTS FACILITIES [CABINET 2003 - 50]**

Councillor G M Kensler presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to submit an expression of interest for the bids to the Sports Council for Wales for:-

- a a water-based artificial turf hockey pitch at Denbigh

- b(i) a new 8 lane x 25m Competition Pool at Llangollen
- or** b(ii) an extension of 2 lanes at Rhyl Swimming Pool to enable regional competitions.

Councillor W R Webb asked whether the provision of an 8 lane competition pool at Llangollen was realistic. The Assistant Director: Culture said it was very unlikely that Objective 1 would be able to provide the scale of funding required for such a project. Councillor E W Williams agreed and said that a smaller pool would be more suitable for Llangollen. Councillor R W Hughes agreed that such a facility was not the most appropriate for Llangollen. The Chief Executive agreed with Members' views that bid for a new competition pool for Llangollen should not be pursued.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet agree to the submission of an expression of interest for a bid to the Sports Council for Wales for:-***

- (a) *a water-based artificial turf hockey pitch at Denbigh, and*
- (b) *an extension of 2 lanes at Rhyl Swimming Pool to enable regional competitions.*

## **7 DENBIGH TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE [CABINET 2003 - 51]**

The Corporate Director: Environment presented the report seeking approval for the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Phase 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative for Denbigh before the end of May 2003.

Councillor E A Owens said this would be looked upon favourably under the Capital Project Bids.

Councillor G M Kensler took the opportunity to thank Nathan Blanchard, Project Manager for his work on the Initiative.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet authorise officers to submit a Phase 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for Denbigh.***

## **8 YSGOL TIR MORFA DEVELOPMENT - LATEST SITUATION [CABINET 2003 - 52]**

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to relocate Ysgol Tir Morfa pupils presently based on the Rhuddlan site onto the Rhyl site by 1 September 2003.

Councillor W R Webb referred to the Task and Finish Group and said that after the initial meeting of the Group had taken place as far as he was aware, no further meetings had been convened. He said he was not in agreement with parts of the report and would not be able to support the recommendations. The Chief Executive said the Task and Finish Group had been established to consider the new building required. The Rhuddlan site was to be vacated in its entirety.

Members discussed in detail the various costs involved, including whether or not £45k for siting the mobiles was the correct figure and whether it had been included in the £100k for extending the car park facilities.

Councillor R W Hughes emphasised that Lifelong Learning had been unaware until March 2003 that the school could not be kept open.

After further discussion Members agreed another detailed report be provided. It was further agreed that the Lead Member for Finance be involved in discussions with regard to the financial implications.

***RESOLVED* that Members agree:-**

- (a) *the Rhuddlan site of Ysgol Tir Morfa is vacated by the end of the Summer Term 2003 to allow the developers full access to the building site and that the pupils be relocated to the Rhyl site to be operational by 1 September 2003;*
- (b) *that temporary accommodation, additional staff car parking, improved play area and traffic management system be provided on the Rhyl site to cater for the additional numbers, and*
- (c) *the capital receipt from the sale of the Tir Morfa site is utilised to fund the capital element of the work with the Lead Member for*

*Finance being involved in discussions with regard to resource implications, and retrospective Council approval be sought.*

**9 WIRRAL AND NORTH WALES PURCHASING ORGANISATION [WNWPO] [CABINET 2003 - 54]**

Councillor W R Webb presented the report for Cabinet to note and endorse unanimous decisions of the Governing Body of the Wirral and North Wales Purchasing Organisation (WNWPO) on 28.03.2003 consequent on notices of intention to withdraw submitted by Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council. Councillor Webb emphasised the hard work taken by the senior officers of the Resources Directorate with regard to the WNWPO.

Councillor E A Owens stressed the need for Denbighshire staff to continue to trade with the WNWPO.

***RESOLVED*** that Cabinet endorse the action taken by and the decisions of the Governing Body of the Wirral and North Wales Purchasing Organisation.

## **10 RUTHIN OFFICE DEVELOPMENT [CABINET 2003 - 55]**

Councillor W R Webb presented the report seeking Cabinet:-

- 1 confirmation of the recommendations for staff to be based in the new building;
- 2 agreement to delegate control of the £200k capital allocation regarding PFI to the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management, and
- 3 agreement to delegate responsibility for minor changes in revenue costs to the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management.

Councillor Webb pointed out that with 19 above capacity, there was little scope for growth in staff numbers. The Corporate Director: Resources agreed with Councillor Webb and said currently total staff numbers were increasing by approximately 100 per year.

Councillor E A Owens said she had discussed possible staff moves with some members of the County Clerk's Department and expressed their concerns regarding a possible move to Ruthin which would take them away from their customers in Rhyl and could lead to a possible fragmentation of the Legal Section. She suggested the part of the Department should be considered along with other Departments to stay in situ at the appropriate time. She also took the opportunity to congratulate the County Clerk and his Legal Section on achieving Lexcel Accreditation.

Councillor E W Williams suggested a report be produced for Cabinet which should include a breakdown of the County Clerk's Department of staff numbers, locations and work carried out which would enable Members to make an informed decision on possible staff moves.

***RESOLVED* that Cabinet:-**

- (a) *confirm the recommendations for staff to be based in the new building;*

(b) agree to delegate control of the £200k capital allocation regarding PFI to the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management, and

(c) agree to delegate responsibility for minor changes in revenue costs to the Lead Member for Property and Asset Management.

## **11 CLWYD LEISURE LIMITED: LEASES [CABINET 2003 - 56]**

Councillor G M Kensler presented the report to reaffirm the Council's agreement to sign the leases for the transferal of the Sun Centre, Nova Centre, North Wales Bowls Centre and Sky Tower, as agreed by Council in March 2001. Councillor Kensler took the opportunity to condemn leaks to the media regarding issues concerning Clwyd Leisure and also thanked the Corporate Director: Resources and his officers for their work.

***RESOLVED*** that Cabinet reaffirm the Council's agreement to sign the leases for the transferal of the Sun Centre, Nova Centre, North Wales Bowls Centre and Sky Tower, as agreed by Council in March 2001.

## **12 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY IN RELATION TO THE ADOPTION AND FOSTERING PANEL [CABINET 2003 - 57]**

Councillor J A Smith presented the report seeking delegation of authority to identified officers in respect of: -

1. Appointment of Chair and Members to the Adoption Panel
2. Making decisions for the Authority in respect of fostering matters
3. Making decisions for the Authority in respect of adoption matters

***RESOLVED*** that:-

(a) the power to appoint a Local Authority Member to the Adoption Panel under Regulation 5(2)(b) of the Adoption Agencies Regulations 1983 (as amended) be delegated to the Lead Member for Social Inclusion;

- (b) *that the power to appoint the Chair and other members of the Adoption Panel with the exception of the Local Authority Member above be delegated to the Chief Executive, and*
- (c) *the power to make decisions upon the recommendations of Fostering and Adoption Panel be delegated to the Chief Executive.*

**13 REVIEW OF DECISION BY CABINET - TRANSPORT [FLEET MANAGEMENT / MAINTENANCE] BEST VALUE REVIEW [CABINET 2003 - 58]**

The Corporate Director: Environment presented the report to update Cabinet on progress with identifying a site for a new fleet maintenance workshop.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet note the position and that a further report be provided when all options have been fully investigated.***

**14 URGENT ITEMS [CABINET 2003 - 59]**

**14A COMMUNITY FUND CAPITAL BID [CABINET 2003 - 59A]**

[Councillor E W Williams declared an interest in the item.]

Councillor E A Owens presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to use £6000 from the Community Fund Capital Block Allocation to purchase approximately 2 acres of land at Ysgol Clocaenog, to secure the land currently used as a football pitch for the school and the community. Councillor Owens said although applications were usually taken in groups, the current application had to be considered by Cabinet owing to the sale of the land being held on 01.02.2003. The application would be considered retrospectively by both Scrutiny Committee and County Council.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the use of £6000 from the Community Fund Capital Block Allocation to purchase 2 acres of land at Ysgol Clocaenog, to secure the land currently used as a football pitch for the school and the community.***

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

No questions had been received.

At this juncture (11.35 am.) the meeting adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

## **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

***RESOLVED*** under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **PART II**

### **15 BRONDYFFRYN TRUST, DENBIGH [CABINET 2003 - 53]**

[Councillor G M Kensler, as member of Brondyffryn Trust declared an interest in the item.]

The Chief Executive presented the report seeking Cabinet agreement:-

- (i) on whether the Council should act as the named guarantor of a loan to be made by a leading commercial bank to the Brondyffryn Trust for the building of a residential unit for children at the Gwynfryn site, Denbigh;
- (ii) on whether the Council should provide revenue support to the Trust for the period between 1 September 2003 and 31 March 2004, and
- (iii) that pursuant to Contract Standing Order 14.2 Cabinet authorise the County Clerk to engage external solicitors not being the lowest tenderer.

The Chief Executive explained to Members that the proposed residential facility at the Gwynfryn site for the school had been gifted by the Welsh Assembly Government with various conditions attached. Members

agreed his suggestion to write to the Welsh Assembly Government asking for their further consideration to gifting the site without conditions which would allow the bank to accept the site as security from the Trust. He emphasised the Authority's commitment to the project.

After discussion it was agreed that resources be made available to fund the legal work required. It was also agreed that once legal consultants had been appointed and further information had been made available, a meeting be held between all the Ysgol Brondyffryn Trustees, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director: Resources, corporate Director: Lifelong Learning and other relevant senior staff from the Education Department to discuss the financial position.

It was also considered that additional representation by Denbighshire County Council Members on the Board may be beneficial.

***RESOLVED*** that:-

- (a) *the Authority reaffirm their commitment to the development of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn as a centre of excellence for children and young people;*
- (b) *authorise the Chief Executive to write to the Welsh Assembly Government asking for removal of the conditions attached to their gift of the Gwynfryn site;*
- (c) *Cabinet agree the County Council should not act as guarantor of a loan from a commercial bank to the Brondyffryn Trust and agree not to provide revenue support to the Trust for the period between 1 September 2003 and 31 March 2004;*
- (ch) *the County Clerk be authorised to engage external solicitors pursuant to Contract Standing Order 14.2 not being the lowest tenderer, and*
- (d) *after the appointment of legal consultants, a meeting be held between all the Ysgol Brondyffryn Trustees, the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director: Resources and relevant senior staff from the Education Department.*

**15 AUTHORISATION OF SINGLE TENDER ACTION [CABINET 2003 - 60]**

Councillors J A Smith presented the report seeking Cabinet endorsement of the Corporate Director: Environment's decision to authorise a single tender procedure in relation to works at Unit 5, Rhyl Railway Station.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet endorse the decision by the Corporate Director: Environment to authorise, on 20.03.2003, the single tender procedure for undertaking works at Unit 5, Rhyl Railway Station within a restricted time limit.***

**16 INCOME SHARE AGREEMENT: PULSE FITNESS PLC - RHYL LEISURE CENTRE [CABINET 2003 - 61]**

Councillor G M Kensler presented the report seeking Cabinet approval to grant authority to the Head of Service to extend for 5 years the current income share agreement with Pulse Fitness PLC to secure a major refurbishment and upgrading of the Planet Pulse Fitness Centre at Rhyl Leisure Centre.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet authorise the Head of Service to agree a 5 year extension of the current income share agreement with Pulse Fitness PLC to secure the refurbishment and upgrading of the facilities at Planet Pulse, Rhyl Leisure Centre.***

**17 PURCHASE OF REFUSE VEHICLES [CABINET 2003 - 62]**

The Corporate Director: Environment presented the report seeking Cabinet authorisation to purchase 3 new refuse vehicles [1 at 18 tonnes and 2 at 26 tonnes] for use within the County for the collection of waste and not to accept the lowest tender.

Councillor E A Owens emphasised that purchase arrangements were of a temporary arrangement and would be superseded by prudential borrowing.

***RESOLVED that:-***

- (a) *the Capital plan be amended to take account of the vehicle purchases identified in the report;*
- (b) *authorisation be given to accept the quotations for the purchase of (i) 1 X 18 tonne Dennis/Dennis low entry refuse collection vehicle. (ii) 2 X 26 tonne Dennis/Dennis low entry refuse collection vehicles, noting that the quotations are not the lowest obtained but that the whole life cost of the vehicles represents the Best Value to the Authority, and*
- (c) *approval be given to negotiate further to see whether any extra discounts can be acquired on the tendered prices – as purchasing 3 vehicles.*

## **18 ECTARC SHORT TERM FINANCIAL SUPPORT [CABINET 2003 - 63]**

[Councillor R W Hughes, Chair of ECTARC declared an interest in the item.]

Councillor G M Kensler presented the report seeking approval of credit facilities for ECTARC, initially until July 2003, with delegated authority for the Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire and the Lead Member for Finance to extend the agreement in conjunction with the Corporate Director: Resources.

Councillor R W Hughes stressed the importance of ECTARC to the economy of Llangollen and surrounding area and asked that Cabinet received a presentation from ECTARC at a future date. The organisation had now refocused its work on lifelong learning. Both the Welsh Assembly Government and ELWa had been approached for funding.

Councillor E A Owens said she supported the short term credit facility but emphasised there would be no carry over of credit facilities to the next financial year.

***RESOLVED that Cabinet:-***

- (a) *approve credit facilities for ECTARC until July 2003;*

- (b) *approve delegated authority to the Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire and the Lead Member for Finance, in conjunction with the Corporate Director: Resources, to extend the facility if required for a period of up to a further 9 months but not into the next financial year, and*
- (c) *receive a presentation from the Chief Executive of ECTARC at a future date.*

**19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE SALE OF MORFA HALL [CABINET 2002 - 64]**

Councillor W R Webb presented the report seeking Members':-

approval of revenue funding of £200k per annum to cover the cost of the lease of office accommodation at Zurich Buildings, Prestatyn;

agreement to seek retrospective approval by Council of the reallocation of capital funding of £120k from the provision of office accommodation at Canol y Dre Ruthin to the Zurich Building, Prestatyn, and

approval of the necessary revenue funding to relocate staff from Morfa Hall, Russell House and possibly Caledfryn to Zurich Buildings, Prestatyn.

Councillor E A Owens reminded Members that the revenue savings from Morfa Hall would be available to offset additional costs.

***RESOLVED* that Cabinet:-**

- (a) *approve revenue funding of £200k per annum to cover the cost of the lease of office accommodation at Zurich Buildings, Prestatyn;*
- (b) *request Council to approve retrospectively the reallocation of capital funding of £120k from the provision of office accommodation at Canol y Dre Ruthin to the Zurich Building, Prestatyn, and*

- (c) *approve the necessary revenue funding to relocate staff from Morfa Hall, Russell House and possibly Caledfryn to Zurich Buildings, Prestatyn*

**20 RETAINER PAYMENTS TO COOKS IN CHARGE [CABINET 2003 - 65]**

Councillor D M Morris presented the report seeking Cabinet approval either to support and fund the reinstatement of retainer payments to Cooks in Charge and make an appropriate recommendation to Council or resist pressures to reinstate retainer payments to Cooks in Charge. He also referred to the letter received by Members from Michael Booth, UNISON Regional Officer.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that changes to terms and conditions of employment fall to Full Council to decide.

The County Clerk said his department were in consultation with Counsel and would be in a position to report back to Cabinet on 20 May 2003.

***RESOLVED* that Cabinet:-**

- (a) *note the report, and*
- (b) *await a further report at the 20.05.2003 Cabinet meeting.*

**21 PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING - ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE [CABINET 2003 - 66]**

The Chief Executive presented the report advising Members that a draft report had been issued to Environment Directorate staff concerning the proposed restructuring of the Directorate with the separate services being reduced from 7 to 5.

The Corporate Director: Environment emphasised that the report was not the final report and that consultation was on-going. The report would be reviewed after completion of consultation process and all necessary protocols would be followed. He emphasised the need to clarify the cross-cutting nature of services to the public and said it was important that consideration was given to both performance and financial

management. He said the new structure would allow best value requirements to be achieved.

The Corporate Director: Environment agreed to provide a broad outline/summary of comments made by staff regarding the report and the final report would include the changes made from the original report.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Corporate Director: Environment for his report but emphasised that it was still at draft stage.

***RESOLVED*** that Members note the draft report on the restructuring of the Environment Directorate submitted to Directorate staff for preliminary consultation. Members also note a further report with detailed cost implications will be provided in due course.

The meeting concluded at 12.55 p.m.

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**AGENDA ITEM NO: 3 [CABINET 2003 - 68]**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** COUNCILLOR ERYL WILLIAMS

**DATE:** 20 MAY 2003

**SUBJECT:** APPROVAL OF IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2003 - 2004 AND BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

1.1 That Cabinet recommend the draft Improvement Plan 2003-2004 to Council for approval (Appendix I).

1.2 That Cabinet agree to monitor the progress of the Corporate Action Plan via quarterly reports produced by the Performance Management Unit.

1.3 That Cabinet approve the proposed Best Value Review Programme for 2003-2004 (Appendix II)

1.4 That Cabinet agree to the removal of the Home Care and Fostering services from the Best Value Review Programme.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

2.1 The Wales Programme for Improvement Guidance<sup>1</sup> requires each local authority to publish its Improvement Plan and Summary by the 30 June 2003. The starting point for the Wales Programme for Improvement is a comprehensive assessment by each local authority of its own fitness to achieve continuous improvement across both corporate and service functions. Arising from the Whole Authority Analysis is a risk assessment which is shared and developed jointly by the authority and its regulators. The Improvement Plan will set out the actions the authority plans to take to improve its performance where it most

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<sup>1</sup> The National Assembly for Wales Circular 18/2002. Local Government Act 1999: Wales Programme for Improvement - Guidance for Local Authorities

needs to. These will include a range of activities, from reviews (whether small or large scale) to other actions directed immediately towards improving performance.

The Improvement Plan needs to reflect the outcome of the Whole Authority Analysis and Risk Assessment and the improvement areas identified and their level of priority was the subject of a special meeting of all Members on the 30 April which will be followed by a further meeting on the 16 May. The Plan is still therefore, a draft which is being developed. A final version will be presented at the Council meeting on the 3 June, taking account of the comments from the 16 May meeting and from Cabinet on the 20 May. The Plan must include an analysis of Denbighshire's performance and report both areas of good and poor performance and it should set out a range and mix of improvement actions which the Authority intends to take.

2.2 The Authority's Performance Management Framework already includes a mechanism for monitoring Service Business Plans through quarterly performance reports to Members but there is currently no system in place for monitoring the Corporate Action Plan.

2.3 The whole authority analysis itself constitutes a first stage review of all functions. The risk assessment will help determine what further review is needed, where and of what kind. In terms of the types of functions which may be reviewed, these will range from, single services, concentrating on achieving gains in economy and efficiency, to groups of services or whole policy areas to cross-cutting reviews which look at the entire authority, for example from the perspective of a particular user group or strategic objective.

In June 2001 Cabinet approved a Five Year Service Review Programme which met the requirements of best value legislation. In March 2002 Cabinet agreed to rationalise the programme of reviews for 2002 - 2003 to ensure that sufficient resources were available to carry out the whole authority analysis. It was also agreed that any 2001 - 2002 reviews which had not been finalised by 31 March 2002 should be completed during 2002 - 2003.

Following completion of the whole authority analysis and risk assessment the Review Programme 2003 - 2004 (Appendix II) which is based on the Authority's findings, will need to be agreed by Members and included in the Authority's Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004.

2.4 Additionally, on the 6 May 2003 a progress report on the Review Programme was presented to the Corporate Governance Committee including a verbal report by the Head of Strategic Planning and Support Services, Social Services. It was reported to the Corporate Governance Committee that the 2001 - 2002 reviews of Home Care and Fostering should be removed from the Review Programme as issues relating to these services would be addressed in the recommendations and improvement plan arising from the Joint Review.

Members should note that in the Audit Commission's WPI Report on the Authority's Improvement Plan 2002/2003 the Council was criticised for its overall management of the review programme and this resulted in a statutory recommendation to "improve the management of the work programme to ensure the completion of all outstanding reviews." It is recommended that consideration be given by Members as to how best value reviews could be more appropriately resourced, for example, through a corporate unit or the use of consultants and the Authority's overall capacity to deliver the review programme.

### **3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

Sections 3, 5 and 6 of the Local Government Act 1999.

### **4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

Printing and binding of 200 copies = £1,050.00 to be funded from within the PM Unit budget

### **5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

The outcome of this exercise will help inform the budget setting exercise for next financial year.

## **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

6.1 The Council carried out the Whole Authority Analysis internally with external input from the Audit Commission, external auditors and other inspectorates, an external focus group selected to represent the views of the community, the Citizens Panel and other key stakeholders such as town and community councils. The Improvement Plan is based on the outcome of the Whole Authority Analysis and Risk Assessment. The draft Plan was considered by the Corporate Executive Team on the 6 May and at Monthly Management Conference on the 15 May. Targets included in the Plan have been agreed by the relevant Scrutiny Committees. All Directorates have made contributions to the Improvement Plan and the final draft will be sent to all Directors and Heads of Service for factual and data accuracy.

6.2 The removal of the Home Care and Fostering services from the Review Programme has been the subject of a verbal report to the Corporate Governance Committee and discussions with the Chief Executive.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

The Plan is a summary of the Authority's performance at both a corporate and service delivery level and therefore has implications on all policy areas including corporate.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 That Members recommend the draft Improvement Plan 2003-2004 to Council for approval (Appendix I).

8.2 That Cabinet agree to monitor the progress of the Corporate Action Plan via quarterly reports produced by the Performance Management Unit.

8.3 That Cabinet approve the proposed Best Value Review Programme for 2003-2004 (Appendix II)

8.4 That Cabinet agree to the removal of the Home Care and Fostering services from the Best Value Review Programme.

*Denbighshire County Council*

# Improvement Plan

## DRAFT

### 2003-2004

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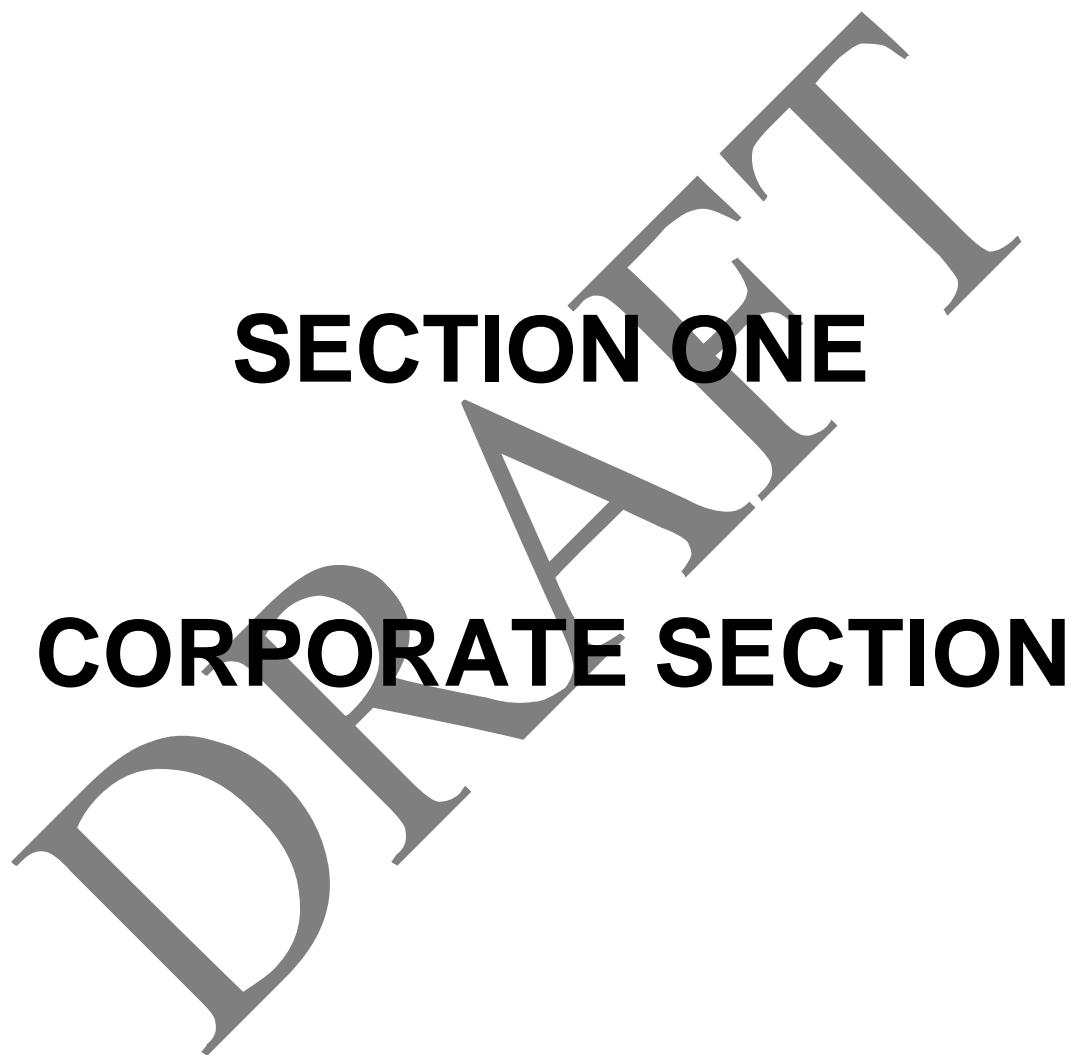
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**SECTION ONE**

**CORPORATE SECTION**



### **FOREWORD**

Local services are a key feature of any community and Denbighshire County Council is constantly working towards improving services for local people.

We strive to provide excellent services to our residents and we regularly measure our performance so that we continuously improve through the setting of targets and the monitoring of service provision.

The information we use to measure this is used to create the Improvement Plan to give residents and organisations the opportunity to see what targets we have set, whether we are meeting these targets and what the outcomes are.

The Plan covers from April 2003 to April 2004.

We know that the best judge of our performance are our local residents and this Plan gives all the information needed to form an opinion.

Some of the headlines for us during the past year were the starting of work on our new offices in Ruthin; the appointment of area partnership managers to formulate our community strategy; the continued success of Objective 1 locally; our Housing Rents service being hailed as one of the best by the Audit Commission; and exceeding our target of having £1 million in reserves.

These were some of the headlines, but not the whole story. Over the past year we have been improving the way we communicate with local people by holding Cabinet question times where people came along, spoke to Cabinet members direct and asked questions about services. We have started our new community newspaper County Voice to tell people more about what we do and we have a new staff sounding board, Group 44, which gives staff at all levels the chance to get involved with improving customer care.

These are some of the good things that have been going on, but we recognise that we still have a long way to go and this report highlights areas for improvement.

Our weaker areas are recognised and we will be working hard to make sure these are improved.

We have also recently undergone a Whole Authority Analysis, which gave us the opportunity to look in depth at our services. The results of this have shown areas which need improvement and we will be working on those.

I hope that you find the Improvement Plan both interesting and informative. It will give you some idea of what we do and the targets we aim to achieve over the next twelve months.

I am keen to hear your views and thoughts, and to use them to help us measure the effectiveness of what we do so that we can respond quickly to your needs.

You can write, email or phone us contact details are on page ????

I look forward to hearing your views, so that together we can continue to improve the quality of life for all in Denbighshire.

**Councillor Eryl Williams  
Leader  
Denbighshire County Council**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Ian Miller**  
**Chief Executive**

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### UNDERSTANDING THE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Improvement Plan is a publicly available document, aimed at the informed reader (for example, elected members, corporate managers and partner organisations). It has to be published by the 30 June annually in relation to the current financial year.

Denbighshire County Council's Improvement Plan is also the Authority's Corporate Business Plan and is in two sections. Section One is the Corporate Section which provides information on corporate issues such as the Wales Programme for Improvement, Community Planning and consultation. This Section also includes the Authority's corporate priorities and key actions for improvement. Section Two is the Service Section within which each service provides a balanced performance assessment for 2002/2003 including information on any reviews which have been carried out, key actions for improvement and statutory and local performance indicators.

Throughout the Improvement Plan are a number of tables containing statutory and local performance indicators where these are being used effectively to drive service improvement. The tables containing statutory indicators are made up of eight columns and can be explained as follows:-

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8
NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
Reference number from National Assembly.	Description of what is required to be calculated.	Comparator data such as benchmarking or "like" groups of authorities and "All Wales Averages" for some services.	The target for improvement for the year 2001 – 2002.  The target for 2001-2002 should be compared with Column 5, the data for 2001 – 2002.	The final annual figure for the performance of the indicator.	The target for improvement for the year 2002 - 2003.  The target for 2002-2003 should be compared with Column 7, the data for 2002 - 2003.	The data which has been provided by the services for inclusion in the Improvement Plan for the year 2002 - 2003.	The target for improvement for the year 2003 – 2004.

\* If outturn data and targets have significantly changed from that published in the last Improvement Plan an explanation will be provided in a short narrative underneath the relevant performance indicator.

It should also be noted that the National Assembly introduced a moratorium on changes to the set of performance indicators for Welsh local government. Therefore, the current set of National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators for 2002 -2003, as set out in SI 2002 No. 757 (W.80), will remain unchanged for the coming financial year 2003 – 2004.

A number of statutory performance indicators relating to Lifelong Learning, Personal Services and Environmental issues are subject to policy agreements and these are highlighted in the Plan. The Authority has agreed targets with the National Assembly for Wales (NAfW) for these indicators for three years and additional monies are available from NAfW depending upon the achievement of these targets.

### 1.1 THE COUNTY OF DENBIGHSHIRE

#### Profile of Denbighshire 2003

Denbighshire County Council covers an area of 84,350 hectares (or 325.7 square miles) from the North Wales coastal resorts of Rhyl and Prestatyn down through historic market towns of St Asaph, Denbigh and Ruthin within the Vale of Clwyd as far south as Corwen and the tourist town of Llangollen. The Clwydian hills run roughly north to south along the eastern boundary and have been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The A55 gives good access to the Irish Ferry port at Holyhead, airports at Manchester and Liverpool, and the major UK road network. There are also direct train services from Rhyl.

In 2001, there were 93,065 people living in the County. This is projected to increase slowly to around 97,900 in 2016. The average age of the population of the County is slowly increasing as there are more people aged over 60 years than young people aged under 20 (26.0% compared with 24.2%). The number of people aged over 85 years has increased by almost 500 since 1991 and they now form 2.8% of the population (compared with 2.0% for Wales).

Over the past decade there has been an average of 1,033 births and 1,298 deaths each year resulting in a negative natural change in the population. The increase in the total population is therefore due to a net in-migration of around 650 people per year.

Whilst the population is predominantly white (98.84%), there were 1,073 non-white people living in the County in 2001.

In 2001, 26.1% of the population said they could speak Welsh.

Unemployment levels in Denbighshire have been generally falling since January 1997. In March 2003 there were 1,345 people registered unemployed (2.5% of the resident working age population). This compares with 2.8% for Wales and 2.7% for the United Kingdom. Seasonal employment is a factor in the County.

In 2001, 72.5% of all dwellings in the County were owner occupied, 13.2% were rented from the Local Authority or Housing Association, and 14.3 % were privately rented. Currently around a third of all households in the County are occupied by a single person and this is likely to increase to around 38% by 2016.

Average house prices in the County are £99,097 (January to March 2003) compared with £144,619 for England and Wales. Prices are generally lower in the north of the County than in the south.

Denbighshire contains some of the most prosperous areas within Wales along with some of the most deprived. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2000 identifies Rhyl West as being the most deprived Electoral Division in Wales.

In 2001, 11.9% of the households in Denbighshire lacked at least one of the following amenities - central heating, exclusive use of a bath or shower, exclusive use of an inside WC. This compares with 7.7% for Wales as a whole.

**Contact:** Karen Hawkes - 01824 706992  
[karen.hawkes@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:karen.hawkes@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.2 COMMUNITY PLANNING**

#### **Community Strategy**

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare a Community Strategy for promoting the economic, social and environmental well being of the County. This process involves listening to the local communities and working with others in planning the future of the County. The Council is leading in the process with the assistance of strategic partners in the public and private sectors. A draft project plan and timetable, agreed with partners, will be followed at a later date by a draft Community Plan. Following a series of detailed consultations the final document must be in place by the next County Council elections in May 2004. This will reflect the community's vision for the County in the medium to long term over a 10 - 15 year period.

#### **Area Partnerships**

As part of the Council's community planning process, four area partnerships are currently being developed whose main purpose it is to incorporate local concerns and needs into the service planning process. Corporate directors, each with area responsibilities, are now supported by a full complement of four area partnership managers whose duties include assisting in the co-ordination of the Council's service delivery at local level.

The four area partnerships are based on the following areas:- Rhyl , Prestatyn, Central Denbighshire (Rhuddlan, St. Asaph, Denbigh and surrounding communities), and South Denbighshire (Corwen, Llangollen, Ruthin and surrounding communities).

Each area partnership will involve elected members, cabinet members as appropriate with support from respective Corporate Directors. The membership of the area partnerships will vary according to which organisations wish to take part. County Council members for the areas will be key players and they will be supported by area partnership managers and other County Council officers as well as officers from other agencies.

Each area will agree its own strategy and will inform and form the basis of the over-arching Denbighshire Community Strategy as well as developing a partnership approach to local organisation strategies.

**Contact:** Eryl Davies - 01824 706147  
[eryl.davies@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:eryl.davies@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 1.3 WALES PROGRAMME FOR IMPROVEMENT

The underlying objective of the Wales Programme for Improvement is to achieve the delivery of high quality services to the public that meet identified needs. It relies on the following principles:

- local government commitment to achieving continuous improvement
- effective management of performance by each Local Authority
- an approach which looks at the Whole Authority, its corporate performance and capacity as well as individual functions
- targeted action based on an assessment of what will do most to improve outcomes for the public
- a regulatory regime which complements authorities' own improvement plans

The Wales Programme for Improvement comprises the following elements:

- a Whole Authority Analysis of the Council's fitness to achieve continuous improvement
- a risk assessment
- an Improvement Plan
- a Regulatory Plan
- a Public Summary

#### THE WHOLE AUTHORITY ANALYSIS

The starting point for the Wales Programme for Improvement is a comprehensive assessment of the Council's fitness to achieve continuous improvement across both corporate and service functions. Denbighshire County Council decided to carry out the analysis internally with external input from the Audit Commission, external auditors and other inspectorates, an external focus group selected to represent the views of the community, the Citizens Panel and other key stakeholders such as town and community councils.

The Analysis covered corporate issues and all services delivered by the Council with the exception of Social Services which have been subject to a Joint Review by the Audit Commission and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales of the discharge of its Social Services function. The resulting recommendations from the Joint Review report have also been included in an action plan within this Improvement Plan.

The Whole Authority Analysis Report outlined a number of recommendations for improvement which have been the subject of rigorous risk analysis and prioritisation to ensure that resources are applied to the most significant areas. These priority recommendations and arising actions are included within this Improvement Plan. The lower priority improvements are to be addressed by each service within their Service Business Plan.

**Contact:** Ivan Butler - 01824 706354  
[ivan.butler@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ivan.butler@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 1.4 ASSESSING SERVICE QUALITY

Denbighshire County Council is committed to listening to the views of communities and partners as a means of learning how to improve the Council's performance in responding to their needs and interests and, where appropriate, involving them even more actively in decision-making and service improvement.

To support this commitment the Authority has:-

- a Best Value Consultation Strategy
- a Corporate Consultation Unit which carries out consultations on behalf of services using specialist knowledge and software
- consultation as an integral part of the performance management and business planning process
- focus groups for people who are vulnerable or 'hard to reach'
- guidelines for consulting people with a sensory impairment
- Denbighshire's Citizens' Panel of five hundred residents who are representative of the adult population
- youth forums throughout the County
- a community newsletter
- Area Partnerships

During 2002/2003 the Authority has continued to carry out a number of consultations including:-

#### **A Crime and Disorder Survey for the Denbighshire Crime and Disorder Partnership**

The findings of the Crime and Disorder Survey showed that the majority of respondents felt that crime and disorder was not a problem in their area but it was a problem in other areas of the County. Car crimes followed by drug related crimes, vandalism and antisocial behaviour were of the greatest concern locally. Police and County Council actions to address crime and disorder issues were not considered to be effective, with the highest levels of dissatisfaction being in Prestatyn, followed by St. Asaph, Denbigh and Rhyl. A huge majority of respondents felt that more policemen on the beat/larger police presence is required.

#### **Planning Services - Customer Survey to people who had applied for planning permission in Denbighshire and Consultee Survey to Town and Community Councils and Internal Services**

The Planning Services surveys found that the majority of respondents contacted the Council to discuss their proposals before submitting their planning applications and found the discussions to be of benefit and staff to be polite and friendly with a very good speed of response. Most respondents found the planning application forms easy to understand although most found no negotiations took place during the progression of their application. Overall, the majority of respondents proved happy with the service provided by the Council in processing their application forms, whether granted or not. The Consultee Survey found that respondents would prefer the Council to advise on its consideration of consultee observations prior to applications being considered at Planning Committee and a small minority thought that these observations should be presented at Planning Committee. Overall, the majority of respondents proved happy with the service provided by the Council and felt they would benefit from regular meetings with Planning Officers on an annual basis.

### **Fair Funding Survey - designed to ascertain the levels of satisfaction the schools were receiving from the Council's services**

The findings showed that the majority of respondents had levels of satisfaction ranging from very satisfied to fairly satisfied with all the Authority's Strategy and Resources services. There was some dissatisfaction with school meals and equipment and maintenance repair.

### **Consultation With the Citizens' Panel on Denbighshire's proposed priorities for 2003/2004 and the Whole Authority Analysis**

Three Panel meetings were held during September giving Panel members the opportunity to discuss with key Councillors and senior management a wide range of issues as part of the Authority's policy and priorities review process. Those attending the meetings were also asked some specific questions about how effective the Council is in areas such as leadership, accountability and communication and the responses have been used to inform the Whole Authority Analysis.

### **Public Transport In Denbighshire**

The Authority has carried out a number of surveys with a view to improving the Council's public transport services including questionnaires to school pupils, head teachers, contractors, escorts and elderly people attending day care centres. A Passenger Transport Consultation Forum has also been formed, the first meetings of which took place in September 2002. The information collected will be used to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the County's public transport services and ways of improving the service.

### **Denbighshire Supporting Business Survey**

The Council is currently carrying out a service review of the way it procures goods and services. As part of the review over four thousand questionnaires have been distributed to the Council's main suppliers and local businesses. The results of the consultation will be used to improve the Authority's procurement practices and processes.

### **Consultations Planned 2003-2004**

- Crime and Disorder Survey 2003 with members of Denbighshire's Citizens' Panel which will enable Denbighshire's Community Safety Partnership to compare findings with previous years and see if the actions taken have been effective
- Consultation with the Citizens' Panel on Denbighshire's proposed priorities for 2004/2005 via a series of meetings in May 2003
- Consultation with members of the public on Denbighshire's proposed priorities for 2004/2005 via the County Voice Newsletter in June 2003
- A postal questionnaire to every household on priorities for the Community Strategy
- A 'Flagship' Species survey to members of the Citizens' Panel and staff to promote wildlife conservation in Denbighshire in April 2003
- A postal satisfaction survey on Highways Maintenance to the Citizens' Panel in May 2003

**Contact:** Janette Ogden - 01824 706161  
[janette.ogden@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:janette.ogden@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## **1.5 REVIEW PROGRAMME**

**Contact:** Janette Ogden - 01824 706161  
[janette.ogden@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:janette.ogden@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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### 1.6 CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

#### Mission Statement

**Denbighshire: Here for you - together, we will deliver**

Denbighshire County Council commits itself to providing a clear vision for corporate direction, in light of continued budget recovery, developing both members and staff to meet future demands and to deliver continued improvements in services for the people of Denbighshire.

From April to June each year the Authority reviews its policies and priorities. This process is called a Policy Review and will take place in a number of ways including "away days", Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meetings. The Policy Review is part of Denbighshire's Policy and Financial Planning Framework and gives the Authority the opportunity to review its existing objectives, agree its priorities and identify the appropriate financial framework. The Policy Review will be informed by:-

- Service business plans
- The Whole Authority Analysis
- Risk assessment
- Consultation with the Citizens' Panel and key stakeholders
- Consultation with Members and staff
- Performance information
- The outcomes of Best Value reviews
- The outcomes of user satisfaction surveys
- The statutory framework
- Policy Agreements

#### Priorities in 2003-04 will be achieved by the following objectives:

##### A. We will focus on our customers and strive to meet their needs in particular for effective basic services.

- A1. We will establish a fully bilingual system to provide customers with a single contact point for the delivery of all services either face to face, via the telephone or electronically via the web site.  
Target 40% of all Council transactions by April 2004, 80% by 2005.
- A2. We will be an open Authority, listening to customer's needs and providing responsive service delivery. Target: area partnerships successfully operating, community strategy to be in place by March 2004.
- A3. We will significantly improve our performance in key services by March 2004:  
benefits, SEN statements, assessments for children in need.

##### B. We will maximise resources for Denbighshire and use them wisely

- B1. Maximise resources from European and other funding sources: up to £10 million from bid-based funding for each year of Objective One.
- B2. Maximise opportunities to generate revenue income through fees and charges to provide funding for service improvements, e.g. charging for toilets to increase the number of sustainable service outlets and improve service quality.
- B3. We will identify savings to fund improvements to services.
- B4. Generate £3 million a year of capital receipts.
- B5. Gradually build reserves to £3 million by March 2005.
- B6. Stimulate the local economy by supporting an integrated procurement policy, e.g. joint ventures.

### **C. We will invest in our elected Members and staff**

- C1. Increase budget for staff training and member training by at least 50% over 2002-03 levels.
- C2. Implement measures to improve recruitment and retention of key staff e.g. social workers by April 2003.
- C3. Gradually remove restrictions on mileage and subsistence allowances, with separate mileage allowance for training abolished from 1 April 2003.
- C4. Implement measures to recruit more young people from Denbighshire by April 2004, and reduce expenditure on agency staff to £1m by October 2003 and £800k by Oct. 2004.
- C5. Implement single status by 2004/05.
- C6. By April 2004, introduce system of appointments to grades rather than jobs - to create a more flexible workforce.

### **D. We will improve the image of Denbighshire**

- D1. Prioritise spending in 2003-04 and later years on services which improve the look of the area:
  - Public conveniences
  - Street cleansing
  - Replacement of all sign referring to abolished councils by March 2005
  - Removing visible signs of dereliction and deprivation.
- D2. Implement extension of registration scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- D3. No ward in Denbighshire to be in the top 20 of the Welsh index of multiple deprivation by 2007, with none in the top 50 by 2012.
- D4. We will seek to enhance the profile of tourism within Denbighshire and actively seek to attract more visitors to the area. The County will also adopt a more visible presence at Llangollen International Eisteddfod and in other venues/facilities from 2003 onwards.

**Contact:** Steve Hatton - 01824 706146  
[steve.hatton@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.hatton@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.7 CORPORATE ACTION PLAN**

#### **Update on Corporate Actions 2002 - 2003**

The Authority has a number of corporate key issues which it needs to address in order to enable the Authority to modernise its working practices and provide the basis for it to secure continuous improvement.

The following issues were identified in last year's Plan and adoption and full implementation of the Constitution / Review of Financial Regulations have been progressed as follows:-

The constitution was adopted by the Council on the 14th May. A key task for the year ahead will be to ensure that its requirements are fully implemented, specifically the scrutiny function which with the appointment of the scrutiny support officers, will address the pressing need of support for the Chairs and members of scrutiny in working to a carefully planned programme of work enabling the executive to be held to account.

To improve the accountability within the new framework it is essential that there is a review of the Authority's financial regulations.

#### **Member And Management Development**

Several learning events for members were held during 2002/3. These included subjects such as Scrutiny, Risk Management, Ethical Standards and Local Government Finance and Best Value Accountancy.

Learning events for managers in the 2002/3 year revolved around a core programme consisting of events addressing Corporate Communication, Leadership Skills, Change Management, Business Planning and Performance and Project Management. In addition there were basic management skills courses, a programme addressing two new corporate personnel policies and two management qualification programmes at certificate and diploma levels.

#### **Achievement Of Significant Balances**

Audited accounts for 2001/02 confirmed that the Authority had managed to eliminate the negative balances. The forecast for 2002/03 was that positive reserves of £1m would be achieved, as well as ensuring adequate specific reserves. Whilst the financial position has not yet been finalised early indications are that this will be exceeded by 0.8m. This is primarily a reflection of the improved performance of the Council in collecting Council Tax and the increases in the housing in the County as a result of new property developments.

#### **Implement Agreed Recommendations Of Service Reviews**

The actions contained within Service Review Improvement Plans are incorporated into Service Business Plans the progress of which is monitored via quarterly performance reports to Members and Senior Management.

**Improvement Of Performance Management.**

During the last two years the Authority has successfully piloted its new Performance Management Framework which will be finalised by August 2003 following consultation with Members and Senior Management. All services produce three year Service Business Plans and report progress to Members and Senior Management via quarterly performance reports. The Performance Management Unit works with the Authority's Scrutiny Advisors to highlight any causes of concern which are then reported to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee with a response from the responsible officer. Any corporate issues or issues which continue to be of concern are reported to the Corporate Governance Committee. Service Business Plans have been amended for 2003 to include Learning and Development Plans.

**Production And Implementation Of Corporate Procurement Strategy.**

The Authority is currently carrying out a best value review of Procurement and has produced a draft Procurement Strategy which will be finalised following a "Procurement Fitness Check" which is being carried out by the Welsh Local Government Procurement Support Unit in October 2003 and the completion of the Review.

**Contact:** Steve Hatton - 01824 706146  
[steve.hatton@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.hatton@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### Corporate Action Plan

Corporate Objective	Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resource Required	Link To Corporate Themes
B	Urgent	Review of revenue budgets to ensure expenditure reflects current priorities and ensure current expenditure is correctly analysed. In addition, there is a requirement to improve financial reporting	Director of Resources	2003/2004	1 additional experienced accountant for 9 months £40k Revenue	Underpins successful delivery of all priorities
B	Urgent	Develop a rolling three year capital plan to ensure priorities are supported and take advantage of additional funding opportunities (Sales Proceeds, Prudential Borrowing)	Director of Resources	2003/2004	No additional resources required	Underpins successful delivery of all priorities
A	High	Ensure County property assets meet agreed DDA requirements	Director of Resources	2003/04 and 2004/05	Capital requirement £1.5 m Revenue requirement – none currently identified	Essential to comply with legislative requirements
C	Urgent	Development and implementation of Single Status	Head of Personnel	2003/2004 – Analysis Future Years implementation implication not yet evident	Additional resource already identified and budgeted	Implementation of Single Status is a national initiative
A and C	Urgent	Develop a Communication Strategy	Public Relations Manager	2003/04	Main demand is on staff time. Additional funding of up to £20k may be required	Communication of all Council activities
C	High	Development of more reliable and timely personnel information, including procurement and	Head of Personnel	2003/04 and two following years	Capital cost exceeds £200k. Revenue costs of £25k pa for	Underpinning strategy to provide workforce required to meet future

## Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004

Corporate Objective	Priority	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	Resource Required	Link To Corporate Themes
		implementation of computerized personnel and payroll system			licences. The system will also require new ways of working	priorities
A and C	High	Continued improvement in accuracy and timeliness of performance management information across the whole authority. Finalisation of the Performance Management Framework	Senior Management and the Performance Management and Business Planning Manager	2003/04	Additional resources may be needed in certain areas to help develop better data collection	Performance Management System is major source of performance data to drive improvements
A, B and C	High	Improve ability to carry out Best Value Reviews	Senior Management and Performance Management and Business Planning Manager	2003/04	Flexibility to appoint external consultants – approx £50k per year	Ability to undertake Best Value Reviews effectively is important in order to achieve service improvements
A, B and C	High	Develop Risk Management and Business Continuity Strategies (including in-house systems that need replacing)	Head of Internal Audit	2004/05	Strategies may identify actions that need funding	Supports the ability to maintain continuity of service delivery
A, B and C	High	Develop Project Management capacity		2003/04	Training of staff £5k. Consider additional posts to undertake projects	Maintain ability and capacity to deliver local and statutory requirements
A	Urgent	Produce Community Plan	Principal Policy Officer and Area Partnership Managers	2003/04 to 2004/05	No additional resources required	Major WAG initiative
A and B	High	Funding in place to maximise Objective 1 opportunities in line with priorities		2003/04	Capital match funding. Additional revenue funding to support projects	Objective I offers major opportunity to attract external funding

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

<b>Corporate Objective</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Resource Required</b>	<b>Link To Corporate Themes</b>
C	Medium	Reduce absence levels	Senior Management and Head of Personnel	2003/04	No additional resources required	Greater operational efficiency
A, B and C	Medium	Introduce Code of Corporate Governance		2003/04	No additional resources required	Modernising Agenda
B	Urgent	Development of a Procurement Strategy and provision of resources to ensure compliance with legislative requirements	Performance Management and Business Planning Manager	2003/04	Funding in place for 2 posts. Third post may be required	Effective procurement ensures financial benefits. Also need to ensure procurement is consistent with Council priorities

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### **1.8 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE INDICATORS**

The Corporate Governance Indicators below provide a snapshot of how well the Authority is performing overall. These 'corporate level' indicators are designed to reflect the underlying capacity and performance of local authorities and others as both democratic or locally accountable institutions, and bodies responsible for managing a significant proportion of public expenditure. The Corporate Governance Indicators in this Section are the responsibility of corporate working groups. Where Corporate Governance Indicators are the responsibility of individual services they have been included in the appropriate sections and highlighted as such.

#### **1.8.1 Implementing Electronic Government (IEG)**

(Alan Evans)

##### **Corporate Governance Indicator NAWPI 1.5**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04																																																																															
1.5	<p>The percentage of interactions with the public, by type, which are capable of electronic service delivery and which are being delivered using Internet protocols or other paperless methods.</p> <p>a) Providing information  b) Receiving payments  c) Making payments  d) Receiving feedback  e) Regulations  f) Make applications  g) Make a bookings  h) Paying for goods  i) Access to community, professional and business net works  j) Procurement</p>	All Wales average not available	New Indicator for 01/02	<table> <tr> <td>a) 46%</td> <td>a) 60%</td> <td>a) 52%</td> <td>a) 72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) 34%</td> <td>b) 50%</td> <td>b) 100%</td> <td>b) 100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c) 100%</td> <td>c) 100%</td> <td>c) 100%</td> <td>c) 100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d) 25%</td> <td>d) 50%</td> <td>d) 49%</td> <td>d) 69%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e) 5%</td> <td>e) 10%</td> <td>e) 5%</td> <td>e) 10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f) 2%</td> <td>f) 25%</td> <td>f) 10%</td> <td>f) 35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g) 6%</td> <td>g) 25%</td> <td>g) 13%</td> <td>g) 21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>h) 47%</td> <td>h) 60%</td> <td>h) 100%</td> <td>h) 100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>i) 23%</td> <td>i) 50%</td> <td>i) 38%</td> <td>i) 66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>j) 3%</td> <td>j) 25%</td> <td>j) 2%</td> <td>j) 2%</td> </tr> </table>	a) 46%	a) 60%	a) 52%	a) 72%	b) 34%	b) 50%	b) 100%	b) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	d) 25%	d) 50%	d) 49%	d) 69%	e) 5%	e) 10%	e) 5%	e) 10%	f) 2%	f) 25%	f) 10%	f) 35%	g) 6%	g) 25%	g) 13%	g) 21%	h) 47%	h) 60%	h) 100%	h) 100%	i) 23%	i) 50%	i) 38%	i) 66%	j) 3%	j) 25%	j) 2%	j) 2%	<table> <tr> <td>a) 46%</td> <td>a) 60%</td> <td>a) 52%</td> <td>a) 72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b) 34%</td> <td>b) 50%</td> <td>b) 100%</td> <td>b) 100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c) 100%</td> <td>c) 100%</td> <td>c) 100%</td> <td>c) 100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d) 25%</td> <td>d) 50%</td> <td>d) 49%</td> <td>d) 69%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e) 5%</td> <td>e) 10%</td> <td>e) 5%</td> <td>e) 10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f) 2%</td> <td>f) 25%</td> <td>f) 10%</td> <td>f) 35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g) 6%</td> <td>g) 25%</td> <td>g) 13%</td> <td>g) 21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>h) 47%</td> <td>h) 60%</td> <td>h) 100%</td> <td>h) 100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>i) 23%</td> <td>i) 50%</td> <td>i) 38%</td> <td>i) 66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>j) 3%</td> <td>j) 25%</td> <td>j) 2%</td> <td>j) 2%</td> </tr> </table>	a) 46%	a) 60%	a) 52%	a) 72%	b) 34%	b) 50%	b) 100%	b) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	d) 25%	d) 50%	d) 49%	d) 69%	e) 5%	e) 10%	e) 5%	e) 10%	f) 2%	f) 25%	f) 10%	f) 35%	g) 6%	g) 25%	g) 13%	g) 21%	h) 47%	h) 60%	h) 100%	h) 100%	i) 23%	i) 50%	i) 38%	i) 66%	j) 3%	j) 25%	j) 2%	j) 2%	
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*The establishment of the IEG Section and clarification of electronic service delivery has lead to revisions in what is delivered and what needs to be delivered. The inclusion of Heads of Service in target setting has also lead to more realistic targets being set. The PI is still subjective and open to differing interpretations. The only significant area where last year's target was not met was in E-procurement where Financial Regulations do not allow Electronic Procurement.*

**Contact:** Alan Evans - 01824 706060

[alan.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.8.2 Welsh Language**

Considerable gains have been made in the management of the Scheme and the target of 'good and improving' has been reached. Progress in its implementation is reported quarterly by members of a cross directorate working group, set up for the purpose in August 2002. These reports are evidence based. The reports are collated and shared with Heads of Service, Scrutiny Panels and the Council. The Welsh Language Board, in its latest report on performance, recommended that the Council appoint an officer with responsibility for implementing the Scheme but, to date, funding has not been found for this post. External evaluations of performance in implementing the Welsh Language Scheme note improvements but that these improvements are not consistent across all Council services or departments. At service level, performance continues to be 'fair and improving'.

#### **Corporate Governance Indicator NAWPI 1.1**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.1	The level of compliance with the Authority's approved Welsh language scheme as confirmed by the Welsh Language Board.  Service Delivery  Scheme Management	All Wales average not available	Good  Good	Fair & improving  Good	Good	Fair & improving  Good & improving	Good  Good & improving

**Contact:** Sioned Bowen - 01824 706149  
[sioned.bowen@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:sioned.bowen@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.8.3 Racial Equality**

The Racial Equality Scheme has been the subject of training courses for staff and Members. The Scheme was ratified by Council in May alongside its adoption of the Equality Standards. Most aspects of Level 1 have been achieved and progress has been made towards the target set of Level 2. This level will need to be consolidated fully for 2003-2004. It is hoped that a dedicated Equalities Officer can be afforded in 2004 so that implementation of Level 3 compliance and beyond can be achieved by 2005.

#### **Corporate Governance Indicator NAWPI 1.2**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.2	The level of the Commission for Racial Equality's 'Standard for Local Government' to which the Authority conforms.	All Wales average not available	1	1	2	1	2

**Contact:** Sioned Bowen - 01824 706149  
[sioned.bowen@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:sioned.bowen@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.8.4 Community Safety**

Reductions in the level of crime and disorder in Denbighshire are the responsibility of the Community Safety Partnership. The partnership is led by Denbighshire County Council, the Central Division of the North Wales Police and includes representation from other organisations such as the Probation Service, Health Authority, Courts, Fire Service and a number of voluntary organisations.

The indicators shown in the table below detail some of the overall crime reduction targets set by the Partnership for 2003-2004. The Partnership has established a number of working groups who will be expected to deliver the overall reductions set in the Crime and Disorder Strategy. It is realised however that there will need to be variations in different parts of the County to address local circumstances.

Crime figures in Denbighshire have risen over the last three years mainly because of the increase in levels of offences such as vehicle crime. It is important to note, however, that the Partnership has attempted to increase reporting of crimes such as domestic abuse and that the Central Division of the North Wales Police have introduced the 'ethical' crime recording system. Underreporting of crime nationally is a problem and the Partnership is keen to address this issue. Both of these measures have been introduced so as to ensure levels of recorded crime in Denbighshire more accurately reflect the real number of crimes occurring in the County.

### **Corporate Governance Indicators NAWPI 1.16, 1.17**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.16 / BV174	Racial Incidents:  a) The number of racial incidents recorded by the Authority per 100,000 of the population.  b) The percentage of racial incidents which resulted in further action.	Not available	No target set	a) 36 incidents – 39/100,000 pop  b) 43%	No targets set	a) 73 incidents - 78/100,000 pop  b) 100%	Targets to be set after Crime & Disorder Steering Group on 15 <sup>th</sup> May
<i>Population for 2001-2002 is 91,843. Population for 2002-2003 is 93,103 (latest Census updates).</i>							
1.17 / BV176  No longer listed as NAWPI 12.5	The number of domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population which are provided or supported by the Authority.	Not available	4.29	4.29	4.29	4.19	Targets to be set after Crime & Disorder Steering Group on 15 <sup>th</sup> May
<i>The number of domestic violence refuge places for Denbighshire remains at 39, however a small increase in the population figures resulted in the performance of this PI appearing to have worsened slightly.</i>							
12.1 / BV126	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households and percentage detected.	Not available	5% reduction = 11.2 per 1,000	411 incidents = 10/1000 households	6% reduction = 11 per 1,000	572 incidents = 14/1000 households	Targets to be set after Crime & Disorder

## Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
			households Targets are Police targets	74 detected = 18%	households Targets are Police targets	65 detected = 11%	Steering Group on 15 <sup>th</sup> May
<i>2001-2003 households figure used is 39,892 as per 2001 census data.</i>							
12.2 / BV127	<p>Violent crimes per 1,000 population and percentage detected.</p> <p>a) violent offences committed by a stranger per 1,000 population</p> <p>b) violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000 population</p> <p>c) violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1,000 population</p> <p>d) violent offences committed under the influence per 1,000 population</p>	Not available	<p>New Indicator for 02/03</p> <p>1182 incidents = 13/1000 pop</p> <p>695 detected = 59%</p> <p>a) 621 incidents = 7/1000 pop</p> <p>b) 650 incidents = 7/1000 pop</p> <p>c) 98 incidents = 1/1000 pop</p> <p>d) 306 incidents = 3/1000 pop</p>	<p>New Indicator for 02/03</p> <p>1070 detected = 48%</p> <p>a) 1132 incidents = 12/1000 pop</p> <p>b) 1204 incidents = 13/1000 pop</p> <p>c) 194 incidents = 2/1000 pop</p> <p>d) 446 incidents = 5/1000 pop</p>	<p>2209 incidents 24/1000 pop</p>	<p>Targets to be set after Crime &amp; Disorder Steering Group on 15<sup>th</sup> May</p>	
<i>Population for 2001-2002 is 91,843. Population for 2002-2003 is 93,103 (latest Census updates).</i>							
<i>This was a new Indicator for 2002/03. Base data needed to be gathered before target setting, therefore, the first targets for this Indicator will be set for 2003/04.</i>							
12.3 / BV128	Vehicle crimes per 1,000 of the population and percentage detected.	Not available	<p>5% reduction = 13.72 per 1000 pop</p> <p>Targets are Police targets</p>	<p>1270 incidents = 14/1000 pop</p> <p>84 detected = 7%</p>	<p>5% reduction = 13.36 per 1000 pop</p> <p>Targets are Police targets</p>	<p>1342 incidents = 14/1000 pop</p> <p>98 detected = 7%</p>	<p>Targets to be set after Crime &amp; Disorder Steering Group on 15<sup>th</sup> May</p>
<i>Population for 2001-2002 is 91,843. Population for 2002-2003 is 93,103 (latest Census updates).</i>							
12.4 / BV173	Has the local Authority established a corporate strategy to reduce crime and disorder in	Not available	Included in Crime & Disorder Strategy April 02. Targets to	Not available	Included in Crime & Disorder Strategy April 02. Targets to	Yes	Not applicable

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	their area? Yes/No. If no, has the Authority established a timetable for doing so?		be developed by end of July 2002.		be developed by end of July 2002.		

Contact: Mike Denman - 01824 706127  
[mike.denman@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:mike.denman@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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### **1.8.5 Property Accessibility**

Following a number of reports to the Asset Management Committee £60k was set aside by Members in 2002/3, a further £700k allocated for 2003/4 and £300k of funding allocated for 2004/5, to carry out physical alterations to the County's buildings and a prioritised list was requested by Members.

Unfortunately, due to critical staff shortages, progress was virtually negligible and only one property out of the 60 'public buildings' [1.6%] was considered to be compliant by 31.3.03, following recent physical alterations.

However, a total of 48 properties have been audited to date and, with the aid of redeployed staff, a series of consultations was held with Service Representatives and the Building Maintenance Group Manager, which resulted in a recent report to Members, prioritising the existing funding allocation and advocating the need to complete the remaining audits and identify a further £ 600 k of funds. Members accepted the report and endorsed the proposal to commission the works from existing funds.

The above assumed that buildings wholly occupied by Tenants are their responsibility and no provision has been made to rectify any inadequacies.

Accordingly the current targets are as follows; -

By the end of 2003 / 4; -50% of the buildings are accessible [funding in place].  
 By the end of 2004 / 5; - 100% of the buildings are accessible [subject to allocation of additional funding in 2004-05].

The Denbighshire Access Group and the Disability Rights Council ['DRC'] were informed last year of the Council's response to the DDA and its intentions.

### **Corporate Governance Indicator NAWPI 1.15**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.15	<b>Property</b> The percentage of the Authority's buildings open to the public and that are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.	All Wales average not available	Not set	0%	Not set	1.5%	50%

*Funding for alterations to thirty properties is in place (sixty properties owned) in 2003/04.*

**Contact:** Stephen Meredith Williams - 01824 708010  
[stephen.m.williams@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.m.williams@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## **1.9 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLANNING**

### **Financial Summary**

The year 2002-03 has seen some very significant progress in the financial management of the Authority. The Financial Statements for 2001-02 were given an unqualified opinion, the first time in the history of the Authority since its creation in 1996. In addition, the negative balances have been eliminated, meeting the requirements of the Financial Recovery Plan.

Progress on financial management has continued during 2002-03. Although the financial results for the year have yet to be finalised, it is hoped that it will have achieved its target of building £1m of general reserves as well as an appropriate level of specific reserves. In addition the Council has successfully addressed the issue of poor collection rates of Council Tax and Business Rates, which is also contributing to the overall financial position.

The Authority however needs to continue to build up its reserves, and during 2003-04 it is proposed to increase general reserves by £1m to £2m.

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**REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY**  
**FINANCIAL YEAR 2003/2004**

	<b>Gross Exp</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>Income</b> <b>£'000</b>	<b>Net Exp</b> <b>£'000</b>
<b>Environment</b>	31,662	7,572	24,090
<b>Life Long Learning</b>			
Education	66,771	9,766	57,005
Culture and Leisure	15,045	3,953	11,092
<b>Personal Services</b>	32,972	6,032	26,940
<b>Chief Executives</b>	2,915	2,705	210
<b>Resources</b>	7,509	6,180	1,329
<b>Benefits</b>	14,732	13,948	784
<b>Corporate and Miscellaneous</b>	8,902	1,266	7,636
<b>Total Directorates</b>	<b><u>180,508</u></b>	<b><u>51,422</u></b>	<b><u>129,086</u></b>
Less Asset Rentals			(16,696)
Capital Financing			11,283
Levies			4,435
Contingency			100
Contribution to Balances			1,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b><u>129,208</u></b>
<b>To be Financed by:</b>			
Revenue Support Grant	83,697		
Business Ratepayers	19,202		
Council Taxpayers	26,156		
Deprivation Grant	153		
<b>Total Income</b>			<b><u>129,208</u></b>

Contact: Alan Evans - 01824 706060  
[alan.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:alan.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.10 AUDIT AND INSPECTION**

The framework of audit, inspection and the Assembly's powers of intervention agreed between the Assembly and the Welsh Local Government Association remain as set out in the Assembly's original guidance on Best Value (Circular 14/2000) but the development of the Wales Programme for Improvement places them in a new and significantly different context. In particular inspection arrangements will change as a result of the emphasis on joint working to support improvement and the concept of the Regulatory Plan (which is proportionate to risk and manageable from the point of view of the Authority's own capacity to manage change). Authorities will still be expected to carry out reviews and prepare Improvement Plans with full regard to proper accounting practices as set out in CIPFA's Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. The Assembly also recommends that each Authority draws up a code of corporate governance as proposed by CIPFA and this is a key corporate action for Denbighshire County Council.

#### **1.10.1 Audit Of Performance Plan 2001/2002**

The Audit Commission in Wales is required to provide a report on the Authority's Improvement Plan 2002/2003. The Audit Commission found that the progress made by the Authority in developing the Improvement Plan as part of an integrated planning process has resulted in an improved focus on current performance and future improvements. The usefulness of the Improvement Plan as the Authority's main strategic planning document is, however, being undermined by the continued high level of inaccuracies and uncertainties around performance information. The Audit Commission's report made six statutory recommendations for improvement which the Authority are implementing via an Action Plan.

**Contact:** Janette Ogden - 01824 706161  
[janette.ogden@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:janette.ogden@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 1.11 REVIEWS CARRIED OUT TO DATE

#### 1.11.1 Planning

##### The Review

- The review of Planning Services was done in 1998/99 as part of the all Wales Best Value pilot study. The Audit Commission carried out a Best Value Inspection of the service in April 2002 and they published their final report in July 2002.
- The Audit Commission came to the view that the Planning Services is a "good two star service with promising prospects for improving"

##### The Results

- The Audit Commission made eleven recommendations for improving the service.
- The inspectors considered that the Authority should act on the recommendations within 12 months i.e. by July 2003.
- The recommendations were reported to the Planning Committee in September 2002 and proposed responses were agreed.
- The main recommendations are:
  - (i) a full review of searches
  - (ii) speed up the determination of planning applications
  - (iii) review business aims, objectives and actions
  - (iv) ensure section heads are engaged in performance management
  - (v) more effective monitoring of outcomes and targets
  - (vi) change procedures where decisions contrary to officer recommendations

##### Outcome

- Of the eleven recommendations:
  - five have been fully or mostly completed/objectives achieved by other means
  - three have been commenced and completion due by July 2003
  - three have not commenced - two due to difficulties in filling a vacant post one by proposed re-structuring of the establishment.
- Most notable successes include (a) the dramatic increase in the speed of handling searches (b) the commissioning of external planning consultants to improve performance by undertaking technical appraisal of planning applications and (c) the filling of a key vacant post leading to the establishment since April 2003 of a dedicated customer and performance unit within Planning Services.
- Outstanding recommendations will be completed/commenced by July 2003.

**Contact:** Aneurin Phillips – 01824 708020  
[aneurin.phillips@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:aneurin.phillips@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **1.11.2 Library And Information Services**

**The Review** recommended that:

- the Council defines the type of library service that the Authority desires and enables the service to plan more effectively.
- the service develops a 3 – 5 year strategic plan that clearly sets out how it will improve standards, and increase usage through promotion and marketing.
- the service engages in benchmarking activity.
- the service should challenge the way in which the Library Service is provided and analyse options for service delivery.
- the service should carry out consultation to inform service planning
- the costs of services should be accurately established

**The Results:**

- A 3 year strategy (2002 – 2005) for the service was approved by the Council in 2002.
- The 3 Year Strategy sets out annual targets for improvement in relation to the 22 Minimum Standards for Public Library Authorities introduced by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2002. A number of marketing, promotional and launch events were held in 2002/03.
- The service is actively engaged in the North Wales Library Benchmarking Group, and is about to participate in a new all-Wales library benchmarking club.
- The service analysed various options for service delivery at Rhuddlan when faced with potential closure, arriving at a decision to refurbish the present library to ensure long term service provision.
- A Public Library User Survey was conducted in 2002, the results of which focused on a demand for new books and a review of opening hours.
- Regular zero-based budgeting exercise ensures that accurate costs of services and activities are established to inform the planning process.

**Progress Report:**

The service was rated as a "Fair 1 Star Service but unlikely to improve significantly beyond its current level of performance". The inspection report highlighted the following:-

- wide network of service provision giving good access
- high level of overall customer satisfaction
- every library has public internet access facility
- library users declining at above average rate
- lack of investment in books and materials
- high staff and premises costs
- customers dissatisfied with range of books, information provision and opening hours
- lack of challenge in BV review
- not explored partnerships
- consultation results not used for service improvement
- no service strategy or improvement plan

The Library service is now redefining its aims and objectives and has produced a 3 year strategic plan that will deal with many of the Best Value recommendations. A

new consultation strategy has been developed, a zero-based budgeting exercise undertaken and a marketing plan is to be introduced.

A recent Internal Audit review of the Library service found that:

- good progress is being made in implementing Minimum Standards
- implementation of the Peoples Network is progressing well
- good progress in implementing recommendations from 2001/2 Internal Audit report in individual libraries
- the Internal Audit recommendation to review administration of fines has been partly implemented and is to be fully implemented by April 2003.

**Contact:** R Arwyn Jones – 01824 708203

[Arwyn.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:Arwyn.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 1.11.3 Housing Rents

The Best Value inspection of the Housing Rents Service originally rated the service as a “Poor, no star service, which will not improve” with the following key points made in the report:

- rent arrears high and increasing
- rent payment and collection methods insufficient, inappropriate and badly managed
- tenants receive no information from the Council regarding rent they have paid
- Best Value Action Plan not sufficient to address the scale of the problems
- the Council does not have a good record of managing change in its Housing Rents Service
- the Council is not willing to take robust action against persistent non-payers
- little performance management of the service
- over-reliance of housing stock transfer as the solution to the service’s problems

The Housing Rents Section was transferred into Housing Services with effect from October 2001. A Best Value Project Group led a full review of the collection and arrears recovery policy leading to an action plan and many new procedures. The service was re-inspected by the Audit Commission in March 2002 with a formal rating of two stars - “a good service with promising prospects for improvement” being issued in February 2003. The Rents reassessment was fully published in March 2003 and showed “excellent” prospects for improvement.

This follow up visit shows that excellent progress has been made in the Housing Rents Service since the original inspection which is borne out by the significant improvement shown in this year’s performance indicators.

**Contact:** Paul Quirk – 01824 708461

[paul.quirk@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.quirk@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 1.11.4 Payroll

#### The main findings of the Inspection were:-

- Above average satisfaction levels.
- A quality service that is meeting the needs of users.
- Continuous improvement is seen as a core principle by the Service.
- Internal Audit assess that the level of controls within payroll is excellent.
- Overall there has been a rigorous challenge to how the service is provided and to look at other options for delivery.
- Commitment from elected members to deliver the necessary actions for improvement was also clear during discussions with the Chair of the scrutiny committee for Resources.
- In conclusion the Service has largely met its aims, users are highly satisfied with the Service and performance compares favourably on most of the indicators. Overall, the Payroll Unit provides an effective, generally cost-efficient and quality service to the Council.

#### Does the Best Value Review drive improvements?

- Prior to the Best Value Review the Service had a realistic understanding of its strengthens and weaknesses and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. It was recognised that this was a result of the way that continuous improvement was seen as a core principle by the Service. The Review has, therefore, been used to clarify and confirm these strengthens and weaknesses and to support actions for an improved delivery of service.
- Overall there has been a rigorous challenge to how the service is provided and to look at other options for delivery.

#### Improvement Plan

- The majority of the actions have been implemented which is something that was expected given the timescale of the completion of the Plan and the inspection Date.
- In conclusion, the Improvement Plan contains all the necessary targets and the majority of actions have been implemented.

#### Suggestions for further consideration

To assist the Service in its continuous improvement it was suggested that:-

- operational targets are further developed to become more explicit and measurable for the next business planning cycle;
- current documentation is reviewed to take into consideration user feedback;
- service delivery options are analysed on a regular basis;
- the review and this inspection report should be used to inform the Council's Whole Authority Analysis and Improvement Plan.

#### Actions

- More explicit and measurable operational targets - confirmed by Internal Audit in the WAA report;
- Documentation being redesigned as part of ICR scanning project;
- External consultant commissioned to undertake risk analysis of current in-house system

**Contact:** Cemlyn Foulkes – 01824 706031  
[cemlyn.foulkes@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:cemlyn.foulkes@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 1.11.5 Information Communication Technology (ICT)

#### The Review

The review covered the performance of ICT holistically, as opposed to just focusing on the service itself. The inspection covered some key aspects of modernisation such as the Delivering Quality Services strategy. Neither the review nor inspection picked up anything that would not have been highlighted as part of the standard ICT Performance Management framework.

However, influencing the inspectors to put over some key messages to key stakeholders was useful in gaining inputs on some strategic issues such as "Delivering Quality Services". It is likely that the results below would have been achieved regardless of Best Value review and inspection. The Service was assessed as providing a 'good' two star service that has promising prospects for improvement.,

#### The Results

Delivering Quality Services (The Customer Service Strategy for Denbighshire C.C.), agreed by Council in February 02, was a commitment to "radically change the culture and working practices of the Organisation, to enable us to deliver consistent, quality services". This was the basis of the Denbighshire IEG statement and culminated in the Council setting its priority in July 2002:

*"We will establish a fully bilingual system to provide customers with a single contact point for the delivery of all services either face to face, via the telephone or electronically via the web site. Target 40% of all Council transactions by April 2004, 80% by 2005 Denbighshire County Council, (2002), Denbighshire County Council Priorities & Objectives 2003-04."*

This strategy has a high profile in the organisation and since April 02 has been driven by the Senior Management Task Force for e government, which is chaired by the CEO. However, the funding required for progression of this in 2003/04 has not been forthcoming. As such, another detailed business case has been drawn up, which may result in the formation of a long term public/private sector partnership to deliver the vision.

#### **ICT Operational Issues**

It was thought that support to some geographical locations was at a different level to some central locations due to location of scarce resource. ICT employed a system whereby Technical Support Officers are allocated particular areas on particular days, which ensures equilibrium of support. Training and skills of users (not ICT staff) was an issue. This has been addressed as part of corporate bids for training, which included information technology. There is now a corporate ICT trainer and the ECDL standard has been adopted. The Service Level Agreements are set by the Information Systems Strategy Group, which has Head of Service representation from all user departments. It was suggested by the inspectors that the targets in these were not challenging enough; these are set by the user departments based on budget allocation. However, more ambitious targets have been set internally within ICT and are compared with other Authorities via the benchmarking work. The inspectors recommended that the action plan (for ICT) should be split into two

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

"strategic" and "operational" plans. This was done for the 2002/03 action plan. However, a system of SMART priorities and objectives at Corporate, Department, Section and individual levels coupled with linked actions with differing levels of detail depending on level is clearer and also makes it clearer to everyone what is required to be delivered and how to feedback learning.

Contact: Dylan Roberts – 01824 706226  
[dylan.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:dylan.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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## **SECTION TWO**

## **SERVICE SECTION**

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### 2.0 ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

#### 2.1 CONSULTANCY SERVICES

##### Performance Assessment 2002-2003

Due to the lack of relevant and up to date performance information it has not been possible to carry out a full assessment of the Department's performance.

##### ***Design Services***

- The trading accounts realised for 2002 - 2003 showed a fifth successive profitable year.
- The average fee charged was less than the average fee charged by local authorities nationally and compared favourably with the fees charged by the private sector.
- The problem reported last year on the funding of 'feasibility work' has still to be resolved. The County Asset manager will be pursuing a budget of £100k from financial year 2003/4 onwards.
- Completion of the Ruthin Gaol project. £2m refurbishment of historic building to meet the opening date of May 2002 and to within 4% of the overall budget cost

##### ***Building Services***

Approximately £1.1 million of capital maintenance work has been completed, predominantly on the Council's schools

##### ***Valuation & Estates***

- A new Estate Management System and digital terrier is being developed and populated.
- Lease renewals and rent review backlog work underway - 10% backlog complete.
- An Asset Management Committee with delegated powers has been established for the estate and agricultural estate matters and this has been very helpful in improving the efficiency of running the estate with better decision making.

##### ***Other Reports***

A recent survey of schools found that 66% of schools are satisfied with property services; 7% are dissatisfied and 10% very dissatisfied with the professional expertise of building surveyors and mechanical and electrical maintenance surveyors.

A recent Audit Commission School Survey Analysis found that the Council scored below average in satisfaction with, and was in the lower quartile for:

- landlord responsibility for structural building maintenance.
- programming and management of building projects
- building maintenance

### **Key Actions for Improvement 2003-2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Customer Consultation	Service Plan 2003/4 - Pursue consultation. Implement Best Value.
Performance Management	Service Plan 2003/4 - Develop meaningful performance indices. Implement Best Value.
Property Maintenance	Service Plan 2003/4 - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue increased property maintenance budget/building rationalisation</li> <li>• Implement IIP/QA/Charter mark</li> <li>• Implement Best Value</li> </ul>
Design Services	Service Plan 2003/4 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development meaningful performance indices.</li> <li>• Implement Best Value</li> <li>• Pursue consultation</li> <li>• Pursue private sector initiatives</li> <li>• Partnering; private sector company</li> </ul>
Lack of professionally qualified staff - recruitment - all three units.	Service Plan 2003/4 – Establishment of Learning Development Plan.

### **Performance Monitoring**

#### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
CD4	Predictability Cost	Develop Service	C3	100%			
CD5	Predictability Time	Develop Service	C3	100%			
CD6	Construction Cost	Budget Control	C1	97.5%			
CD7	Construction Time	Budget Control	C1	91%			
CD8	Profitability	Develop Service	C2	0			
CB1	Maintenance expenditure as a % of Total Asset Value	Develop Service	C2/C3			1.5%	
CB2	Maintenance expenditure as a % of available budget	Develop Service	C2/C3			95%	
CB3	Asset Value of surveyed buildings as % of Total Asset Value	Develop Service	C2/C3			20%	
CB4	Number of surveyed buildings as a % of Total No.	Develop Service	C2/C3			10%	
CB5	Staff costs as a % of Expenditure	Develop Service	C2/C3			10%	
CB6	Small building works expenditure as a % of available budget	Develop Service	C2/C3			105%	

**Contact:** Rod Bowden – 01824 706842

[rod.bowden@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:rod.bowden@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## **2.2 ECONOMIC REGENERATION**

### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

By targeting the opportunities of the Objective 1 Programme, Economic Regeneration has secured the necessary resources to maximise regeneration within Denbighshire. The Denbighshire Objective 1 Partnership, which is managed by the European Unit, has a very high percentage rate of project approval.

Some of the successful actions carried out during the year include:

- developing business groups at Dyserth, Rhuddlan and St Asaph
- further development of the Dee Valley Small Towns and Villages Enterprise Initiative (STVEI) area
- establishing the STVEI initiative in Denbigh and Ruthin
- developing the St Asaph City of Music project
- commencing work on a new community enterprise support facility in Rhyl
- developing promotional campaigns for Rhyl and Prestatyn, and Borderlands
- adoption of a new Tourism Strategy
- delivery of the DAPPER (Denbigh and Prestatyn Project Encouraging Regeneration) project, the Key Fund and DUNE (Denbighshire's Unique Natural Environment) fund

A review of the local performance indicators shows that the service has performed well over the year, although the PIs are probably too quantitative. The service has used several national economic development consultants whose advice is that the local quantification of economic development objectives is extraordinarily difficult and that the collection of information to support an assessment of effectiveness even more difficult. However, the PIs do show that the service is performing well in its three main areas of work - Business Support, Tourism and European Funding. Several of the PIs are taken from Objective 1 targets/outputs. They all show that the service is on target to achieving the outputs and its objectives.

The performance indicators for Business Support indicate that the Section is providing a good service, assisting businesses by providing advice and guidance, funding and premises, which is also confirmed by the results of the service consultation. The Section is also meeting its Objective 1 targets and outputs.

The Tourism performance indicators reflect the after effects of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Figures for the first six months of 2002 show that tourist numbers increased in Denbighshire but that tourist expenditure has decreased. It is widely believed in the industry that this is because of an increase in domestic visitors as people are less willing to travel abroad. This has also resulted in a decrease in foreign visitors, who may only account for a small percentage of total visitor numbers but are historically the higher spenders.

The European Section's performance indicators show that the Unit has a very good rate for bid approvals and that it continues to be good value for money as the bidding costs remain a low proportion of grants secured. In 2002/03, 10 projects were submitted through the Denbighshire Objective 1 Partnership and approved securing a total of £8,140,099 EU funding and a total project cost of £17,406,644.

It should be noted that the Service's budget was highly supplemented by European funding and enabled far more work to be carried out than the original Council allocation would have allowed and at no extra cost to the Council. If this level of work is to be sustained further, applications will be required during 2003/2004. Several applications have already been submitted and several more are currently being prepared. Further applications will be invited and developed over the course of the Objective 1 Rolling Programme during 2003/2004.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Insufficient performance management information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicators will be further reviewed but in view of the known constraints, external support will probably be necessary to assist.</li> <li>• Further consultation with WLGA regarding all-Wales indicators.</li> <li>• The first draft results against European project outputs, produced by WEFO, for all Objective 1 areas revealed the need for more WEFO work.</li> </ul>

### **Performance Monitoring**

#### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
LI/ER/BS/03	Percentage occupancy rate of industrial units	SO/ER/BS/02, 03	C3.1, 3.2, 3.3	89%			None
LI/ER/T/01	Tourist numbers in Denbighshire	SO/ER/T/01, 02	C3.1, 3.2, 3.3	1,833,000			None
LI/ER/R/01	Percentage of bids approved	SO/ER/R/01, 02, 03, 06	C3.1, 3.2, 3.3	96%			None

**Contact:** Gareth Evans - 01824 708080  
[gareth.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **2.3 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

It has not been easy to carry out a full assessment of the Department's performance as the majority of the benchmarking information for 2001/2 has not been received as yet. One particular area of good performance is the maintenance of street lighting which is consistently in the top quartile of performance.

The main area of concern was poor performance in road safety, although this has now shown signs of improvement and additional funding of £259k from NafW has been awarded to the Council to help improve road safety in the County further.

- A major programme of resurfacing and culvert replacement has shown the introduction of major improvements across the County.
- Winter maintenance activities have caused a steady drain on financial resources and left an increasing backlog of surface damage due to freeze/thaw conditions.
- Introduction of further social car schemes raising opportunity and access for the elderly in rural areas to public transport services.
- Concessionary Fares Scheme introduced.
- As identified by Contract Services consultation exercise with local communities there was a desire for a higher level of service to be provided in the service areas:-
  - Verge Maintenance
  - Winter Maintenance
  - Highway and Footway Maintenance
  - Maintenance/Gully Emptying
- As part of normal service review, a revised verge maintenance policy has been introduced which makes more extensive use of private contractors on the principal roads using high speed vehicles. Similarly, the rural community grass cutting programme is rotated, ensuring the issue of early or later cutting benefits are shared more equitably.
- Winter Maintenance is provided in line with budgetary provision and national guidance standards. Standards are medium to good in terms of the size of the precautionary salting route mileage. Nevertheless, there is a strong demand for this to be increased particularly in rural communities.
- With regard to highway, footway and gully emptying, the Council's allocation of budgets is well below S.S.A. provision. Nevertheless, grants have been acquired which support this deficiency along with good achievement of actions supported by the National Performance Indicators.

Internal Audit reports of highways maintenance, vehicle maintenance and fleet maintenance highlighted one critical system weakness where arrangements must be put in place for the Fleet Manager as the Operator's Licence holder to be able to manage all aspects where he is legally responsible. The Fleet Manager as the named individual on the Operator's Licence is required by law to have continuous and effective responsibility for the management of the transport operations of the Council.

#### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Operator's Licence	2003/4 Service Plan – Implement Transport Operations Fleet Management / Maintenance Action Plan.

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Road Safety	<p>2003/4 Service Plan –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement accident remedial schemes concentrating initially on known accident cluster sites.</li> <li>• Formulate long term structural highway maintenance programme based on outcome of comprehensive technical surveys.</li> <li>• Extend risk management approach to highway/third party claim process to lower risk areas.</li> <li>• Reduce road accidents by speed enforcement partnership with North Wales Police - Arrive Alive Initiative.</li> <li>• Engineering and educational programme to reduce risk of road accidents.</li> </ul>
Condition Of Non-Principal Roads	<p>2003/4 Service Plan –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formulate long term structural highway maintenance programme based on the outcome of comprehensive technical surveys</li> <li>• Survey of B and C roads commencing</li> </ul>
Performance Management & Customer Consultation	<p>2003/4 Service Plan –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate/implement electronic data storage and retrieval system for terrier information</li> <li>• Investigate/procure/implement electronic data management system for highways maintenance: Phase 2: customer contact system</li> <li>• Devise and implement departmental consultation strategy</li> </ul>
Increasing Third Party Claims Risks	Extend risk management approach to highway inspection/third party claim process to lower risk areas.
Service Delivery	<p>2003/4 Service Plan –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A revised verge maintenance policy has been introduced which makes more extensive use of private contractors on the principal roads using high speed vehicles.</li> <li>• Winter Maintenance is provided in line with budgetary provision and national guidance standards. Standards are medium to good in terms of the size of the precautionary salting route mileage. Nevertheless, there is a strong demand for this to be increased particularly in rural communities.</li> </ul> <p>2003/4 Service Plan –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue / Procure funding in respect of</li> </ul>

Area for Improvement	Improvement Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cycling and highway maintenance.</li> <li>• Formulate long term structural highway maintenance programme based on outcome of comprehensive technical surveys.</li> <li>• Extend risk management approach to highway inspection / third party claim process to lower risk areas</li> </ul>
Vehicle Maintenance Workshops	Debate has taken place over the location of the new workshop but a decision has yet to be taken and it is critical that this is taken as soon as possible.

### Performance Monitoring

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
6.1	Cost of highway maintenance per km on principal roads.	All Wales average not available	Target not set	£0.0043	£0.013	£15,125 (estimate)	£12,800
<i>Definition has changed for 2002/03. Now expressed as expenditure per km of principal road.</i>							
6.2	Cost per passenger journey or subsidized bus services.	All Wales average not available	£2.40	£2.14	£1.98	£1.85 (estimate)	£1.46
<i>An estimate of £2.18 was published in the last Improvement Plan, however a more accurate figure was obtained for 01/02 due to close down of accounts.</i>							
6.3	Road Conditions: a) Conditions of principal roads.  b) Condition of non-principal roads.	All Wales average not available	a) not set  b) not set	a) 0%  b) no data	a) not set  b) not set	a) 11.4%  b) 27.7%	a) N/A  b) N/A
<i>Data are results of technical surveys. Target setting not appropriate at this stage.</i>							
6.4	Percentage of street lamps not working.	All Wales average not available	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.72%	0.5%
6.5	Road Safety:  Number of road accident casualties per 100,000 population broken down by nature of casualties and road type:  Road User Types: a) pedestrians b) pedal cyclists c) two-wheel motor	All Wales average not available	ai) 14 aii) 73  bi) 3 bii) 17  ci) 22 cii) 40	ai) 11 aii) 65  bi) 4 bii) 33  ci) 15 cii) 23	ai) 11 aii) 64  bi) 4 bii) 33  ci) 15 cii) 23	ai) 17 aii) 61 aiii)  bi) 5 bii) 19 biii)  ci) 20 cii) 32 ciii)	ai) 16 aii) 61 aiii)  bi) 5 bii) 19 biii)  ci) 20 cii) 32 ciii)

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	vehicle users d) car users e) other vehicle users  Casualty categories i) killed/seriously injured. ii) slight injuries iii) children killed/seriously injured  <u>Children</u> <u>Total</u> <u>Killed</u> <u>Slightly injured / Seriously injured</u>		di) 50 dii) 455  ei) 2 eii) 76	di) 38 dii) 480  ei) 2 eii) 77	di) 37 dii) 475	di) 25 dii) 450 diii)	di) 24 dii) 406 diii)

*Data from the National Assembly source are not available for child casualties broken down by mode other than pedestrian.*

6.6	Number of days of temporary traffic controls or road closure on traffic sensitive roads caused by Local Authority road works per km of traffic sensitive road.	All Wales average not available	15	2.28	1.52	0.88	0.57
6.8	Damage to roads and pavements. Total number of reported incidents of dangerous damage to roads and pavements repaired or made safe within 24 hours from the time that the Authority first became aware of the damage, as a percentage of such incidents.	All Wales average not available	96%	97%	98%	96%	98%
6.9	The percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people.	All Wales average not available	71%	73%	76%	77%	81%
6.10	The percentage of total length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use by members of the public.	All Wales average not available	64%	52%	55%	62%	65%

**Contact:** Philip Brelsford – 01824 706801  
[philip.brelsford@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:philip.brelsford@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **2.4 PLANNING**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 – 2003**

- Denbighshire was the first Authority in Wales to adopt its Unitary Development Plan despite staff turnover and reductions.
- All 11 national quality customer services indicators are now delivered. The quality of the Development Control service has also improved - delivering 9 out of the 10 Audit Commission quality indicators.
- A high percentage of applications are approved, reflecting a positive approach to negotiation.
- The track record on appeal costs is improving, with no payments made last year. There were no successful applications for costs against the Council in 2002/2003.
- The Building Regulations trading account will show a surplus in 2002/2003 and a balanced trading position over 3 years. Decisions on full plans and building notices are being delivered on time.
- The number of complaints against the service is low.
- Conservation is delivering results on the ground in Denbigh, Ruthin and elsewhere. In assessing Buildings at Risk, appraising Conservation Areas and setting up Townscape Heritage Initiatives in Denbigh and Rhyl, Denbighshire is amongst the leading authorities in Wales.
- The percentage of searches returned within 5 working days is improving but below target. Again, this is partly due to staff absence (maternity leave). The overall performance of the Council (measured in percentage of searches returned within 10 working days) is improving.
- The speed of handling planning applications has improved but is below target. This is disappointing, but reflects the fact that there have been several staff vacancies/absences during the year.

#### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 – 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Loss of fee income from building charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanctioned overtime</li> <li>• Allowed partnership working with adjoining Authority</li> <li>• Bid for extra building control officer rejected by Council</li> </ul>
Increased service costs and pressures	Invested in Oracle upgrade 97k in total – almost completed.

### Performance Monitoring

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
7.1	<p>Development Plans:</p> <p>a) Do you have an adopted UDP in place? If NO go to b &amp; c</p> <p>b) Do you have a deposit UDP in place?</p> <p>c) What percentage of your population is covered by local plans which were adopted in the last 5 years.</p>	All Wales average not available	Yes  -	No  Yes  0%	Yes  -	Yes  -	Yes
<i>The UDP was adopted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002.</i>							
7.3	The number of advertised departures from the adopted development plan <b>approved by the Authority</b> as a percentage of total permissions granted.	All Wales average not available	<4%	2.09%	<3%	0.85%	<2.5%
<i>There has been a decrease in the number of advertised departures approved by the Authority which is a reflection of an up to date Development Plan.</i>							
7.4	Percentage of total applications determined within 8 weeks.	All Wales average not available	70%	62.3%	75%	66.7%	75%
<i>There has been an improvement in the percentage of applications determined in 8 weeks. However, actual performance remains below target.</i>							
7.6	Quality in customer service (Planning Officers Society Wales checklist).	All Wales average not available	11/11	11/11	11/11	11/11	11
<i>There has been no change. The service meets all quality indicators.</i>							

**Contact:** Aneurin Phillips - 01824 708020  
[aneurin.phillips@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:aneurin.phillips@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 2.5 COMMUNITY SERVICES

#### Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003

##### **Area Renewal**

- The overall Supplementary Credit Approval (SCA) allocation was £1.6m over 2 years with the current spend projected for March 2002 being £1.35m and a further £0.25m committed to complete those schemes commenced and scheduled for completion in 2003/2004.
- The West Rhyl Renewal Area expired on 31 March 2002 and an exit strategy has been prepared and is in final draft form for public consultation. Work on the first phases of the South West/East Rhyl Renewal Area and Denbigh Renewal Area is now well under way.

##### **Home Energy Conservation Act**

- The Council has a statutory duty to report on improved energy efficiency and reduced carbon dioxide emissions in all homes within the County. Lack of staff resources contributes to the lack of proactive promotion of energy efficiency issues with only a 0.1 FTE Officer Time being available. At the half way period of 5 years the actual percentage of known improvements is 4.11% across all tenures. It is clear that the target of 30% improvement over 10 years will not be achieved.

##### **Renovation Grants**

- 224 individual Housing Improvement Grants to an overall value of £2,230,000 were given which committed the full capital budget allocation. Problems were encountered this year when £600,000 was removed from this budget. This has had a knock on effect on Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and consequently the performance target for this service will not be achieved.

##### **Housing Enforcement**

- Continued action to improve the standard of private sector rented housing stock has resulted in 5 successful prosecutions and one out of court settlement.
- A total of 40 properties have now been registered under the East Rhyl Phase1 Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) Registration Scheme. Final approval of Phase 2 of the Scheme is pending, but it will not be possible to progress this Scheme until sufficient resources can be identified.

##### **Cemeteries**

- A number of cemeteries within the County are near capacity and Members need, as a matter of urgency, to decide on policies for the future burial of Denbighshire residents. In particular, consideration must be given to the problems emanating in the Rhyl area where there is little or no ground suitable for the purpose of a cemetery owing to the high water table.

##### **Refuse Disposal**

- Rising tonnages are placing an additional pressure on the overall Community Services budget and are resulting in cutbacks in other areas to fund these unavoidable additional costs. It is the Welsh Assembly's desire to see waste tonnage reducing over the coming years.
- Landfill Tax is also increasing and will again impact on the budget as the Council has allocated inadequate funds for such an increase. Also the Chancellor has announced proposals to accelerate this year on year increase to £3 per annum in the near future.

### **Recycling and Composting**

- The Welsh Assembly has set all local authorities recycling/composting targets of 15% by 2003/2004 rising to 40% by 2009/2010.
- Over the last two years a Green Waste Composting Initiative has been introduced at four of the six Civic Amenity Sites. Despite delays in receiving performance incentive grant monies which had been planned to commence the scheme, it is now running well.
- The District Audit report on waste management within the Council made the point that the Council is at risk of failing to meet national targets and current arrangements will not support achievement of national objectives. The need to establish staff structures and action plans to achieve statutory targets, as well as a framework for the delivery of wider aspects of the Waste Management Strategy for Wales was emphasised.
- Consultants were appointed to assist in the preparation and documentation for a stand alone minimisation/waste reduction contract which will be effective from August 2003. The contract also includes for the County's six Civic Amenity Sites which will offer further recycling/waste minimisation opportunities to the successful tenderer.

### **Civic Amenity Sites**

- The tonnages of waste passing through Civic Amenity Sites is increasing, but is not within the remit of the Council to control. This led to a considerable increase in haulage as well as disposal costs. Double manning, introduced to the four northern sites as part of the Waste and Composting Initiative has allowed more time for interaction with users and this, together with further separation of recyclables at the Civic Amenity Sites, has enabled an improvement in the reduction of the amount of waste to landfill from these sites.
- The new Civic Amenity Site contract commencing in August 2003 will be target driven to ensure that waste diversion targets continue to increase over the contract period in line with the Welsh Assembly Government's targets.

### **Play Area Provision and Maintenance**

- Considerable improvements have been made in the provision and maintenance of play areas within the County following the capital allocation released during 2002/2003. Further progress is to be made over the following year arising from an additional capital allocation which will be dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of these and other play areas.
- A significant achievement has been the opening of a skate park in Prestatyn which has been jointly funded by Denbighshire County Council and Prestatyn Town Council.

### **Public Conveniences**

- Complaints continue to be received from the general public and visitors to the County about the maintenance standards and cleanliness of public conveniences. Following a capital programme of improvement at Corwen, Llangollen and St Asaph, together with improved mobile cleaning facilities which are now far more responsive than before, the incidents of complaints have dropped.
- Internal Audit carried out a recent review of procedures and operations and came to the opinion that a complete review of the Service should be conducted to establish whether the current service is cost effective, bearing in mind the current levels of overtime, the cost of out of hours maintenance and call outs and the general state of repair of the public conveniences. The report recommended that consideration be given to transferring the maintenance work to either Contract Services, Property Maintenance or an outside contractor depending on the cost. This would enable the Technical Officer to concentrate more on regular income collection, supervision of the cleaners and the performance of the deep clean to a planned timetable. Work is now ongoing with the action plan.

- During external consultations carried out for the Whole Authority Analysis the public conveniences service was regularly criticised for lack of cleanliness, unrepaired damage and charges made for the service.

### **Food Safety**

- Poor food hygiene standards found in a significant number of premises have needed resolute enforcement action by officers within the Section to obtain improvement in facilities and practices. This has resulted in two major successful prosecutions being undertaken in addition to numerous emergency closure orders being served on premises considered an imminent risk to food safety.
- The Section was subject to an audit in November by the Food Standards Agency. A draft report has been received and officers are currently developing responses to the points raised during the audit. The high level of commitment from the team to their task was one issue identified by the auditors in their summary. Poor IT was commented upon by the auditors as being a significant factor. It was also applauded that Denbighshire, being a small Authority, had been prepared to institute legal proceedings when necessary unlike some larger authorities.

### **Pollution**

- The Contaminated Land Strategy, a new statutory function, was adopted by Cabinet in October 2002. Although the strategy is in place the Department will not be able to implement it due to lack of resources.

### **Pest Control and Dog Warden**

- The restructuring of the service has resulted in significant improvements in service delivery and response times. Response times to complaints and requests for service have been reduced to less than 24 hours in all cases except where a longer time is requested by the complainant.
- Known problem areas for dog fouling have been targeted and signs have been provided or improved where necessary. Dog owners are being educated and provided with bags and advisory leaflets in those areas. Verbal warnings have been issued to a number of owners and persistent offenders will now be issued with fixed penalty notices.

### **Licensing**

- In conjunction with the Police, a review of the Public Entertainment Conditions is underway and it is hoped that this will, together with increased enforcement, result in reductions in crime and disorder.
- The Licensing Bill which is scheduled to come into operation in April 2004 will shift the responsibility for Liquor Licensing from the Magistrates' Court to the Council. The implications of this will be significant and require considerable revenue investment to cope with the proposed statutory duty. Training will need to be undertaken by members and officers. Strategies, policies, staffing levels and resources will need to be in place well before April 2004.

### **Other Reports**

A recent Audit Commission School Survey Analysis found that the Council scored below average in satisfaction with schools grounds maintenance. This was in the lower quartile of performance (this service is currently subject to a Best Value Review).

Internal Audit reports recently issued include a review of Environmental Services, Scientific Services, Refuse Collection and Renovation Grants. No serious weaknesses were reported and the annual review of Renovation Grants always receives a positive audit report.

### **Key Actions for Improvement 2003-2004**

<b>Areas for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Performance Management	None.
Animal Movement Licensing	Identify as a budget pressure for 2004/2005.
Home Energy Conservation Act	Service Plan 2003/4 – Review the County's implementation of the Home Energy Conservation Act by September 2003.
Cemeteries	Service Plan 2003/4 – Review the Council's policy on cemetery provision by September 2003.
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recycling Officer is being appointed by 1 May 2003.</li> <li>• Trade Waste Management Officer is being appointed by 1 April 2003.</li> <li>• Waste Management Strategy to be produced by November 2003.</li> <li>• Ensure Council contracted services are performing to acceptable standards.</li> <li>• Review Waste Disposal contracts.</li> <li>• Currently tendering a combined recycling contract which will achieve the NAfW recycling/composting targets over the coming six years. To commence in August 2003.</li> </ul>
Inspections Of High-Risk Food Premises	Service Plan 2003/4 – Implement FSA Audit recommendations on Food Safety Enforcement Plan by September 2003 and obtain adequate resources to increase Food Safety Section staffing.
Public Conveniences	Service Plan 2003/4 – Implement Internal Audit Report recommendations.
Contaminated Land	Service Plan 2004/5 – Obtain adequate staffing resources to implement Contaminated Land regime.
Licensing Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplementary bid for contingency funding 2003/2004</li> <li>Service Plan 2003/4 – Restructure Licensing Section and develop plan to undertake new duties and responsibilities of Liquor Licensing</li> </ul>
Schools Grounds Maintenance	Service Plan 2003/4 – Implement recommendations following the Best Value Service Review for Ground Maintenance.
Animal By Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers attending training programme</li> <li>• Meeting to discuss impact on Departments</li> </ul>
Area Renewal	Service Plan 2003/4 – Obtain adequate resources to ensure Area Renewal work can continue.
Renovation Grants	Service Plan 2004/5 – Obtain adequate resources to ensure Renovation Grants work can continue.
Housing Enforcement	Service Plan 2004/5 – Obtain adequate resources to introduce registration scheme for HMOs.

### Performance Monitoring

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
4.1	The proportion of private sector dwellings where direct action by the Local Authority has resulted in: a) unfit dwellings being made fit or demolished b) return to occupation during 2002/2003, where they have been vacant for more than 6 months at 1 April.	All Wales average not available	a) 11.04%  b) None set	a) 9.22%  b) 0.114%	a) 7.79%  b) 0.114%	a) 5.17%  b) 0.56%	a) 5.17%  b) 0.56%
5.1	Total tonnage of Municipal waste arisings – a) i) percentage recycled or reused ii) percentage of incinerator residues, beach cleansing wastes, rubble and abandoned vehicles recycled b) percentage composted c) percentage used to recover heat, power and other energy sources d) percentage land-filled	All Wales average not available	a) 5.6%  b) 2.5%  c) 0%  d) 91.9%	a) 3.77%  b) 0.35%  c) 0%  d) 93.53%	a) 5.0%  b) 5.0%  c) 0%  d) 88%	ai) 4.7%  aii) 67.5%  b) 4.4%  c) 0%  d) 87.5%	ai) 7.5%  aii) 70%  b) 7.5%  c) 0%  d) 82%
<i>Definition change for 02/03 to include waste reused and percentage of incinerator residues, beach cleansing wastes, rubble and abandoned vehicles recycled.</i>							
5.5	The percentage of highways and relevant land inspected of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness.	All Wales average not available	98%	96.1%	97%	94.4%	95%
5.6	Number of collections missed per 100,000 collections of household waste	All Wales average not available	99	81	78	510.9	95
5.7	Percentage of population served by a kerb-side collection of recyclables.	All Wales average not available	0%	0%	0%	0%	44%
<i>Denbighshire will be introducing kerbside collections of re-cyclables for 03/04 as a new contract has been agreed which will include an element of this type of collection.</i>							

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
8.1	The percentage of food premises inspections that should have been carried out that were carried out for:  a) High-risk premises.  b) Other premises.	All Wales average not available		a) 100%  b) 100%	a) 49%  b) 100%	a) 100%  b) 100%	a) 41.2%  b) 100%
8.2 BV166	Score against the checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health/trading standards.	All Wales average not available	9	8.3	9	8.5	9
9.4	Playgrounds:  a) The number of playgrounds and play areas provided by the council, per 1,000 children under 12.  b) The percentage of these which:  (i) Conform to national standards for local unequipped play areas.  (ii) Conform to national standards for local equipped play areas.  (iii) Conform to national standards for larger, neighbourhood equipped play areas.	All Wales average not available	a) 2.64	a) 4  (i) 1.6%  (ii) no target set  (iii) no target set	a) 4  (i) 2%  (ii) 4%  (iii) 2%	a) 4  (i) 0%  (ii) 6%  (iii) 4%	a) 4  (i) 0%  (ii) 11%  (iii) 13%  (iii) 14%

Contact: Ken Ewing - 01824 706929  
[ken.ewing@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ken.ewing@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **2.6 SUPPORT SERVICES**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

- The majority of performance indicators are being achieved and performance has improved since 2001/2.
- The number of vacant posts filled within 25 (internal) or 55 (external) working days shows poor performance, caused by the need to re-advertise posts and a corporate moratorium. The target is unlikely to be achieved in the remaining period.
- Suspense accounts are not currently being cleared within 10 working days of the period end due to procedural difficulties in the second quarter that caused a reduction in performance which is unlikely to be reversed in the final annual percentage.

#### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Insufficient Performance Management information	Service Plan 2003/4 – Refine local performance indicators in consultation with Performance Management Unit and produce a satisfaction survey and needs analysis questionnaire for internal and external customers.

#### **Performance Monitoring**

##### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
LI/SS/P/01	Number of training and development days per member of staff per annum	SO/SS/P/01	C4.1	5.4			LI/SS/P/01
LI/SS/F/05	Production of financial information with 5 working days of period end	SO/SS/F/02	C1.1, C1.2	-			LI/SS/F/05
LI/SS/F/06	Completion of grant claims within deadlines	SO/SS/F/02	C1.1, C1.3				LI/SS/F/06

**Contact:** Mike Hitchings - 01824 706980  
[mike.hitchings@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:mike.hitchings@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **3.0 PERSONAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE**

#### **3.1 SOCIAL SERVICES**

##### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

The following section provides an overview of the progress Denbighshire Social Services has made against key actions set in the Improvement Plan for 2002/2003:

1. *To ensure continuous improvement in quality and particularly assessment processes.*

Progress includes:

- innovative use of Carers Services to meet the assessed needs of carers providing regular and substantial care
- improved service user choice e.g. with the availability of the Hospital Discharge Scheme and Direct Payments
- a greater partnership approach to assessment, e.g. the CBAS and MAP services
- additional services for vulnerable people via Transitional Housing Benefit and the development of the Supporting People programme
- the provision of training for all Children's Social Workers on the Assessment Framework for Children in Need
- reduction in the number and cost of out of county placements for looked after children

2. To ensure the service recruits and retains sufficient skilled staff and deploys staff effectively.

The Department has developed a comprehensive Workforce Strategy. The new post of Senior Manager, Business Support has responsibility for taking this strategy forward. The Department's Improvement Priorities include some of the key actions in the Workforce strategy.

3. To closely monitor and analyse spend and take corrective actions where necessary and maximise income.

The Department has:

- analysed spend and identified that, due to the abolition of Preserved Rights and the Residential Care Allowance, National Assembly Grants are insufficient to meet statutory duties. Representations have been made to the Assembly
- made strategic use of grants such as Delayed Transfer of Care, Carers Grant and Flexibilities, Children First, and Sure Start
- reduced the infrastructure of the in-house home care service to better reflect the size of the service, thus reducing unit cost
- achieved a substantial reduction in the number and cost of out of county placements for looked after children

4. To implement Operational Plans for each part of the service.

Each team produced an Operational Plan in 2002/03. Clear guidance has been issued to teams for Operational Plans for 2003/04 which mirror guidance for the production of Service Plans. Operational Plans show clear links with departmental objectives and corporate priorities.

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

5. To further implement the performance management arrangements and to resource key functions which need more attention in a modern social services department, e.g., workforce strategy, customer care strategy, e government and communications.

During Autumn 2002/03, parts of the Department were restructured specifically to address this action plan and the need to strengthen senior management arrangements for Children's Services. An evaluation of the new structure will take place during 2003/04.

### **National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators (NAWPIs)**

Social Services have performed well in relation to a number of National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators (NAWPIs). Successes include:

- the number delayed discharges remains very low (2.09% - PI 3.8)
- the number of adults with a care plan drawn up in line with Departmental policy is high (97% - PI 3.9)
- the timeliness of reviews of children on the child protection register has improved (80% reviewed on time - PI 3.12)

However, Social Services have performed less well in relation to other NAWPIs:

- finding suitable placements for children and young people has been problematic and the number of children having 3 or more moves during the year is high. In 2003/2004 we will be focusing on improving recruitment and retention of foster carers (PI 3.1)
- ensuring that children had care plans in line with National Assembly definitions (PI's 3.3 & 3.4). Progress in improving performance in this area will be a priority in 2003/2004

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

- the need to respond to the recommendations of the Joint Review inspection of Denbighshire Social Services in 2003
- a need to pay more attention to Contracts brokering, monitoring and development
- recruitment and retention problems, including for Welsh speaking staff, and actions to deal with these are included in the Workforce Strategy
- the numbers of staff available to undertake Emergency Duty needs enhancing
- the numbers of service users awaiting assessment by an Occupational Therapist remains high (approximately 500)
- there are some inconsistencies in the structure of services across the County and some structures need revising.

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Focus on customers and strive to meet their needs in particular for effective basic services.	To be included
Maximise resources for social care and use them wisely.	To be included
Invest in our staff and in staff across the social care sector	To be included
Plan for the future and for continuing change	To be included

### Performance Monitoring

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
3.1	Stability of placements of children looked after by the Authority by reference to the percentage of children looked after on 31 March in any year with three or more placements during the year.	7.60%	<10%	7.69%	<12%	20.16%	<10%
<p>Last year's Improvement Plan identified that 2003/04 would present challenges in relation to this PI. Unfortunately there is a shortage of foster carers in Denbighshire which limits placement choice. This is particularly problematic when there is a need to identify a suitable placement for children and young people with complex needs. The situation has been further compounded by: a high demand, and consequently delays, in accessing therapeutic services for children and young people (provided by health); and a shortage of staff (social services) which has reduced the department's ability to support foster carers. In 2003/04 focus will be on improving recruitment and retention issues in relation to foster carers and social care staff.</p>							
3.2	Educational qualifications of children looked after by the Authority by reference to the percentage of young people leaving care aged 16 or over with the following numbers of GCSE's at Grade A* to G, or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ)			33.43% Not set 85.71%	a) 75% b) 50%	a) Final data by 9/5/03 b) Final data by 9/5/03	a) 75% b) 50%
<p>The 01/02 definition stated "at least one" qualification. The target for 02/03 was based on the 01/02 definition. A target of 50% was published in the Improvement Plan, but this has been raised to the National target of 75% for a) (one) and a target of 50% has been set for b) (two or more). Currently liaising with Education to finalise figures for 2003/04. It is anticipated that performance for 2002/03 will not be at the level achieved in 2001/02 as this was an exceptional year.</p>							
3.3	The percentage of young people in care on their 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday who have a care plan and/or pathway plan for their continuing care.	89.16%	100%	28.57%	100%	23.33% Final data by 9/5/03	100%
<p>Further work is needed to validate performance data for 2002/03. Whilst further checks may slightly improve the data above, it is the case that performance is significantly under target. Proposals are being drawn up to strengthen leaving care services and performance against this PI will be a key area for improvement in 2003/04.</p>							
3.4	The percentage of first placements (for looked after children) beginning with a care	64.47%	95%	10.77%	95%	44% Final data	90%

## Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	plan in place.					by 9/5/03	
<i>Further work is needed to validate this information. Performance may be over reflected in the figure above. The definition for a care plan for this performance indicator (and 3.3 above) is very specific and does not include detailed care plans that staff frequently prepare for the courts. To help improve performance in 2003/04 the department's Childcare Procedure Manual has been revised to include revised systems which will help to ensure that care plans are in place. Again this performance indicator will be a key indicator for improvement in 2003/04.</i>							
3.5	Costs of services for children looked after by an Authority by reference to gross weekly expenditure per looked after child in foster care or in a children's home.	£369.31	£400.00	£409.99	£415.00	£496.93	£415  Final target by 9/5/03
<i>A figure of £396.80 was published in the last Improvement Plan, however a more accurate figure for 01/02 was obtained after close down of accounts. Similarly this may apply to the data for 2002/03 which is based on estimates. Knowledge from operational services suggests that the denominator figure may be higher than shown, thus reducing the cost. Further checks will be made.</i>							
3.6	Cost of providing social services to adults by reference to gross cost per week for:  a) residential and nursing home care.  b) home care.	£202.90	Not set	£164.13	£165.00	a) £268  b) £117	a) £154  b) Final target by 9/5/03
<i>A figure of £156.77 was published in the last Improvement Plan, however a more accurate figure for 01/02 was obtained after close down of accounts. Similarly this may apply to the data for 2002/03 which is based on estimates. The 01/02 definition asked for a combined costs of residential and nursing home care and home care for adults – these elements have been separated for 02/03. The combined figure for 2002/03 is £192 which exceeds the target set (£165), though this is still better than the Welsh average of £202.90 (the lower the figure the better for this PI). The abolition of Residential Care Allowance and the transfer of Preserved Rights has increased the number of people supported to live in Care Homes in 2002/03 (PI 3.13 relates). The cost of Care Home placements is far greater than homecare (see data above) which increases the overall combined cost. Future liaisons will take place with Elected Members to consider increasing the target set out above to a more realistic level.</i>							
3.7	The rate of older people (aged 65 or over) helped to live at home per 100,000 population aged 65 or over.	99.20	99	80.81	98	125.93  Final data by 9/5/03	98
<i>Further analysis of performance against this indicator is required as there was an exceptionally high increase during the last quarter of the year (this may be explained as the winter period traditionally results in higher level of referrals – particularly to hospital and for disability equipment – and an increase in the take up of the 6 weeks free home care scheme).</i>							
3.8	The rate of delayed transfer of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over.	21.50	2.53	1.89	2.53	2.09	2.53
<i>The department's performance has been excellent in relation to this indicator. However, the number of delayed discharges are likely to increase in the coming year due to reduced capacity in the care sector. The target for 2003/04 has, therefore, been maintained in line with 2002/03. This target still reflects a considerably higher than average performance.</i>							
3.9	The percentage of adult clients receiving a written statement of their needs and how they will be met.	86.97%	85%	87.2%	95%	97%  Final data by 9/5/03	95%
<i>The data for 2002/03 reflects the number of people who have a care plan on their file in line with departmental policy. Under this policy there is a requirement that the care plan is signed by the client/or their carer and that they are offered a copy.</i>							

## Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
3.10	The rate of assessments of people aged 65 and over per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.	135.56	250	187.25	205	175.43 Final data by 9/5/03	205
<p><i>Published 2001/02 figures show that Denbighshire has the highest rate of assessments in Wales. It is believed there may be some double counting. The definition is based on an envelope assessment which may include Occupational Therapy and other specialist assessments. Further data analysis is needed.</i></p>							
3.11	The number of nights of respite care provided or funded by the Authority per 1,000 population aged 18 or over.	94.94	106	132.6	145	83.80 Final data by 9/5/03	100 Final target by 9/5/03
<p><i>Whilst the number of nights respite has reduced from last year's performance it is the case that increasing use has been made of the Carer's special grant to provide respite during the day, evening and at the weekends. There has also been a reduction in residential homes in the number of beds available for respite care. The target that was set for 2002/03 was 145 which is in excess of the All Wales average of 95. For 2003/04 the target has been set at the Welsh average of 95. Further refinement is needed of the data for 2002/03 which is expected to increase the figure currently shown.</i></p>							
3.12	The percentage of children on the child protection register whose cases should have been reviewed that were reviewed.	64.20%	100%	71.70%	100%	80%	100%
<p><i>Whilst the target has not been met performance has improved and exceeds the Welsh average in 2001/02. There has been a dedicated Child Protection Co-coordinator post since September 2002 which has played, and will continue to play, a significant role in improving performance.</i></p>							
3.13	The number of people aged 65 or over whom the Authority supports in residential care homes or nursing homes per 1,000 population aged 65 or over.	New indicator for 2002/03 28.49	New indicator for 2002/03 22	New indicator for 2002/03 24.44	New indicator for 2002/03 22	33.57	22
<p><i>In 2001/02 the Authority entered into a policy agreement with the National Assembly for Wales with a target to reduce performance to a rate of 22. The actual performance for 2001/02 was 24.44. The abolition of Residential Care Allowance and the transfer of Preserved Rights has meant performance in 2002/03 was at a rate of 33.57. It is unlikely that the target of 22 will be reached in the foreseeable future and this has been raised with the Assembly who have expressed that if the target is unachievable they would still wish to see performance moving towards this. The policy agreement now forms a NAWPI.</i></p>							
3.14	The number of adults aged under 65 whom the Authority helps to live at home per 1,000 adults aged under 65, in each of the following client groups separately:	New indicator for 2002/03 a) 4.28 b) 3.16 c) 2.73	New indicator for 2002/03 a) 3.46 b) 4 c) 5.25	New indicator for 2002/03 a) 6.58 b) 0.86 c) 0.15	New indicator for 2002/03 a) 3.46 b) 4 c) 5.25	a) 10.07 b) 4 c) 6.98	a) 3.46 b) 4 c) 5.25
<p><i>As with 3.13 this indicator formed a policy agreement with the National Assembly for Wales in 2001/02. The increased figures relate to improved data collection. This data needs some further validation but it appears to be reliable and to provide evidence of strong performance.</i></p>							

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
3.15	The percentage of cases of children with an allocated social worker who is providing a service appropriate to the child's need, in each of the following groups separately:	New indicator for 2002/03					
	a) children on the child protection register.	a) 99.62%	a) 100%	a) 100%	a) 100%	a) 99%	a) 100%
	b) children looked after (exclude those children in group 'a' above).	b) 99.61%	b) 100%	b) 100%	b) 100%	b) 100%	b) 100%
	c) children in need (exclude those children in group 'a' and 'b' above).	c) 83.54%	c) 100%	c) 100%	c) 100%	c) Final data by 9/5/03	c) 100%

This PI formed a policy agreement with the Assembly in 2001/02. Further information needs to be gathered to validate the 100% performance for Children Looked After as this may over reflect performance. Data is currently being gathered for Children in Need but it is anticipated that this will not reach the target of 100%. A stepped approach to reaching the 100% target for children in need is planned with a target of achieving the Welsh average of 85% in 2003/04 subsequently increasingly to meet the 100% as set in the policy agreement.

Contact: Sally Ellis - 01824 706078/6149  
[sally.ellis@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:sally.ellis@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **3.2 HOUSING SERVICES**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 – 2003**

The Housing Rents service is showing significant improvement both in terms of service delivery (from the Best Value review) and performance. The level of debt has reduced and the overall management of the service since the move to the Housing Department has led to excellent results. The service should be commended for its excellent progress, but will need to ensure that there is an ongoing review of costs.

Carrying out of housing repairs is an area in need of improvement, although there is some doubt expressed over the accuracy of the data. Performance has improved during 2002/3, but not all targets are being met. The system needs to be reviewed to ensure that the data is accurate before deciding on any further action that may be required to improve the overall system.

The major issues in 2002/03 were:

- Progress on the investigation of Housing Options developing the option of Stock Transfer to a new Community Ownership Housing Organisation
- Investigation of the alternative option of Prudential Borrowing
- Continuing improvement of the Housing Rents Service and a further Inspection by the Audit Commission
- Development of a new Rent Setting Policy with target rents based on "Benchmark Rents" as set by the Welsh Assembly Government. An interim report was agreed by the February Cabinet which removes many of the current anomalies and this will be implemented from the 6 April.
- Introduction of the Tenants Compact and expansion of Tenant Participation
- Development of the new style Local Housing Strategies in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government Guidance which is being progressed
- Revision of procedures on Homelessness to incorporate the Homelessness Act 2001 and the development of Homelessness and Single Persons Homelessness Strategies

#### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Housing stock transfer progress delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce and implement a Housing Stock Business Plan and submit to the Assembly Government by April 2003.</li> <li>• Evaluate and appraise stock options for Council housing by July 2003.</li> </ul>
Slow re-letting of Council Houses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Plan 2003/4 –</li> <li>• Improvement in performance re-let property times and completion times for responsive repairs.</li> <li>• 3% budget increase agreed.</li> </ul>
Uncertainty over housing repairs statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Plan 2003/4 –</li> <li>• Review of housing repairs performance data.</li> <li>• Review of housing repairs data by October 2003.</li> <li>• 3% budget increase agreed for 2003/04.</li> </ul>
Inability to meet requirements of Homelessness Act January 2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Strategy</li> <li>• Additional hostel places and temporary</li> </ul>

Area for Improvement	Improvement Actions
	accommodation.
Implementation of supporting people – sheltered service Insufficient performance management information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation with Social Services in line with Supporting People Operational Plan.</li> </ul> <p>Service Plan 2003/4 – Review of Local PIs and customer standards for new financial year.</p>

### Performance Monitoring

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
4.2	Energy efficiency – the average SAP rating of Local Authority owned dwellings.	All Wales average not available	45	52*	52	52*	52
4.4	The average weekly costs per Local Authority dwelling of management.	All Wales average not available	£8.44	£8.33	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03

\* Figures – 2001/2002 energy survey.

4.5	Local Authority rent collection and arrears: a) proportion of rent collected. b) rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the Authority's rent roll. c) rent written off as not collectable as a proportion of the Authority's rent roll.	All Wales average not available	a) 91.5%  b) 9.3%  c) 0.3%	a) 92.5%  b) 8.2%  c) 0.3%	a) 94.7%  b) 6.8%  c) 1.5%		
4.5 (NEW)	Local Authority rent collection and arrears: a) rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the Authority's rent roll. b) rent arrears of former tenants as a proportion of the Authority's rent roll. c) rent arrears of current and former	All Wales average not available			a) 6.8%  b) 1.5%  c) 1.5%	a) 4.9%  b) 1.5%  c) 2.4%	a) 5%  b) 2.5%  c) 1.5%

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	tenants written off as not collectable as a proportion of the Authority's rent roll.						
NAWPI 4.5 – 2001/2002 definitions used for target figures 2002/2003. 2003/2004 using current year definition – new targets set.							
4.6	Proportion of homelessness applications on which the Authority makes a decision and issues written notification to the applicant within 33 working days.	All Wales average not available	100%	87%	93%	99.3%	93%
4.7	Average relet times for local Authority dwellings let during the financial year.	All Wales average not available	35 calendar days	47 calendar days	46 calendar days	52 calendar days	46 calendar days
4.8	Effectiveness of the Social Housing System:  a) proportion of properties vacant (voids)  b) the average number of homeless households in temporary accommodation during the year, in bed and breakfast accommodation.	All Wales average not available	New Indicator for 2001/02	a) 1.12  b) 5	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03
4.9	The number of local Authority dwellings needing major repair or improvement works at 1 April 2001 and the proportion of these dwellings receiving such works during 2001/02.  (i) under 5k  (ii) over 5k	Awaiting figures from the LGDU		(i) 1063 4.5%  (ii) 2216 2.3%	(i) 1063 3.95%  (ii) 2192 2.42%	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03
4.10	Percentage of repairs completed within target time:  a) classed as emergency  b) classed as urgent	All Wales average not available	a) 100%  b) 90%	a) 73.6%  b) 74%	a) 100%  b) 90%	a) 91.47%  b) 84%	a) 95%  b) 90%

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
A figure for 4.10a of 86.09% was published in the last Improvement Plan, however due to audit a more accurate figure of 73.6% was found.							
4.11	The average time taken to complete non-urgent responsive repairs.	All Wales average not available	50 days	62.28 days	50 days	54 days	50 days
4.12	Does the Authority follow the Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing?	All Wales average not available	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.13	Tenants' participation  a) Are there landlord wide Tenant Participation Compacts (TPCs)?  b) When was the most recent review of a landlord-wide TPC in partnership with Tenants?  c) What proportion of your tenants are covered by local or group-specific TPCs?	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	a) Yes  b) March 2003  c) 0%	a) Yes  b) Quarterly basis  c) 5%
4.14	Effectiveness of co-coordinated approach for dealing with homelessness and social housing: The number of homeless households placed by local authorities in temporary housing for more than six months.	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	1	Nil
4.15	Average rent lost per tenant through dwellings being left vacant during the financial year.	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	£34.17	£30.25

Contact: Paul Quirk - 01824 708461  
[paul.quirk@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.quirk@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 4.0 RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

The Resources Directorate consists of the following services; Finance, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Internal Audit, Corporate Property and Personnel. The main role of the Directorate is to ensure that resources allocated to support the Corporate Objectives and priorities of the Council are used in a manner consistent with its policy and statutory framework and are aimed at continually improving the services to the community.

#### 4.1 FINANCE

The Finance function is divided into four sections for day-to-day operational management. In particular the department previously known as Revenues (primarily based in Rhyl) has been divided into two separate functions - Benefits Department and Local Taxation Department, allowing greater focus and attention. In general there are few statutory performance indicators in place in relation to the provision of financial services, and as a result local performance indicators are being developed in line with guidance provided by CIPFA, the major accounting body in relation to Local Government.

##### 4.1.1 Management Accounting and Corporate Property

###### Performance Assessment 2002 – 2003

It has proved difficult to carry out a full assessment of performance as the Section has only recently been established and is still developing its performance indicators. The implementation of the recommendations of this report will enable performance to be effectively managed in future years. However, considerable progress has been achieved in implementing many of the key priorities during 2002/3.

The Unit has been successful in consolidating its position following the process of restructure that took place during the previous financial year. Although the established structure of seven posts was fully staffed at the commencement of the year, there have been periods during the year when staff resources have been restricted, thereby influencing productivity levels.

Key Tasks which have been undertaken during the year which are fundamental improvements in the level of service provide consist of the following:

- The Council's fixed assets were re-valued for the 2001/02 final accounts, this work being required to remove qualification of the accounts by the District Auditor.
- The 2001/02 accounts were approved by Council in September 2002, within the statutory deadline.
- The format of accounts was revised to improve clarity and understanding, and this was recognised by the District Auditor and Council.
- The Financial Recovery Plan was delivered, due in part to the financial reporting and monitoring undertaken by the Unit.
- All outstanding ERDF capital grant claims relating to the former Rhuddlan Borough Council were finalised, assisting in removing the District Auditor's qualification of the accounts and the risk of further substantial grant claw back by the European Commission.
- The District Auditor provided an unqualified audit certificate for the 2001/02 accounts - first time in Denbighshire's history.
- Cabinet has been provided with monthly Budget reports on the Revenue budget position during 2002/03, thus enabling decisions to be made at an early stage which would influence

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

the ability of the Council to maintain its requirement to work towards delivery of its corporate objective to build up balances by the year end.

- ERDF Objective 5(b) grant claims were completed within the timetable set out by WEFO and all outstanding queries resolved, thus preventing potential claw back of the £1.5m grant income received.
- The Community Projects Capital Grants scheme was developed with a number of schemes being approved.
- Production of a Corporate Asset Management Plan
- Establishment of the Asset Management Group & Asset Management Committee together with supporting administrative mechanisms
- Production of Service Asset Management Plans

Although there have been achievements in the key priorities of the Unit, there remain areas where service improvements are required.

- Of particular concern is the ability to address long standing accounting issues which have been raised by the District Auditor following the audit of the final accounts. Some of the points raised have been of concern to the District Auditor for a number of years.
- Another area of concern is that consultation is required with budget holders to determine whether the standard of management accountancy support provided by the Unit is of a sufficiently high standard to enable Managers to monitor and control spending.
- Only 5% of the Council's buildings that are open to the public are suitable and accessible to disabled people.

### ***Internal Audit Report on Asset Management***

A number of weaknesses were identified, most of which have now been addressed to improve the service.

### ***District Audit Statement of Accounts 2000/1***

The District Auditor qualified the 2000/01 accounts because the Council had failed to undertake a revaluation of its fixed assets. This key task has been completed following the establishment of the Management Accounting Unit. A number of other District Audit recommendations do, however, remain to be addressed.

### ***Performance Summary***

It has proved difficult to carry out a full assessment of performance as the Section has only recently been established and is still developing its performance indicators. The implementation of the recommendations of this report will enable performance to be effectively managed in future years. However, considerable progress has been achieved in implementing many of the key priorities during 2002/3.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Poor accessibility of Council buildings to disabled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £700k approx in capital plan 2003/4 &amp; approx £300k 2004/5 to carry out improvements.</li> <li>• Vacant post now filled.</li> </ul>
Non-implementation of District Audit recommendations	Review contents of District Auditor's Management letter and ensure action points are communicated and complied with to remove risk of qualified audit

Area for Improvement	Improvement Actions
	opinion.
Incomplete performance management information	Service Plan 2003/4 – Continue to develop Performance Indicators with assistance of CIPFA Benchmarking Club and Technical Practitioners' Groups. Submit CLAW PI returns and analyse benchmarking results.

### **Performance Monitoring**

#### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
LI/RS/MA1	Budget monitoring reports submitted to Cabinet in month following end of accounting period.	SO/RS/MA1	C1.1	100%			
LI/RS/MA3	Production of Year End statement of accounts to Council by statutory deadline of 30 September.	SO/RS/MA3	C1.2	100%			

Note 1: Records retained in Management Accounting unit since August 2001 - 8 months monitoring, performance over this time period was 100%.

Note 2: Statement of Accounts presented to Cabinet 25 September 2001.

**Contact:** Chris Taylor - 01824 706140  
[Chris.taylor@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.taylor@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **4.1.2 Exchequer Services And Financial Accounting**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

This Service continues to perform well and, where possible, performance is improving further. The Service compares well with other local authorities and has received favourable audit and Best Value reports.

##### **General**

- Performance targets are being achieved for all indicators that can be measured at this stage of the financial year and performance is improving where possible
- IIP re-accreditation achieved in July 2002
- Participation in all CIPFA/IPF Benchmarking Clubs
- Business continuity maintained through PFI move to decant village
- VAT Partial Exemption position monitored on a regular basis
- New Cash Office in Denbigh opened March 2003

##### **Creditor Payments**

- National performance indicator for prompt payment showed Denbighshire (92%) again in the top quartile for Wales for 2001/02. Performance in 2002/03 is at least matching previous years whilst volumes are significantly up.
- The modules developed to enable electronic receipt of invoices now account for 28%. There are significant paybacks in reducing the administration and costs of paper based systems.

Reminders have been eliminated and payments are now guaranteed to meet prompt payment targets.

- Purchasing Cards have been introduced for a limited number of staff to provide purchasing solutions to meet particular needs (foreign travel and accommodation, Internet purchasing of books, videos etc., and certain ICT purchases).

### ***Cashiering***

- Increase in credit and debit card processing at the Rhyl office and by telephone.
- Revised arrangements for the processing of bank credits have reduced the delay in applying credits to personal accounts significantly.
- Arrangements for the introduction of Internet payments using Switch or Delta Debit cards commenced in April 2001 and were extended to car parking fines

### ***Ledger Section***

Developments have centred round the software to improve the appearance and user-friendliness of the system. There have also been significant developments in reporting facilities.

### ***Technical Section***

- The areas covered are highly technical, with developments on a continual basis. In several of these areas, the section works in partnership with consultants who provide the specialist market knowledge and professional support that enables the section to maximize benefit to the Council.
- The benefits of splitting off the Technical work from the Management Accountancy functions have shown through in such areas as Treasury Management, Leasing, VAT and Bank Reconciliation, where there have been significant improvements.
- In order to raise the profile of Risk Management it was decided to create a separate section allowing the existing specialist qualified staff to concentrate on Risk Management and Insurances.

### ***Revenues Support Services***

- The software systems are now in their third year of operation and are running smoothly.
- The Support Services sections have made a significant contribution to the improvement of processes within Benefits, Local Taxation and Housing Rents. A great deal of effort has gone into the reconciliation of the various systems, externally to the Cash Receipting, Ledger and Bank Reconciliation systems and internally to other revenues systems.

### ***Best Value Report August 2002 – Payroll Service***

- The Payroll Service has recently received a Best Value desk top inspection that reported that long-term objectives are being met, user needs are met, operational targets are being achieved and the service compares well with other local authorities.
- The report recommended that the service needs to develop operational targets to be more explicit and measurable. This has since been implemented.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Untested Disaster Recovery Plan	Service Plan 2003/4 – Disaster Recovery Plans to be tested with Audit and ICT
Potential duplicate payments	No specific action, but Section will continue to scrutinize, raise queries on and follow up transactions which are dubious or potentially duplicated.

**Performance Monitoring**

**Corporate Governance Indicator NAWPI 1.6**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.6	<u>Exchequer</u> The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days.	All Wales average not available	97.5%	92%	100%	92%	100% Set nationally

**Contact:** Cemlyn Foulkes - 01824 706031  
[cemlyn.foulkes@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:cemlyn.foulkes@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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### 4.1.3 Benefits And Collections

#### Performance Assessment 2002 – 2003

The Service is showing significant evidence of improvement in its statutory indicators and has addressed issues identified in external reports to improve service delivery and internal controls. Performance in comparison to other local authorities is also expected to improve when benchmarking of 2002/3 performance takes place. Significant progress has also been made in key improvement priorities during 2002/3.

The Section is clearly benefiting from the restructuring and provision of additional resources. However, the statutory indicators do not include cost comparisons but these will be measured and compared to ensure that the Service continues to provide value for money.

- There has been a delay in producing the Customer Services Charter but it is in draft format at present and is at the consultation stage.
- All fully completed benefit forms are processed within 14 days of receipt. However, the numbers of fully completed forms is very low and the service is looking at ways of improving the quality of information submitted with the forms.
- Two modules of the Verification Framework have been implemented. This was achieved on time and within budget. Consideration has been given to implementing the third module but the budget granted and experience of other local authorities means that it is not a cost effective or efficient way of preventing and detecting fraud.
- Three of the Performance Standards have been self-assessed with the remaining four being done this year.
- Although a new benefit application form has been written with stakeholders and has been successful, the Section has not done as much work on the other notifications as anticipated. The more frequently used forms have been altered to provide more clarity but there are time delays with the bilingual documents produced.
- Performance Indicator performance to date is as follows:
  - The Fraud Strategy has been implemented as part of the Verification Framework
  - Speed of processing new and renewed claims and changes of circumstances is exceeding targets and has significantly improved due to the additional resources provided
  - The target for accuracy of claim calculation is being exceeded
  - The target for recovery of overpaid benefits is on target for achievement by the end of the financial year due to additional resources provided
  - Local indicator targets were not set at the commencement of the year as it was a new team, so it is not possible to comment on performance at this stage
- The Verification Framework was introduced on 30/09/2002. It was predicted that there would be an impact on performance in the third quarter of the financial year due to the immense changes for both customers and staff. Claims are taking longer to process as the staff have to write to customers for information they have not provided with their forms. Actions were taken to mitigate this identified risk, e.g. increased monitoring and communication with stakeholders.
- The Housing Benefit Help Team have visited the Section and staff have attended various sessions with them about performance and how systems can be improved.
- A project team has been set up in order to implement the forthcoming Tax and Pension Credit changes. The changes are radical and the Department for Work and Pensions has already provided additional funding to assist with them. The full impact is not yet known, although this issue is being effectively project managed.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Higher unit costs/poor performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2004/5 – investigate ways of inviting customers to claim to improve standard of completed forms – e.g. telephone customers instead of writing to them to speed up process.</li> <li>• Workshop held and actions implemented as a result.</li> <li>• Action on-going.</li> </ul>
Loss of income due to decrease in Fraud Subsidy resulting in increased costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will not meet previous targets, accepted by DWP and transitional funding received in 2002/3 to compensate for this.</li> <li>• Emphasis of work now changed to focus on sanctions and prosecutions as they generate income.</li> <li>• Reviewing staffing structure.</li> </ul>
Absence of Disaster Recovery Plan for Academy System	Funding now agreed by Risk Management Group for testing platform in 2003/4 and actions included in Exchequer Service Business Plan.
Non-implementation of Tax and Pension Credit changes to timescale	Service Plan 2003/4 – plan and implement new tax and pension credit changes.
Lack of cost performance measurement and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtained costs from other local authorities in Wales but not comparable.</li> <li>• Additional staffing for new legislative changes will not be required, existing staff will take on additional work which will bring our staffing levels in line with Conwy (a comparable Authority).</li> <li>• None in Service Plan, although Action Plan agreed with Internal Audit and will be followed by Internal Audit during 2003/4.</li> </ul>

### **Performance Monitoring**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.7	<u>Council Tax</u> The percentage of council tax collected.	All Wales average not available	92.64%	93.69%	95%	96.19%	96.5%
1.8	<u>NNDR</u> The percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year which were received by the Authority.	All Wales average not available	92.39%	88.82%	93.22%	96.14%	96.5%

*A figure of 90.24% was published in the last improvement plan – however more accurate figures were later made available due to close down of accounts.*

## Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004

**Note for the following Indicators (11.1-11.4b):** Targets are based on Corporate Target Setting Methodology. Comparative Data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) only currently available for Q1 and Q2 of year 2002/03. Therefore, the targets for 03/04 are based on this available comparative data, and will be reviewed when the DWP release comparative data for Q4.

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
11.1 / BV76	Security: Whether the Authority has a written and proactive strategy for combating fraud and error which embraces specified initiatives including those sponsored by the Department of Work and Pensions, which is communicated regularly to all staff.  - Yes/No	All Wales average not available	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
11.2	The average cost of handling a HB or CTB claim, taking into account differences in the types of claim received.	All Wales average not available	£48.29	£58.00	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03	Deleted indicator for 02/03
11.3a / BV78a	Speed of processing: a) Average time for processing new claims.	All Wales average not available	60 days	83 days	74 days	47 days	47 days
11.3b / BV78b	Speed of processing: b) Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstances.	All Wales average not available	25 days	23 days	22 days	12 days	10 days
11.3c / BV78c	Speed of processing: c) Percentage of renewal claims processed on time.	All Wales average not available	54%	55%	58%	62%	70%
11.4a / BV79a	Accuracy of processing: a) Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the information available for the determination for a	All Wales average not available	No target set as data not previously collected	98%	98%	97.62%	98.61%

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	sample of cases checked post-determination.						
11.4b / BV79b	Accuracy of processing:  a) The percentage of recoverable overpayments (excluding Council Tax Benefit) that were recovered in the year.	All Wales average not available	45%	26%	38%	40.63%	See narrative below.

Targets are based on Corporate Target Setting Methodology. Comparative Data from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) only currently available for Q1 and Q2 of year 2002/03. Therefore, the targets for 03/04 are based on this available comparative data, and will be reviewed when the DWP release comparative data for Q4.

Contact: Jackie Walley - 01824 706301  
[jackie.walley@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.walley@denbighshire.gov.uk)

Contact: Ken Jones - 01824 706358  
[ken.a.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ken.a.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **4.2 INTERNAL AUDIT**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

The Service has a record of good performance and improvement and compares favourably with other local authorities during benchmarking. However, the key issue of staffing resources may impact on future performance.

- The Department has had an unsettled year as far as staffing is concerned, mainly due to employees being seconded to work in other areas. The Head of Internal Audit was seconded for eight months to lead the Council's Whole Authority Analysis, an Audit Manager had a brief secondment to the Performance Management Unit to audit performance indicators and, currently, the Audit Assistant is seconded to the Accountancy Section. Also, a new Auditor post was not filled for three months due to difficulty in recruiting a suitable person. Although some funding was made available to cover a portion of the resource lost during the secondment of the Head of Internal Audit, there has inevitably been an effect on the performance of the Department due to the reduction in resources.
- During the year, all employees have agreed new draft job descriptions in preparation for job evaluation. It is anticipated that all posts will be evaluated at higher grades as job descriptions have changed significantly since the last evaluation. The crucial effect is that over 90% of the Department's budget relates to employee costs and there could be an increase of up to £15k in salary costs in 2003/4 that the Department cannot fund without making cuts which can only be in employee costs. A budget bid was made for additional funding but was unsuccessful. A restructuring of the Department is therefore currently being discussed but, unless a solution is found, the Department will inevitably be operating with eight staff in 2003/4 compared to the current nine staff identified as required during the Audit Needs Analysis. This leaves the Council at risk of loss through system weakness, fraud, error etc. as an increased number of services will not receive an audit review due to lack of internal audit resources. This has been reported to the Corporate Governance Committee in March 2003.
- In summary, the main features of 2002/3 performance show that:
  - The audit plan has been completed to a reasonable level
  - A high level of audit recommendations are accepted by management
  - Customers are satisfied with performance
  - Costs are reasonable for a small Department, although above the Welsh average
  - Action needs to be taken to procure goods and services using electronic means

#### **Performance Summary**

The Service has a record of good performance and improvement and compares favourably with other local authorities during benchmarking. However, the key issue of staffing resources may impact on future performance.

#### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Potential reduction in resources.	Already reported to Corporate Governance Committee and serious concern raised with Resources Director (S151 Officer) over increased risk to the Council.

## **Performance Monitoring**

### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
WCIAG1	% Annual audit plan completed.	IA2-IA3	C1-C4	66.2%			68%
WCIAG3	% Audit report recommendations accepted	IA2-IA3	C1-C4	99.5%			97%
WCIAG4	% Audit assignments completed within planned time	IA2-IA3	C1-C4	62.5%			53%
WCIAG8	Ave. Staffing cost per directly chargeable audit day	IA1	C1	166			159
WCIAG9	Staffing cost per £m gross revenue expenditure and HRA	IA1	C1	1,470			1,414
Cipfa3	Direct Days per Auditor	IA2-3	C1-C4	185 days est.			171 days

Contact: Ivan Butler - 01824 706354

[ivan.butler@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ivan.butler@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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### **4.3 INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

- This year, ICT has assisted in the provision of, and successful implementation of, 73 major projects, with a further 25 in progress to February 2003. These are in addition to the ICT planned actions in the 2002/2003 Action Plan, approved by Council in March 2002.
- A risk assessment took place in 1999 to ascertain the resources necessary to maintain the service level for three years and a bid was made which was relatively successful. A risk assessment exercise was again carried out in July 2002 for ICT for Denbighshire and it was found that the use and reliance on and complexity of ICT is still growing beyond expectations. This has been addressed by submitting a bid for staff in this budget round.
- Operationally, the ICT Department is continuing to provide a service that is value for money in comparison with all Welsh Authorities according to the performance indicators and the All Wales ICT Benchmarking study 2002. The National Benchmarking results show that, whereas other authorities are improving due to added investment, the Department's performance remains consistent despite increased workloads.
- Approximately 20% of resource was allocated to laying the technical foundations for e-Government. This included the use, for the first time, of a private sector partner, to complement IC T resource. This has significantly helped in the initial step change in technology, which will be required to start addressing the risks to service delivery associated with much of the current set up.
- The Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Section made substantial progress in its first year. 23 actions on the IEG Action Plan were completed and a further 19 projects are underway.

#### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Viability of major in-house written legacy systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacement of high risk systems.</li> <li>• Continue to communicate concerns to user departments responsible for service delivery.</li> <li>• Encourage services to properly challenge the use of these systems as part of their challenge process.</li> </ul>
Loss of indispensable staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget bid for 2004/5.</li> <li>• Develop partnership.</li> <li>• Implement staff retention strategy.</li> <li>• Carry out job analysis work.</li> <li>• Carry out future human resource planning work.</li> <li>• Continue to push for business analysis in departments – and understanding of risks there.</li> <li>• Advise and inform all corporate departments.</li> <li>• Support levels in SLA will be reality. Departments must realize and consider the consequences.</li> <li>• Push for BIS Accounting Teams in departments.</li> </ul>
Insufficient storage management	Proposals for 2004/5 capital allocation and management of ICT hardware.

**Performance Monitoring - Key issues only**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
LI/ICT/09	Quarterly:- No. PC's installed - (knock on Adjustment to cover reinstallation of replaced PC's)	ICT Objective 2,3,4,5,8	C3	357 (892)			
<i>ICT installed 357 new PCs with a knock on adjustment to cover reinstallation of replacements taking it to 892. This is almost double last years output.</i>							
LI/ICT/01	Monthly:- Percentage incoming calls not answered for ICT and (all Directorates)	ICT Objective 1,3,5	C2, 3	32% (27%)			
<i>Compare this with the percentage of incoming calls not answered by ICT and that has almost trebled because nearly all staffing in particular in Networks and Operations are out on support calls or installing equipment and software.</i>							
SOCITM KPI 1	Annual:- Customer Satisfaction (score out of 5)	ICT Objective 1,4	C2, 3, 4	3.4			
SOCITM KPI 2	Monthly:- Percentage of calls to the Help Desk resolved in the agreed time scale.	ICT Objective 1,4	C2, 4	88.8% 118 calls per wk			

**Contact:** Dylan Roberts - 01824 706226  
[dylan.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:dylan.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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### 4.4 IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG)

#### Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003

In April 2002, a new section was added to the structure. This is the Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Section, responsible for coordinating the corporate delivery of E-Government. The mission statement for Information Communication Technology (ICT) also holds true for the aims and objectives of this Section.

The 2002/3 Action Plan has been successfully completed with the exception of actions which were planned to be completed later than March 2003. The reasons for non completion are:-

IEG 7	IEG Statement	due to the delayed guidance from WAG
IEG 12	E-HR	due to funding not being approved
IEG 24	Customer Service Director	awaiting Options Appraisal report
IEG 26	Customer Services Culture	due to lack of resources in Education
IEG 27	Customer Care Guidelines	due to lack of resources in Education

#### Performance Monitoring - NAW PI 1.5

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
1.5	<p>The percentage of interactions with the public, by type, which are capable of electronic service delivery and which are being delivered using Internet protocols or other paperless methods.</p> <p>a) Providing information  b) Receiving payments  c) Making payments  d) Receiving feedback  e) Regulations  f) Make applications  g) Make a bookings  h) Paying for goods  i) Access to community, professional and business networks  j) Procurement</p>	All Wales average not available	New Indicator for 01/02	<table border="1"> <tr><td>a) 46%</td><td>a) 60%</td><td>a) 52%</td><td>a) 72%</td></tr> <tr><td>b) 34%</td><td>b) 50%</td><td>b) 100%</td><td>b) 100%</td></tr> <tr><td>c) 100%</td><td>c) 100%</td><td>c) 100%</td><td>c) 100%</td></tr> <tr><td>d) 25%</td><td>d) 50%</td><td>d) 49%</td><td>d) 69%</td></tr> <tr><td>e) 5%</td><td>e) 10%</td><td>e) 5%</td><td>e) 10%</td></tr> <tr><td>f) 2%</td><td>f) 25%</td><td>f) 10%</td><td>f) 35%</td></tr> <tr><td>g) 6%</td><td>g) 25%</td><td>g) 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### **4.5 PERSONNEL**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

It is difficult at this stage to provide an opinion on the performance of the Department as the statutory indicators are really indicators of corporate performance and the local indicators have only recently been developed and reported. The main area of concern for the Council is the level of sickness absence but action has been taken to address this with the implementation of the Sickness Absence Policy and training for managers operating the policy. This area will be monitored through the performance indicator to ensure that the new Policy is effective.

- Two statutory indicator targets are not currently being achieved, these being sickness absence levels which are consistently high and the percentage of staff from ethnic minority communities as a % of the total workforce. A Sickness Absence Policy was introduced in July 2002 followed by an ongoing programme of training for managers. Absence reduced in periods 1 and 2 but increased in period 3. A priority over the next 12 months will be to understand reasons for absence and to address these issues.
- Local performance indicators are now being reported. Provisional targets have been set and these are currently being achieved or good progress is being made in their achievement.
- The Council has achieved Bronze level in the Corporate Health Strategy standard and now conforms to Level 2 of the Commission for Racial Equality's 'Standard for Local Government'.
- Ongoing improvements in the Recruitment and Retention Strategy have resulted in the appointment of 10 Corporate Modern Apprentices and the implementation of a Summer Placement Scheme to give students experience of working within a Local Authority. This resulted in a saving of nearly £3,000 on the cost of agency workers which would normally have been appointed over the summer period.
- Very little progress has been made with Single Status during the past 12 months although this is not through lack of trying. The main hurdle is agreeing on the Job Evaluation Scheme to be used and this issue is common throughout Wales. The Department has been successful in obtaining finance for a temporary Personnel Officer to progress on this issue during 2003/04.
- Some progress has been made on policy development. The Training and Development Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy and the Relocation Policy have been revised and agreed during the past 12 months and the Sickness Absence Policy implemented. However, the progress on development continues to be slow and in order to speed up the process, a programme for policy development has been drawn up along with a negotiation procedure.
- It is recognised that employee issues such as disciplinary and grievance issues are still taking a long time to be resolved and it is proposed that these policies are reviewed during 2003/04 in order to speed up the process.
- The Department was successful in obtaining agreement and funding to purchase a computerised Human Resources System. Although tenders were sought and a number of companies were short listed, the Department has been unable to proceed with the purchase as a feasibility study is being undertaken to determine whether it should also include Payroll. In the meantime, considerable work has been undertaken to gather data on employees. Sickness absence figures are now calculated on a monthly basis and data relating to the profile of the workforce is available. This task, however, continues to be extremely time consuming.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
No computerized HR system	Service Plan 2003/4 – to implement core HR system in accordance with the project plan.
High level of sickness absence corporately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – review the sickness absence by July 2003.</li> <li>• Develop practical guidelines for managers on the policy by March 2003.</li> <li>• Continue with the training for managers.</li> <li>• Arrange short training course for employees.</li> <li>• Implementation of new computerized personnel system during 2003/4.</li> </ul>
Lack of awareness of corporate Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – develop and produce Corporate Health &amp; Safety policies by September 2003.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a driver safety programme by January 2004.</li> <li>• Produce a Corporate Health Safety Audit by April 2003.</li> <li>• Implement the Staff Protection Register by February 2004.</li> <li>• Implement the SHE2000 H&amp;S Management System by July 2003.</li> <li>• Project manage the Risk Register facility.</li> <li>• Development of Manual Handling training programme.</li> <li>• Produce a Corporate Health and Safety Training programme by April 2003.</li> <li>• Enhance Health and Safety awareness by March 2004.</li> <li>• Review and act upon the results of Senior Manager Survey.</li> <li>• Recruit Corporate Driver Trainer.</li> <li>• Recruit Corporate Health and Safety Advisor.</li> </ul>
Inflexible Resource Levels  Slow development of Personnel Policies & Procedures, including Single Status	<p>Resource requirements have been identified in the proposed Contract Centre business plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – review the Recruitment and Selection Policy &amp; Process and adhere to rolling programme for policy revision.</li> <li>• Additional resource to be brought in for a 9 month period.</li> <li>• A programme for policy development has been drawn up along with a negotiation procedure.</li> </ul>
Low % of staff from Ethnic Minority Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – implementation of new computerized personnel system by March 2003.</li> <li>• Review the recruitment and selection policy and process by September 2003.</li> <li>• Ensure all workforce monitoring forms have been returned and input.</li> </ul>

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that Members and employees are informed of new developments in equalities legislation.</li> <li>Corporate Equalities Group.</li> </ul>

### **Performance Monitoring**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.9	The percentage of senior management posts filled by women.	All Wales average not available	>11.1%	20%	>20%	25%	>25%
1.10	The number of working days/shifts per Full Time Equivalent lost due to sickness absence.	Awaiting figures from LGDU	<4.7%	13 days (or 5.9%)	9.2 days	15.7 days	13.7 days
<p><i>Definition for 01/02 stated percentage of working days, as opposed to the number of working days. The target for 2003/04 equates to two days less sickness absence per employee.</i></p>							
1.12	Ill health retirements as a percentage of the total work force.	All Wales average not available	0.5%	0.69%	0.6%	0.36%	0.6%
1.13	The number of Authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition as a percentage of the total workforce.	All Wales average not available	1.5%	2.72%	>2.72%	2.6%	>2.6%
1.14	The number of staff from Minority Ethnic Communities within the Authority's workforce as a percentage of the total workforce.	All Wales average not available	0.50%	0.19%	0.45%	0.31%	0.6%

**Contact:** Linda Atkin - 01824 706565  
[linda.atkin@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:linda.atkin@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **5.0 LIFELONG LEARNING**

#### **5.1 CULTURE AND LEISURE**

##### **Performance Assessment 2002 – 2003**

The Department has a wide range of services that monitor performance through the new performance management system. These are summarised in the Performance Management Report and show signs of good performance and improvement.

The Library Service has implemented an action plan for improvement following the Best Value Inspection and is making good progress in implementing Minimum Standards.

- It is anticipated that all three statutory performance indicators will achieve their target. The target number of visits to libraries has been as predicted; there has been a reduction in visits due to the issue book loan period changing from 2 to 3 weeks. However, the introduction of the free internet access through the People's Network and the resulting good media coverage has attracted new users enabling the service to meet the target. The number of swims and other visits to leisure centres has been marginally increased due to higher public profile raised through the National Swimming Scheme.
- The introduction of new electronic performance management system has improved the consistency and accuracy of performance data; however, the system has not been without its technical problems. Staff have been trained in using the system and implementation is now smoother. The categorising of activities has been an issue and this is reflected in local performance indicators for education, outreach and participation. These areas have had different interpretations by sections hence previous targets and achievements being so different.
- The target for the number of annual visitors will be achieved thanks to an injection of marketing funding via Objective 1 through the Tourism Section within Economic Regeneration. The number of disability projects successfully undertaken far exceeds the target due to the specific work of a disability sports officer and greater awareness throughout the Department. The number of events, together with the number of attendees increased as greater use of Rhyl Events Arena has been achieved with greater potential for use in the future.
- External opportunities have been taken to improve local facilities - Leisure Services successfully gained SPORTLOT approval in principle of £750,000 towards refurbishment of Rhyl Leisure Centre and, with Education colleagues, an approval of £1.3m NOF funding towards PE/Sports Development.
- Further service specific strategies and policies were developed including 'Sport for Life' and Cultural Tourism Strategies, Customer Care Plan and Skate Park Policy that provide the framework for developments for the next five years.
- Reviews were undertaken in Leisure Services, Youth Service and the Pavilion Theatre, resulting in restructuring service areas to provide a more consistent and fair structure and improved efficiency.
  - Re-branding, promotion and marketing targets of Leisure and Libraries were not achieved this year due to the lack of resources and expertise. However, this will be addressed in 2003/04.
- A major contribution to the Council's e-government strategy was the introduction of free internet access at all libraries through the NOF funded People's Network. A priority for the next three years will be the development of learning programmes through the Community Consortia for Education and Training Dolen Dysg Dinbych to maximise public benefit of this investment.

### **Key Actions for Improvement 2003-2004**

<b>Areas for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Marketing	Service Plan 2003/4 - appoint a Marketing Manager by May 2003 and improve the marketing of Culture and Leisure.
Property Condition	Service Plan 2003/4 – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Improve the quality of the 'Youth Club' facilities for young people.</li> <li>♦ Undertake development of Rhyl Leisure Centre.</li> <li>♦ Complete Best Value Review for Sport and Recreation Services.</li> </ul>
Library Service	Service Plan 2004/5 - increase number of books purchased per 1,000 population by 30% and Increase expenditure on newspapers and AV materials by 120% per 1,000 population.

### **Performance Monitoring**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
9.1	Number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organized school groups.	Awaiting figure from LGDU	9,000	9,016	9,286	8,151	9,379
<i>Temporary closure of the portrait galleries due to refurbishment impacted the number of educational visits to Bodelwyddan.</i>							
9.2	The number of visits to public libraries per 1,000 population.	All Wales average not available	5,997	5,997	5,500	6,123	6,300
<i>The introduction of the People's Network and associated media coverage has led to increase in visits.</i>							
9.3	Swimming pools and sports centres:  The number of swims and other visits per 1,000 population.	All Wales average not available	9,000	9,379	9,423	9,044	9,388
<i>Minor closures for repair and maintenance issues affected the numbers of swims.</i>							
7.8	Is a Local Biodiversity Action Plan in place for the Authority's area?  If no, will there be such a plan in place within the next 12 months?	New indicator for 02/03	New indicator for 02/03	New indicator for 02/03	New indicator for 02/03	No	Yes

### Key Local Performance Indicators

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
CLPI1	No of annual visitors/users	SO/CL/01	C3	1,602,785			N/A
CLPI2	Number of disability Projects/incentives	SO/CL/03	C3	17			/A
CLPI3	Total number of participants	SO/CL/03	C3	359,614			N/A
CLPI4	Number of educational sessions	SO/CL/02	C3	511			N/A
CLPI5	No of attendances at educational sessions	SO/CL/02	C3	16,648			N/A
CLPI6	Number of outreach sessions (including talks and lectures)	SO/CL/01	C3	166			N/A

#### Notes:

1. *The data collected was actuals for ¾ of the year and projected for the last quarter. Therefore, the targets will be reviewed following last quarter actuals are analysed.*
2. *A new performance management system was introduced in 2001/02, therefore, no comparable data for 2000/01 is available although individual services have data relating to National PI's.*
3. *There are no comparable benchmark figures across Culture and Leisure, only service specific data.*
4. *Culture and Leisure will be developing a methodology for qualitative performance analysis this year that involves participation, education and customer satisfaction. It should be noted that customer satisfaction surveys are being undertaken in Libraries and Leisure this year.*
5. *20% major target identification in Culture and Leisure Strategy for outreach 2002/03.*
6. *Re. CLP11 anticipated lower figure for Libraries due to change in loan period which will impact on visitor figures; although it is anticipated higher figures due to the Gaol opening and Record Office resuming full service.*

**Contact:** Ann Gosse - 01824 708200  
[ann.gosse@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ann.gosse@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## 5.2 EDUCATION SERVICES

### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

- As most of the Department's statutory performance indicators are related to pupil performance, it is not easy to provide year on year comparisons due to the changing ability levels of particular cohorts of pupils. The preference is to track the progress of pupils. Schools set their pupil performance targets after careful consideration of their pupils' prior performance. Each pupil agrees challenging targets and the aggregation of these becomes the school's target. The Council's target is a weighted average of the school targets.
- Each school has specific software to track pupil progress against National Curriculum Assessments. Separate software also provides individual pupil analysis for the end of KS2 & KS3 SATs in Maths, Science and English.
- The Council is committed to intervene in schools if any of the following criteria are identified:
  - low or falling performance
  - difficulties in management or organisation
  - consistently unsatisfactory quality of provision

There are a few areas where year on year comparisons are useful:

#### **2001/2 Performance Improvement**

- no. of permanently excluded pupils per 1000 pupils for primary schools reduced by 0.5% in 2001/2
- % permanently excluded pupils receiving less than 10 hours alternative tuition improved by 30% in 2001/2
- % permanently excluded pupils receiving more than 25 hours alternative tuition improved by 8.5% in 2001/2
- % primary school Year 3-6 classes with more than 30 pupils reduced by 9% in 2001/2

#### **2001/2 Performance Deterioration**

- no. of permanently excluded pupils per 1000 pupils for secondary schools increased from 1 per 1000 to 1.24 per 1000
- % SEN statements issued in 18 weeks reduced by 14%

#### **2002/3 Performance Improvement to December 2002**

- no. of permanently excluded pupils per 1000 pupils for secondary schools reduced by 14% but is still above target
- % Primary School classes with more than 30 pupils in years 3-6 reduced by 0.4%

#### **2002/3 Performance Deterioration to December 2002**

- no. of primary pupils permanently excluded during the year per 1,000 pupils increased and is above target
- % Primary School classes with more than 30 pupils in Reception to Year 2 increased by 0.3%

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
SEN statements not promptly issued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEN Officers now appointed. New foundation database in place. Figures now show that there has been 100% improvement (reliant on external sources) within 18 wk period since September 2002.</li> <li>Decision process now altered and new MIS tracking system introduced.</li> </ul>
Increased number of Reception to Year 2 class sizes above 30 pupils.	Close monitoring of the situation by the Senior Education Officer Primary.
Number of excluded pupils not achieving targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close monitoring of the situation particularly in Rhyl area by link officers and ESW service.</li> <li>Increase ESW support – secondary and special schools agree to match fund ESW posts.</li> <li>Assembly special grant funding directed to the 'hot spots'.</li> </ul>
Insufficient performance management information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transfer ESP information into corporate Business Plan format.</li> <li>Service teams to identify local PIs and include in Quarterly Performance Reports.</li> <li>To date these include – number of schools gaining awards, Healthy Schools, Quality Mark Basic Skills Agency.</li> </ul>

### **Performance Monitoring**

**NB: Comparator information is published by the National Assembly for Wales and includes Independent Schools data also.**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
2.1	Average GCSE/GNVQ points score of 15/16 year olds in schools maintained by the Authority.	39	No target set	39	No target set	40	40
2.2	Percentage of pupils in schools maintained by the Authority in the previous summer achieving 5 or more GCSE's at grades A* - C or the vocational equivalent.	50%	52.4%	48%	56.5%	52.0%	56.8%
2.3	Percentage of pupils in schools maintained by the Authority achieving one or more GCSEs at grade G or above or the	92%	92%	91%	93%	93%	93%

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	vocational equivalent.						
2.4	<p>Percentage of 11 year olds in schools maintained by the Authority in the previous summer achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Level 4 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 Mathematics test.</li> <li>b) Level 4 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 English test.</li> <li>c) Level 4 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 Welsh (first language) test.</li> <li>d) Level 4 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 2 Science test.</li> </ul>	a) 72.8% b) 79.5% c) 75% d) 85.6%	a) 65.3% b) 64.9% c) 71.7% d) 67.7%	a) 71.2% b) 74.6% c) 77.7% d) 79.3%	a) 69.8% b) 69.8% c) 71.2% d) 72.4%	a) 71.6% b) 76.8% c) 81.2% d) 82.9%	a) 69.2% b) 67.6% c) 71.3% d) 71.4%
2.5	<p>Percentage of 14 year olds in schools maintained by the Authority in the previous summer achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Level 5 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 Mathematics test.</li> <li>b) Level 5 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 English test.</li> <li>c) Level 5 or above in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 Welsh (first language) test.</li> <li>d) Level 5 or above in</li> </ul>	a) 62% b) 61.5% c) 70.8% d) 67.2%	a) 67.1% b) 62% c) 64% d) 60%	a) 63.7% b) 60.9% c) 67.8% d) 64.4%	a) 67.5% b) 65% c) 77% d) 64%	a) 61.8% b) 63.1% c) 57.6% d) 69.9%	a) 69.0% b) 67.0% c) 82.0% d) 66.0%

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 Science test.						
2.6	Percentage of 15/16 year olds achieving the 'core subject indicator'. Those pupils achieving at least grade C in GCSE English or Welsh, Mathematics and Science in combination.	37%	37%	35%	41.7%	35%	43.3%
2.7	Percentage of 15/16 year olds leaving full-time education without a recognised qualification.	3%	1.1%	1.5%	1.0%	2.0%	0.9%
2.8	Number of pupils permanently excluded during the year from schools maintained by the Authority per 1,000 pupils on rolls of schools maintained by the Authority:  a) for primary schools b) for secondary schools c) for special schools	a) 0.3 b) 1.7 c) 4.0	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0	a) 0.38 b) 1.24 c) 0	a) 0 b) 0 c) 0	a) 0.89 b) 1.47 c) 0	a) 1.0 b) 1.07 c) 0
2.11	The percentage of permanently excluded pupils attending:  a) Less than ten hours a week of alternative tuition b) Between ten and twenty five hours a week of alternative tuition c) More than twenty five hours a week of alternative tuition	All Wales average not available	a) 0% b) 0% c) 100%	a) 0% b) 21.43% c) 78.57%	a) 0% b) 0% c) 100%	a) 0% b) 0% c) 100%	a) 0% b) 0% c) 100%
<p><i>Pupils permanently excluded receive more than 25 hours a week of alternative tuition, therefore, they automatically exceed the criteria for parts a and b, hence it is not necessary to report on these sections.</i></p>							
2.12	The percentage of primary school classes with more than 30 pupils in years:	All Wales average not available					

## Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
	a) Reception to two inclusive  b) Three to six		a) 2.2%  b) 8.9%	a) 2.7%  b) 9.7%	a) 2%  b) 8%	a) 2.0%  b) 12.2%	a) 2.0%  b) 8.0%
<i>A figure of 9.4% for 2.12b was published in the last Improvement Plan, however after audit the figure was found to be 9.7%.</i>							
2.13	a) The number of statements issued during the year  b) Percentage of statements of special educational need, excluding those affected by 'exceptions to the rule' under the SEN Code or Practice.  i) prepared within 18 weeks ii) finalised within 26 weeks	For 2.13a awaiting figures from LGDU.  For part b, all Wales averages not available	a) 83  b) 60%	a) 52  b) 23%	a) no target set  b) 75%	a) 103  bi) 24.3% bii) 47.6%	a) 97 (5% reduction)  bi) 100% bii) 100%
<i>01/02 definition only recorded those statements prepared within 18 weeks, there was no requirement to publish figures on those statements finalised within 26 weeks as in the new category ii).</i>							
2.14	The percentage of attendance, those present or on approved educational activities, in secondary schools.	89.9%	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	New Indicator for 2002/03	89.8%	89.8%
<i>New indicator for 02/03.</i>							

Contact: Ieuan Lloyd Roberts - 01824 706702  
[ieuan.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ieuan.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **5.3 STRATEGY AND RESOURCES**

#### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

This Service continues to perform well and shows signs of improvement. The consultations with schools show that the Service is very well regarded by its customers. Areas where improvements are required are recognised and actions planned for improvement.

- Schools requirements were gathered and assessed leading to the formulation and issue of Fair Funding packages to schools. To date, 95% of schools have responded with a 100% buy back rate of services.
- The National Assembly's Learner Grant scheme was implemented within the timescale required and provided support to 452 students.
- The level of surplus school places was reviewed and the Managing School Places Strategy developed. An Audit Commission review of Managing School Places 2002 stated that "very good progress" has been made and that the approach taken was "commendable".
- The service has had several audits, inspections and reviews during 2002/03, both on its own account and as part of reviews of other Directorate services e.g. 6<sup>th</sup> Form Funding, Review of LEA Funding Formula, Performance Management (Education probe), Managing School Places and internal audit of primary schools (central). The outcomes of each of these reviews have been positive e.g. :
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Form Funding (Audit Commission) "the Local Authority has encouraged different parties on the CCET to work together and prepare composite bids for projects thereby removing nugatory competition and building on partnership arrangements." "In the light of the low level of secondary school balances, the Local Authority should be extra vigilant in their financial monitoring and support provided for secondary schools"
  - Performance Management (Audit Commission) "A review of service business plans shows that service objectives are clearly linked to corporate objectives and that these are effectively and consistently cascaded through Strategy and Resources."
  - Managing School Places (Audit Commission) "the Authority has made very good progress" "commendable approach"
  - Internal Audit on Primary Schools ( Central) "On the whole, the central support systems for Primary schools continue to be well managed."
  - With regard to the Audit Commission's review of the LEA Funding Formula, the Council was commended on the work it had done so far particularly with respect to deprivation factors.
  - Schools have once again been surveyed by the Audit Commission on their opinion of the Directorate's services. The services which Strategy and Resources provide have thus been subject to detailed appraisal by its customers (schools) and the majority placed in the top quartile in England and Wales. This shows improvement on the 2001/02 survey where not all the services scored in the top quartile. One particular area of improvement is Personnel Support which is now in the top quartile for primary schools. In 2001/02 this was scoring slightly below the Welsh average.
  - An internal review of school transport has taken place because it is evident that current budgets do not match service policies and this has been the subject of a report to the Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee.

Performance in achieving objectives and targets for the year has generally been good:

- Progress has been made in budget monitoring
- Ensuring prompt payment of invoices
- Meeting Student Awards targets
- Forecasting of pupil numbers
- Beginning a strategy of improved 3 year forward planning for schools.

Areas where performance has not been as good as expected have been:

- The implementation of 3 year forward planning for Directorate Budget managers. Although a model was developed and issued to Managers, it became evident from the quality of returns, that Managers needed to be given more training and this will be dealt with in the 2003/04 Business Plan objectives and actions.
- The upgrading of the quality of furniture and fittings in schools. This was a resource issue whereby both revenue and capital bids were unsuccessful in 2002/03. However, the draft Capital Plan for 2003/04 does include an allocation for this purpose which will enable significant progress to be made.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Present investment in schools cannot be maintained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – continue to review the level of surplus places &amp; develop the Managing School Places consultation by establishing a project team of Officers and producing accurate up to date statistics including pupil projections.</li> <li>• Update the Asset Management Plan for annual review.</li> <li>• More external capital funding likely up to 2010.</li> <li>• Use of mobile classrooms where necessary.</li> <li>• Strategy paper drafted to assess admissions and transport policies. It has been proposed to Education Services that they should consider assessing the admissions policy on education grounds which will then form the third side of the MSP / Transport / Admissions triangle.</li> <li>• Small schools are receiving good Estyn reports, therefore, need to consider the need to change from the educational point of view.</li> <li>• Need to consider relocation if a school is forced to close due to health &amp; safety risks.</li> <li>• Attempts being made to increase schools maintenance budget.</li> </ul>
Concern over funding issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with local colleges to review provision and economies of scale.</li> <li>• Funding per pupil is low but performance is average.</li> <li>• Further bids to Members for additional funding.</li> <li>• ELWa to determine formula for 16+ funding from April 2004.</li> </ul>
Low level of some school balances	The service has consulted with users, central finance and the Education Officers to produce a Managing School Budgets Handbook which includes an Intervention Strategy for Schools – Deficit and Surplus Balances.
Poor condition of school furniture and fittings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Plan for 2003/4 includes an allocation for this purpose which will enable significant progress</li> </ul>

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
	<p>to be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – provide rolling programme of new furniture and fittings for schools.</li> </ul>

### **Performance Monitoring**

#### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
LL/SR/AM03	% of schools provided with new furniture as part of a rolling programme	SO/SR/AM07	A2	12%	5%	25%	None
LL/SR/SS01	Maximum number of student loan applicants received details of their entitlement at least a month prior to their course start date.	SO/SR/SS01	A2	95%	99.74%	100%	None
LL/SR/AM01	% of schools where actual pupil numbers for the whole school was within +/- 5% of estimated roll - Secondary.	SO/SR/AM02	B3/B4	100%	100%	100%	None
LL/SR/SF04	Publication of Section 52 Outturn statement	SO/SR/SF04	A3	N/A	06.01.03	01.10.03	01.10.03
LL/SR/SP01	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days	SO/SR/SP01	A2	81%	87%	89%	90%

**Contact:** Gaynor Brooks - 01824 706703  
[gaynor.brooks@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:gaynor.brooks@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## **6.0 COUNTY CLERK'S**

### **Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003**

A full assessment of performance of all services has not been possible due to the lack of performance management information available for this Department. The only relevant indicator is for standard searches which has shown signs of improvement from previously very poor performance. Other recommendations in this assessment regarding performance are supported by the recent District Audit Report.

- In the Land Charges Section work continues to achieve computerisation to meet the Government's proposals for speeding up the house purchase process. The project has yet to be completed since the opportunity has been taken to strengthen related ICT systems across the Council. This delay coupled with the introduction of a new search form and the increase in personal searches has had an impact as recorded in the performance indicator, although much improved on previous years. A significant improvement has been made in the percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days. Performance has improved by more than double on 2001/2, and the 2002/3 target is currently being exceeded.
- Two Scrutiny Support Officers joined the Department in the Autumn to assist the non-executive Members in their new role.
- Corporate Services has completed the introduction of the Rolling Register of Electors, the review of community electoral areas and boundaries and, through a steering group, is overseeing the Council's processes for compliance with the Data Protection Act 2000 and Freedom of Information Act 2000 resulting in the Council's Draft Information Scheme being approved by the Information Commissioner. Civics was strengthened by Council supporting a number of proposals from the Members' Civics Panel to establish a protocol and raise the civic profile.
- Work is ongoing to establish local performance indicators particularly for Legal Services and committee administration.
- There have been no complaints to the ombudsman upheld as maladministration this year.

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Incomplete performance management information	Develop Local Performance Indicators for Legal Services and include actions to develop PIs for other parts of the Department).
Insufficient service provision costings	None.

**Performance Monitoring**

NAWPI Code	Indicator Description	Comparator 01/02	Target 01/02	Data 01/02	Target 02/03	Data 02/03	Target 03/04
1.3	The number of complaints to an Ombudsman classified as Maladministration.	Awaiting figure from LGDU	0	1	0	0	0
1.4	The percentage turnout for local elections.	All Wales average not available	40%	23%	35%	23%	35%
<i>Data remains the same due to definition of PI (no elections since last publication of data)</i>							
7.7	The percentage of standard searches carried out in 10 working days.	All Wales average not available	64%	24.84%	35%	65.06%	65%
<i>Data for part year shows considerable improvement, but more work needs to be done regarding computerisation hence the 03/04 target.</i>							

**Contact:** Ian Hearle - 01824 706384  
[ian.hearle@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.hearle@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### 7.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

#### Performance Assessment 2002 - 2003

##### **Cabinet Support**

- Support has strengthened this year through the appointment of a personal assistant to the Leader and Cabinet Members that has enabled the Leader and Cabinet to receive more comprehensive and timely briefings. A Delegated Decision system has been introduced. The unit has been less good at ensuring that papers are despatched on time - the last quarter saw a drop to 87% of papers despatched with the main despatch. More people have attended Cabinet meetings this year, but in the main this was due to exceptional circumstances. The Forward Work Programme has been introduced, but is in need of much improvement.

##### **Modernising**

- The Constitution was adopted in May 2002. Progress on the demographic profile has been slow, but the Modernising Panel consulted on a range of proposals on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The Standards Committee has been set up and Scrutiny Support Officers have been appointed allowing better co-ordination of the monitoring of the performance of the Cabinet.

##### **Voluntary Sector Liaison**

- A grants policy was adopted in December 2002 and a multi-disciplinary officers group has been set up and decisions on grants have been linked to the delegation system.

##### **Community Legal Partnership**

- A referral system has been agreed and is being adopted. The partnership has been streamlined to promote attendance and progress; however there is still insufficient funding available to administer this partnership.

##### **Community Strategy**

- The Policy Unit has led in the establishment and development of a multi-agency strategic group which is overseeing the Community Strategy process. An action plan and timetable is being implemented and a county-wide questionnaire is being designed in partnership with other agencies for a comprehensive survey of community views on the agreed future vision for Denbighshire for the next 10-15 years.

##### **Area Partnerships**

- The Council has adopted, as part of its Constitution, four areas - Rhyl, Prestatyn, Central and South, each now covered by an Area Partnership Manager who will oversee the process of achieving an area strategic plan as well as facilitating a means by which all area partners can communicate their views and inform policy and decision makers.

##### **Emergency Planning**

- A Risk Register of 44 identified threats to Denbighshire has been produced. The Corporate Emergency Response Group has commenced with a review of fire strike contingencies. A Corporate Communications Group has been established and Exercise Bluebird held in January 2003 to debug the new emergency planning approach.

##### **Corporate Communications**

- The target for the number of news releases issued has been exceeded as has the target for the number of times news releases were used by regional/national press. The quarterly community newsletter, Llais y Sir/County Voice and the Cabinet Question Time series

have been successfully launched and development continues. A new style Headlines has been launched and targets for publication have been met.

- The Unit failed to meet targets for the number of Councillors, Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and Heads of Service who have received media training. This is being addressed by the unit taking on the responsibility for organising and marketing future courses from central Personnel. There was a poor response to the stakeholder survey, although all those returned were satisfied with the service - looking to repeat the exercise and actively encourage responses including the Citizens Panel.

### **Social Inclusion**

- Denbighshire Crime and Disorder Strategy has been produced. Four Geographic Crime and Disorder Working Groups have been developed, including action plans for each group. A drug and alcohol strategy and action plan have been produced. The perceptions of crime survey will be undertaken in April 2003. The Agenda 21 Environmental Strategy was completed Autumn 2002, and has been approved.

### **Performance Management Unit**

- A draft procurement strategy has been produced and the Council is in the first stage of a Procurement Review. The Performance Management System continues to develop and local indicators show increased improvement in the quality of Service Plans, Performance Reports, Service Reviews and the corporate Improvement Plan. However there has been slight slippage in the completion of the corporate Performance Management Handbook which should be finalised early in the next financial year and the accuracy and reliability of performance indicators throughout the organisation continues to be an identified weakness.
- Service reviews are still not sufficiently resourced and the project management of reviews continues to be generally poor causing slippage in the Review Timetable and external inspection programme. The Unit has attempted to rectify these weaknesses through its action plan, but many of these issues can only be tackled corporately. This is addressed in the Corporate Section of this report.
- The performance indicator database has been completed and will be rolled out to Members, management and staff and form part of the performance management database. Approximately one third of the Citizens' Panel was replaced during the year to ensure Panel members remain representative and do not become 'expert witnesses'. The Panel has proved an invaluable resource and members have taken part in annual meetings, focus groups, postal surveys and received feedback via quarterly copies of the newsletter "Sounding Board". 24 internal and 3 external surveys have been completed during 2002 - 2003.
- Statutory Performance Indicator performance to date shows that:
  - The level of domestic burglaries and vehicle crime have increased on 2001/2 levels
  - The level of robberies has decreased on 2001/2 levels

### **Key Actions For Improvement 2003 - 2004**

<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Improvement Actions</b>
Increase in some Community Safety PIs on crime levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Service Plan 2003/4 – undertake a Crime and Disorder Audit for the County by Autumn 2003.</b></li> <li>• Review the Crime and Disorder Strategy for the County by March 2004.</li> <li>• Section 17 Crime and Disorder Training by December 2003.</li> </ul>
Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the co-ordination of the Health Alliance in doubt.	None.
Reporting of racial incidents unlikely to meet target Incomplete performance management information	<p>A further bid for funding is to be submitted in July 2003.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Plan 2003/4 – identify local PIs and benchmarking clubs for departments.</li> <li>• Develop local PIs and benchmarking data with services.</li> <li>• Member of All Wales Indicator group.</li> <li>• Member of Procurement Benchmarking group.</li> <li>• Local indicators for Health to be developed in partnership with other agencies/groups.</li> <li>• Crime and Disorder survey.</li> <li>• Community Strategy consultation.</li> <li>• Produce internal Customer Charter for the Unit following the distribution and analysis of customer satisfaction questionnaire.</li> </ul>

### **Performance Monitoring**

#### **Key Local Performance Indicators**

PI No	Definition	Supports Service Objective	Supports Corporate Objective	Data 01/02	Data 02/03	Target 03/04	Benchmark
CS1	Public attendance at Cabinet Meetings.	CE01	C2 C33	12			
CS2	Cabinet working to strategic programme.	CE01	C2	Not achieved			
LI/CE/PR/01	Percentage of Cabinet Members who have received media training.			36%			
LI/CE/PR/04	Percentage of stakeholders satisfied with Press and PR services						
LI/CE/PR/07	Percentage of correspondence under the comments and complaints procedure dealt with within fifteen working days.						
LIPMU/02	Reduced number of critical DA improvement recommendations.	SO/CE/PM/01	C2.5/C3	12			None set
SO/CE/EP/03	Percentage of persons trained against identified need.	CEO 9	C3.3	77%			N/A

**Contact:** Steve Hatton - 01824 706146  
[steve.hatton@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.hatton@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## 8.0 SUPPORTING PLANS

The following Service Plans feed into the Authority's Improvement Plan:-

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>		
Consultancy Services	Rod Bowden	01824 706842
Economic Regeneration	Gareth Evans	01824 708080
Highways and Transportation	Phillip Brelsford	01824 706801
Planning	Aneurin Phillips	01824 708020
Community Services	Ken Ewing	01824 706929
Support Services	Mike Hitchings	01824 706980
<b>PERSONAL SERVICES</b>		
Social Services	Sally Ellis	01824 706078/6149
Housing	Paul Quirk	01824 708461
<b>RESOURCES</b>		
Internal Audit	Ivan Butler	01824 706354
Management Accountancy	Chris Taylor	01824 706140
ICT	Dylan Roberts	01824 706226
Exchequer	Cemlyn Foulkes	01824 706031
Personnel	Linda Atkin	01824 706565
Revenues	Roger Parry	01824 706132
<b>LIFELONG LEARNING</b>		
Culture and Leisure	Ann Gosse	01824 708200
Education Services	Ieuan Lloyd Roberts	01824 706702
Strategy and Resources	Gaynor Brooks	01824 706703
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S</b>		
Chief Executive's Office	Steve Hatton	01824 706146
County Clerk's	Ian Hearle	01824 706384

Other supporting plans:-

NAME OF PLAN	CONTACT NAME	CONTACT NUMBER
Annual Budget	Roger Parry	01824 706132
Behavior Support Plan	Sylvia Jones	01824 706755
Carer's Special Grant Plan	Sheila Lyons	01824 706636
Caring for our Countryside - A Countryside Strategy for Denbighshire	Tony Hughes	01824 708260
Children First Action Plans	Lorna Roberts	01824 706635
Children's Services Plan	Lorna Roberts	01824 706635
Clwydian Range AONB Management Strategy	Howard Sutcliffe	01352 810614
Crime and Disorder Strategy	Mike Denman	01824 706127
DCC Major Emergency Management Plan	Malcolm Boscott	01824 706969
DCC Coastal Flood Response Plan	Malcolm Boscott	01824 706969
Denbighshire Local Biodiversity Strategy	Moira Young	01824 708263
Draft Denbighshire Landscape Strategy	Moira Young	01824 708263
Education Strategic Plan	Ieuan L Roberts	01824 706720
Hazardous Pipeline Plan	Malcolm Boscott	01824 706969
The Local Housing Strategy	Paul Quirk	01824 708461
Pilkington's Special Glass, St. Asaph COMAH Off-Site Emergency Plan (to be produced by August 2003)	Malcolm Boscott	01824 706969
Schools Organisation Plan	John Williams	01824 706712
Social Services Business Plan / Social Care Plan 2001-2004	Sheila Lyons	01824 706636
Sure Start Plan	Lydia Watson Christine Jones	01824 712040 07876 576858
Unitary Development Plan	Michael Pender Jonathan Cawley	01824 708050 01824 708053

### **9.0 TERMINOLOGY**

Action Plan	Once authorities have carried out a review and set performance targets for a service, they should set out an action plan explaining how new targets are to be met.
Audit Commission	Appoints external auditors to local authorities and carries out value for money studies. New duties to carry out inspections <a href="http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk">www.audit-commission.gov.uk</a>
Audit	External auditors have additional duties to audit annually the Authority's improvement plan.
Benchmarking	Involves making comparisons of performance with others identifying good practice and areas where improvements are needed.
Corporate Governance Indicators	A subset of Performance Indicators intended to show how an Authority is performing overall, in its strategic approach and its relationship with staff and customers.
Cross Cutting reviews	These are reviews based around clear themes or issues - such as lifelong learning, or services to children - which cover services delivered by a range of departments and by other partners.
4 Cs	Challenge, compare, consult, compete: the four main elements of a review.
3 Es	Economy efficiency and effectiveness.
Improvement Plan	Local authorities are required to publish and make accessible to the whole community an annual improvement plan.
Inputs	The resources, financial, staffing, technology etc. put into a service.
Local indicators	Authorities are encouraged to develop and use Local Performance Indicators which reflect local priorities and will be an important measure of an Authority's responsiveness to meeting the needs of the community.
Outcomes	The value or impact of a service.
Outputs	The level of service delivery generated as a result.
Performance Indicators	Local authorities will have to measure and publish their performance against National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators (NAWPI). In some service areas there will also be other indicators set by other relevant government departments.

## ***Improvement Plan 2003 - 2004***

Reviews	The central process for achieving Improvement Plans.
Statutory Guidance	The statutory guidance on NAWPIs is contained in the National Assembly for Wales Circular 8/2001.
Target Setting	Authorities must set targets for the performance of the Authority as a whole and for individual services, as measured by the National Assembly for Wales Performance Indicators and Local Indicators.
Wales Programme for Improvement	Supersedes National Assembly Guidance on Best Value from April 2002.

### Websites

- [www.syniad.gov.uk](http://www.syniad.gov.uk)
- [www.detr.gov.uk](http://www.detr.gov.uk)
- [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)
- [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)
- [www.Wales.gov.uk](http://www.Wales.gov.uk)
- [www.wlga.gov.uk](http://www.wlga.gov.uk)
- [www.denbighshire.gov.uk](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk)

## DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

DRAFT BEST VALUE REVIEW PROGRAMME  
2002 - 2005

<b>AREA</b>	<b>YEAR 2002 - 2003</b>	<b>YEAR 2003 - 2004</b>	<b>YEAR 2004 - 2005</b>
Corporate	Procurement Communication and Consultation		Services To Older People Change Management
Environment	Internal Transport Agricultural Estates Property Maintenance Waste Management Public Conveniences		Design and Consultancy Services
Lifelong Learning		Sport and Recreation	Youth Service
Personal Services	<b><i>Home Care</i></b> <b><i>Fostering</i></b> Residential Homes for Older People	Future reviews for Social Services will be dependent upon the recommendations arising from the Joint Review	
Resources	Personnel Debt Recovery		Strategic and Financial Planning

**REPORT TO CABINET**      **AGENDA ITEM No: 4 (CABINET 2003 - 69)**

**CABINET MEMBER**      **Councillor M German , Lead Member for Sustainable Development & Environment**

**DATE:**                    **20 May 2003**

**SUBJECT:**                **Denbighshire Retail & Leisure Study**

## **1. DECISION SOUGHT**

- 1.1** To seek approval to undertake wide consultation on the Denbighshire Retail & Leisure Study (The Study) before reporting back on how the Study can-
- Inform the review of retail planning policies
  - Be treated as a material planning consideration in determining planning applications
  - Help develop town centre strategies and regeneration.

## **2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

- 2.1** The Study was commissioned by Planning Services (with part funding from Economic Regeneration and WDA) primarily to inform the review of retail planning policies and the determination of retail proposals. It has been over 5 years since the previous studies were completed and this is the recommended period to undertake a review. Retailing is a fast changing, complex and important sector of the economy going well beyond administrative boundaries.
- 2.2** The Study is an important and substantial document with significant implications for several policy areas right across the County- especially for planning, economic regeneration, and town centres.  
The Study sends out important messages about the uncertain future facing the County's town centres, and the steps needed to stem decline and turn them around.
- 2.3** Accordingly, wide ranging consultation – both internal and external – is needed.

## **The Study**

- 2.4** Attached is a copy of the covering report to the Planning Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003- which attaches a copy of the Study's Executive Summary- setting out –
- Need for the study
  - Aims
  - Method
  - Results
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations.

**2.5      Study status**

- 2.6** The status of the Study needs explaining.
- It is independent consultants report
  - It is not Council policy
  - Nevertheless it is an important document with considerable information which will help to inform decision making
  - It requires wide consultation.

## **Consultation**

- 2.7      Internal Consultation to date**
- The Executive Summary has already been circulated to all Members via the Planning Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> March
  - Electronic versions have already been circulated to Senior Management for information and comment
  - Hard copies are available in all Political Group rooms
  - Hard copies are available at most Council offices

## **Proposed Internal Consultation**

- 2.8** It is proposed to hold a presentation or workshop with appropriate Senior Managers and Members to be given by the consultants Roger Tym & Partners. This would provide an excellent opportunity for Officers and Members to have the Study explained.

If Cabinet consider this helpful a convenient date, time and venue will be arranged.

Suggestions are invited.

### **Proposed External Consultations**

**2.9** It is proposed to use the 4 (four) Area Partnerships as the most appropriate vehicle to consult externally.

This would no doubt involve-

- Town and community councils
- Local and town centre business groups
- Retailers, property owners and developers/agents
- Community groups
- Customers.

### **Conclusion**

**2.10** Following consultation it is proposed to report back to Cabinet for further consideration of the Study and to agree the next steps.

## **3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

**3.1** To enable the Cabinet to better formulate Council policy on this important cross-cutting issue it should approve wide external consultation on the Study.

## **4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1** Whilst no specific cost implications have been identified any costs that do result will need to be contained within existing service budgets.

## **5. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

**5.1** Any increased costs resulting from the consultation exercise will need to be contained within the service budget concerned

## **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

**6.1** The Planning Committee asked for CD-ROM versions to be available at all libraries. This has not yet been undertaken – awaiting the outcome of Cabinet.

## **7. IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

**7.1** Depending on how the Study is received and steps taken there could be significant implications for several policy areas- planning, economic regeneration, regeneration services, contract services, and regulatory services.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1**
  1. That the Denbighshire Retail & Leisure Study be the subject of wide consultation including-
    - A presentation or workshop with Senior Management and Members – to be arranged
    - Consultation via the Area Partnerships
  - 2 That the Study be brought back to Cabinet with the results of that consultation and for further consideration as to the way forward.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**25<sup>TH</sup> March 2003**

**ITEM NO.**

## **REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES**

### **DENBIGHSHIRE RETAIL AND LEISURE STUDY 2003**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 Denbighshire Planning Services appointed consultants Roger Tym & Partners to undertake a county-wide Retail Study to update the County's retail planning policies and proposals primarily for development plan and development control purposes. This Study is now complete and a copy of the Executive Summary is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. Copies of the Main Report are available for inspection in Group Rooms and at planning offices in Trem Clwyd, Ruthin and Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn.
- 1.2 The Report is submitted to the Planning Committee:
- (i) for information;
  - (ii) for use as a material planning consideration in determining policy and applications;
  - (iii) to inform members of the potential for regenerating the eight town centers within the County.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The two previous retail studies for the northern and southern parts of the County were undertaken separately over 5 years ago by consultants (i) Roger Tym and (ii) Chestertons, respectively. These studies informed both the preparation of the current UDP and development control decisions. Five years is the recommended period to update retail studies and accordingly the new County wide study commenced last year.

#### **3. AIMS OF THE STUDY**

- 3.1 This County wide Study was extended to cover leisure which are related to retail uses and are encouraged to locate in town centres. The Study closely followed advice set out in Planning Policy Wales (2002) and Technical Advice Note 4 (TAN 4) and covered the following:
- 1. Changing national planning guidance and advice;
  - 2. Changing trends and circumstances in retailing – both generally and locally;
  - 3. Quantitative and qualitative assessment of retail demand and capacity – including any significant developments within the county and beyond;
  - 4. Health checks of the viability and vitality of each of the 8 centres in the county;
  - 5. Feasibility and suitability of possible development sites and opportunities to meet any quantitative or qualitative retail need;

6. Conclusions and recommendations to update the current retail strategy, planning policies and proposals, in order to:
  - (i) to inform review of development plan;
  - (ii) assist in the determination of planning applications; and
  - (iii) generate more positive town centre management.
7. Identification of strategies and actions for each town centre to improve their future viability and vitality.

#### **4. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 4.1 The Executive Summary comprises 18 pages and provides a useful summary of the substantial main document of over 85 pages plus 10 Appendices. Rather than summarise the Executive Summary here, I have identified several key messages which are set out below:

#### **5. KEY MESSAGES**

- 5.1 The key messages of the study are:
  1. A continued decline and deterioration has been experienced in nearly all of the town centres - in both relative and absolute terms;
  2. Competing centres such as Chester, Wrexham and Llandudno have expanded, improved and drawn clear of Denbighshire's centres.
  3. Unless positive measures and steps are taken as a matter of urgency, this decline will continue, resulting in further vacancies and missed investment opportunities;
  4. Further out-of-town retailing should be resisted as it will further exacerbate the decline of Denbighshire's centres – but this must be matched by development in town centres. This can only be achieved by a more pro-active approach to town centre management and re-development (including site assembly).

#### **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 That the Study is used as a:
  1. material planning consideration to inform both policy formulation and the determination of planning applications , where appropriate;
  2. justification to adopt a more positive and pro-active approach to town centre management – including strategic long term (vision, attracting investment, site assembly) as well as short term operational matters (street cleaning, events);
  3. basis for a presentation/workshop on the county's town centers, bringing together interested organisations and stakeholders in both the public and private sector;
  4. basis for the response of officers and other stakeholders on the issues raised within the report.

**Appendix 1**  
**Denbighshire Retail and Leisure Study 2003**  
**Executive Summary**

Denbighshire County Council

## **DENBIGHSHIRE RETAIL & LEISURE STUDY**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

February 2003

Roger Tym  
*&* PARTNERS

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***Planners and Development Economists***

17 St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7PW

Tel 0161 834 0833 Fax 0161 834 0818 e-mail [north@tymconsult.com](mailto:north@tymconsult.com)

## 1 AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.1 The study brief sets the following aims:

- to provide a clear basis for an early review of the UDP's Retail Strategy;
- to identify strategies for the eight town centres that can be used to secure funding for urban regeneration;
- to assess quantitative and qualitative retail needs and the suitability of various town centre and edge-of-centre sites in meeting these needs;
- to assess the extent to which the Welsh Development Agency, Objective One or any other grants may assist in bringing forward opportunities; and
- to enable improved consideration of current and emerging proposals for food retail and non-food retail development.

1.2 In responding to the brief, we grouped the tasks to be undertaken under five headings, as follows:

- market research by means of a survey of households in order to establish current patterns of retail and leisure spending, the conditions necessary to secure an increase in the expenditure retention level and to assess quantitative expenditure capacity;
- health checks for the eight centres and an assessment of the main competing centres outside Denbighshire;
- a survey of the town centres to identify retail and leisure development opportunities, requirements for land assembly and so on;
- development of strategies for each of the eight centres, taking account of quantitative and qualitative needs, opportunities and the requirements of national policies; and
- identification of top priorities for action or further research and of the mechanisms which will need to be put in place to ensure complementarity with other Council initiatives and maximise the prospects of drawing down WDA and European funding.

## 2 THE REQUIREMENTS OF NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

2.1 The national policy framework has established 12 important principles, as follows:

- i) the objective to promote, sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of existing town, district and local centres as part of a package of initiatives to promote sustainable development (Planning Policy Wales, TAN (W) 4 and 'a better quality of life');
- ii) the objective '*to secure accessible, efficient, competitive and innovative retail provision for all communities of Wales, in both urban and rural areas*'(paragraph 10.1.1 of Planning Policy Wales);
- iii) the objective '*to promote town, district, local and village centres as the most appropriate locations for retailing and for functions complementary to it*'(paragraph 10.1.1 of Planning Policy Wales)
- iv) the objective '*to promote access to these centres by public transport, walking and cycling*' (paragraph 10.1.1 of Planning Policy Wales);
- v) the need for Unitary Development Plans (UDPs) to establish a hierarchy of centres and a strategy for the location of employment, shopping, leisure, hospital, education and other uses which generate many trips, so as to identify the preferred locations for major retail and leisure investment and ensure that all significant generators of travel are well served by public transport (paragraphs 8.1.3, 10.2.1, 10.2.13 and 11.2.2 of Planning Policy Wales);
- vi) the need to adopt a plan-led approach to the promotion of all types of new development which generate many trips, so as to ensure that they are well served by public transport (paragraph 8.6.3 of Planning Policy Wales, and paragraphs 21 and 19 of TAN (W) 18 and the Draft TAN (W) on Transport respectively);
- vii) the requirement to adopt a sequential approach to selecting sites for new retail and leisure development and other town centre uses - in areas where there is a need and capacity for such development - which is an approach which requires flexibility on the part of local planning authorities, developers and retailers (paragraphs 10.2.11 to 10.2.12 and 10.3.2 of Planning Policy Wales and paragraph 6 of TAN (W) 4);
- viii) the need to assess the principle of 'severability' in applying the sequential approach, so as to investigate whether it is possible or desirable to disaggregate large retail and leisure development proposals into their constituent parts in seeking to fit them into existing town, district and local centres (paragraph 10.3.3 of Planning Policy Wales);
- ix) the desire to reduce overall travel and the demand for car travel in particular (paragraph 8.1.3 of Planning Policy Wales, paragraph 5.1.3 of the Transport Framework for Wales, paragraph 5 of the Draft TAN (W) on Transport, and 'a better quality of life');
- x) the presumption to resist applications for retail development on land designated for other uses in an approved development plan (paragraph 10.3.16 of Planning Policy Wales);
- xi) the desire to promote mixed-use developments, especially within town centres, and maximise the use of previously developed brownfield land (paragraphs 2.5.2 and 10.2.4 of Planning Policy Wales); and
- xii) the need to improve access to leisure, retail and other services for residents of deprived areas as part of the drive to promote social inclusion (paragraphs 2.3.2 and 2.5.5 of Planning Policy Wales, 'a better quality of life' – the first of the White Paper's four core objectives and paragraphs 1.8, 7.29 and 7.33).

### 3 TRENDS IN RETAIL AND LEISURE INVESTMENT

#### Expenditure

- 3.1 The growth in volume of retail sales in Great Britain since 1995 has been higher in the non-food comparison retail sector, than in the food sector, with highest growth secured by retailers of household goods. This recent trend reflects the longer term trend since the mid-1970's during which growth in comparison expenditure has averaged 3.6 per cent, per capita, per annum, compared to a growth of convenience (food) expenditure of only 1.8 per cent, per capita, per annum.

#### Location of Investment and Retail Trading Formats

- 3.2 Planning policy has substantially reduced the flow of new out-of-centre retail investment in recent years. Over 90 per cent of new shopping centre floorspace in Great Britain was developed in town centres in the year 2001, compared to a corresponding proportion of 68 per cent in 1990. Similarly the flow of out-of-centre retail warehouse park development is now just 40 per cent of its 1990's peak. Nevertheless, proposals to substantially extend major out-of-centre developments such as Broughton Park – which has already attracted many quality retailers to an out-of-centre location – remain a threat to Denbighshire's town centres.
- 3.3 In recent years, the prospects for department stores have improved. However, most of the leading operators require larger catchment populations than Rhyl. Moreover, department stores often command the ability to demand a subsidy from developers towards fit-out costs, so that large scale development opportunities are required, with the subsidy derived from the unit shopping which is anchored by the department store.
- 3.4 The 1990s witnessed substantial growth in the development of factory outlet centres (FOCs), which are groups of stores, that offer discounted brand goods which are typically out of season, or end of season, or slightly defective, or which represent excess stock. There are now 44 FOCs in the UK, the largest of which is Cheshire Oaks which has 32,500m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace. Nevertheless, the flow of FOCs has reduced as a result of the propensity for promoters to seek out-of-centre locations against the tide of national policies.
- 3.5 In the food sector, the major operators are finding it increasingly difficult to secure permissions for large supermarkets outside town centres. Many operators are seeking to offer an increasing range of non-food items, often associated with applications for store extensions. At the other end of the spectrum, several operators have introduced new small scale convenience formats of around 500m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.6 In the leisure sector there is evidence, in some part of the UK, of over supply in the multiplex cinema sector, with several closures of first generation schemes occurring since the year 2000. The new growth market in the leisure sector is likely to be 'gaming sheds', given the legislative reforms to gaming which will occur in the near future.
- 3.7 The e-tail market has grown, but the 'must try it on/feel it' factor means that most sectors remain competitive in the High Street, particularly the clothes and footwear sector.

## 4 CURRENT PATTERNS OF RETAIL SPENDING AND LEISURE VISITS

### Comparison Expenditure

- 4.1 Only 41 per cent of the non-food comparison expenditure of the residents of Denbighshire's primary catchment area (PCA) is spent in stores and town centres which are located within the PCA. We consider that there is both scope and a need to increase the overall retention rate if Denbighshire's town centres are to improve. The retention rate varies from just 8 per cent for residents of the Llangollen area to 52 per cent for residents of Rhyl. Two thirds of the outflow of comparison expenditure, or leakage, is accounted for by Chester, Llandudno and Wrexham. There are also significant outflows to Cheshire Oaks, Broughton Park and to Manchester City Centre.
- 4.2 Rhyl is by far the most important town centre for comparison shopping within Denbighshire, with a comparison turnover drawn from residents of the PCA of £69m. However, Rhyl attracts only 27 per cent of the overall pot of expenditure available to the residents of Denbighshire's PCA. Prestatyn is the next largest centre, with a comparison turnover of around £8m, followed by Denbigh and Ruthin both of which have comparison turnovers of almost £6m. Rhuddlan, St Asaph, and Corwen have an extremely limited comparison goods offer and Llangollen's comparison retailing is very much aimed at the tourism market.

### Convenience Expenditure

- 4.3 Convenience shopping is more of a locally oriented activity than comparison shopping, with most food and groceries shoppers preferring to use facilities as close to home as possible (or close to work) unless there are serious qualitative or quantitative deficiencies in local provision. Accordingly, the performance of the PCA in relation to the retention of convenience expenditure is significantly better than that for comparison spending. The survey indicates that retail facilities located within the PCA zones attract 84 per cent of convenience expenditure generated by residents of the area.
- 4.4 Whilst the overall retention level indicates that there is no generalised quantitative or qualitative deficiency in convenience retail provision, the local retention rates are low in Corwen (20 per cent), Abergel (29 per cent), the St Asaph/Rhuddlan area (31 per cent) and Llangollen (37 per cent). These low localised convenience retention rates suggest scope for further convenience provision of appropriate scale in these areas and the need in Abergel is in the process of being met by the Tesco proposal which should be supported. The local convenience retention rates are highest in Rhyl (90 per cent), Denbigh (77 per cent), Ruthin (59 per cent), and Holywell (51 per cent). In Prestatyn the local retention rate is 48 per cent, but this will be improved when the Tesco planning commitment is implemented.
- 4.5 There are six stores located outside Denbighshire's PCA which attract more than £1m of convenience expenditure from its residents; these are:
- |                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| • Tesco, Mold           | £4.68m |
| • Asda, Wrexham         | £2.41m |
| • Tesco, Wrexham        | £2.35m |
| • Asda, Queensferry     | £2.35m |
| • J Sainsbury, Wrexham  | £2.22m |
| • Tesco, Broughton Park | £1.32m |
- 4.6 Most of the convenience leakage to the three Wrexham food superstores is from the Corwen and Llangollen areas. Most of the leakage to the Tesco at Mold is from Ruthin and Holywell. Most of the leakage to the Asda at Queensferry and the Tesco at Broughton is from the Holywell area.

## Leisure Visits

4.7 Rhyl is the most important location within Denbighshire for visits to commercial leisure facilities such as cinemas, bingo halls and bowling, but Wrexham and Chester attract residents from the southern part of the County and from the Holywell area. As expected, the pattern of visits to pubs, bars and restaurants is much more localised, but many of Denbighshire's residents are prepared to travel significant distances to Llandudno, Mold and Manchester for visits to theatres/concert halls.

## Conclusions

4.8 The analysis of current shopping patterns has shown that:

- i) Rhyl is by far the most important of the comparison centres within Denbighshire, with an overall market share for residents of the Denbighshire PCA of 27 per cent;
- ii) the retention of comparison expenditure by stores and centres within the PCA amounts only to 41 per cent of aggregate expenditure, with leakage accounting for 59 per cent of expenditure – there is clear scope and a need to increase the comparison retention rate;
- iii) Chester is by far the most important comparison competitor, followed by Llandudno and Wrexham;
- iv) the overall convenience retention rate is very healthy at 84 per cent, but the retention rates in Corwen, Llangollen, the St Asaph/Rhuddlan area and Abergele are unacceptably low and indicate a qualitative need for enhanced provision; and
- v) there is significant leakage of convenience expenditure from the Corwen and Llangollen areas to the three food superstores in Wrexham (Asda, Tesco, and J Sainsbury), there is significant leakage to the Asda at Queensferry and the Tesco at Broughton Park from the Holywell area and significant leakage to the Tesco store at Mold from Ruthin and Holywell.

4.9 The comparison business retention level will increase if further retail development occurs within the town centres of the PCA which is of a sufficient quality to resist the pulling power of the new developments which are occurring elsewhere in the region outside Denbighshire's PCA. The proposed retail element of the extension to Broughton Park in Flintshire should be resisted firmly by Denbighshire County Council.

## 5 QUANTITATIVE RETAIL CAPACITY ANALYSIS

### Comparison Sector

- 5.1 If Denbighshire's town centres can be improved so as to increase the retention of the comparison expenditure available to residents of the PCA, from 41 per cent at present, to 47 percent by the year 2001, then we project a growth in retained expenditure amounting to around £64m. Some of this growth will need to be set aside for the needs of existing retailers, to allow for a growth in internet-based retailing, to allow for a reduction in vacancies, and to meet the turnover requirements of existing committed developments. However, even allowing for these 'claims' on the expenditure growth, there is projected to be around £28m available for new comparison retailing – over and above existing commitments such as Greenfield Place – assuming the retention level can be improved.
- 5.2 Under such a scenario, there would be quantitative need for around 7,500m<sup>2</sup> (81,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) of nett additional comparison sales area. However, this requirement shall not be regarded as a prescriptive floorspace limit, since further quality developments within Denbighshire's town centres could improve the retention level to a higher than that assumed. Quality developments in the right locations can create their own capacity by clawing back expenditure leakage.

### Convenience Sector

- 5.3 If the retention of convenience (food) expenditure can be improved from its current level of 84 per cent to 86 per cent in the year 2011, then we forecast a growth in retained expenditure up to 2011 of around £39m. However, much of this growth will be absorbed by the Tesco commitment in Prestatyn, and small allowances need to be made also for the growth in internet-based shopping and the growth needs of existing retailers. As a consequence, we calculate a short term expenditure deficit in the period up to 2006 which means that the Tesco store in Prestatyn will have some competitive effects on other retailers in the short term. However, by the year 2011, there is a small positive convenience expenditure residual.
- 5.4 There is no overall quantitative need for further convenience provision in Denbighshire, over and above the Tesco commitment in Prestatyn. However, there are clear localised needs for further convenience provision of appropriate scale in Abergel and in the town centres of Corwen, Llangollen and the St Asaph/Rhuddlan area in order to improve the local retention rates in these towns.

## 6 TAN 4 HEALTH CHECKS

### Rhyl

- 6.1 We consider that Rhyl is healthy in terms of its convenience sector provision, but that its comparison offer is not competitive in relation to competing centres outside Denbighshire, particularly in the fashion and higher order goods sectors. Rhyl is represented by few national multiple operators (relative to its main competitors) and whilst there is some evidence of national multiple operator demand, this demand is limited and mainly from the lower end of the retail spectrum.
- 6.2 Rhyl's position in the various retail ranking indices is slipping, which is an indicator of its poor health. Whilst Rhyl has good service sector representation generally, its food & drink outlets serve a restricted market, thereby narrowing the centre's appeal to families. Other indicators of Rhyl's poor health as a retail and leisure centre include: its deteriorating (increasing) level of retail yield; low retail rents (compared to competitor centres); a rising vacancy level; continuing problems in relation to parking and congestion; and the continuing crime problem (perceived and actual).

### Prestatyn

- 6.3 We consider that Prestatyn is relatively healthy in terms of its convenience sector provision and that implementation of the Tesco commitment will strengthen its position. Prestatyn has quite good representation across the comparison sub-sectors, but fashion clothing provision remains particularly weak and we have not identified any fashion retailers that are looking to move into Prestatyn; this poor range of clothing provision is a prime reason for Prestatyn's recent dramatic slide down the MHE retail ranking index. There is, however, interest from at least two key national multiple retailers (Tesco and Argos) which could significantly reverse the fortunes of Prestatyn. Poor accessibility to the A55 is a key problem which needs to be addressed.

### Rhuddlan

- 6.4 Rhuddlan's health as a retail centre is poor, both in terms of its convenience and its comparison offer (except for antiques shops, which have emerged recently as a niche market in Rhuddlan). This is reflected by Rhuddlan's very high vacancy rate. Rhuddlan is healthier as a service centre (hairdressers and beauty salons) and its environmental condition is good. In terms of leisure and tourism, Rhuddlan has a healthy mix of attractions, but these are not fully exploited.

### St Asaph

- 6.5 St Asaph functions as a local convenience and service centre, but it has no material comparison offer. The convenience offer is limited, but the range of services and the quality of its restaurant offer are good. However, St Asaph has particular shortcomings in terms of HGV traffic, on-street parking, congestion and associated pedestrian-traffic conflict. If these problems are not addressed through implementation of a by-pass, there is a danger of existing businesses being lured elsewhere.

### Denbigh

- 6.6 Denbigh's convenience offer has deteriorated recently, with the loss of butchers and bakers, largely attributable to increased competition from edge-of-centre supermarkets. Denbigh's health in terms of its comparison offer is similarly deteriorating (although there is a good mix of specialist retailers), and whilst Denbigh contains a high proportion of service uses, its food & drink offer appeals to a very narrow market. Moreover, Denbigh's level of vacancy is very high and there are parking problems, particularly

for businesses. All of these factors help to explain Denbigh's significant recent slide down the retail ranking indices.

### Ruthin

- 6.7 We consider that Ruthin has a healthy convenience offer and is gaining a reputation as a centre for health and beauty services. Ruthin has a good range of quality hotels and restaurants, and tourist attractions; it has no significant traffic problems; and its environment and general setting is of a very high standard. The only area of its health which we consider has deteriorated in recent years is its role as a centre for comparison goods, with a contraction in both the overall number of comparison goods outlets, and, more worryingly, some contraction in its niche market (ladies' fashions).

### Corwen

- 6.8 Corwen is reasonably healthy as a centre for local convenience shopping, but it does not provide for main food shopping. It is weak as a centre for comparison goods and service uses and a key indicator of Corwen's poor health in these sectors is the high vacancy level.

### Llangollen

- 6.9 Llangollen provides for day-to-day convenience needs, but its supermarket offer is restricted. Llangollen's role as a centre that mainly serves the tourist market has been consolidated in recent years; this tourist role is complemented by the relatively good range of restaurant uses.

## Conclusions

- 6.10 The status of Denbighshire's main retail centres in the retail hierarchy is diminishing, compared with competing centres (Chester, Wrexham and Llandudno), which are generally improving. This suggests that competing centres have more successfully managed to mitigate the undermining impacts of major out-of-town developments such as Cheshire Oaks and Broughton Park. The findings of the retail rankings analysis were corroborated by a wide range of consultees, who generally endorsed the view that Chester remains the dominant regional centre, followed by Wrexham as the major sub-regional centre; Llandudno is now generally regarded as a far superior retail centre to Rhyl and performs a sub-regional status, with Rhyl still elusively struggling for sub-regional status. Prestatyn is clearly the second centre in Denbighshire. Denbigh performs more as a district centre role, with Ruthin and Llangollen of a similar order, but serving a wider tourist market. Corwen, Rhuddlan and St Asaph essentially function as local centres
- 6.11 Out-of-centre development, such as, that proposed by Development Securities and Pillar Property for a 505,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (47,000 m<sup>2</sup>) extension to Broughton Shopping Park on the Welsh border near Chester, represents a further threat to Denbighshire's town centres. A planning application has been lodged with Flintshire County Council to build 347,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. (32,300 m<sup>2</sup>) of offices and 127,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (11,755 m<sup>2</sup>) of retail space. According to Development Securities, Tesco, Allders, Woolworths, WHSmith, Boots and Next are already represented at the Park, but more retailers are said to require space. We consider that Denbighshire County Council should object strongly to the threat to its town centres posed by the proposed expansion of Broughton Park.

## 7 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF DENBIGHSHIRE'S TOWN CENTRES

### Rhyl

- 7.1 Rhyl's principal weaknesses are: its limited comparison goods offer, particularly in the mid-order clothing sector; the lack of recent town centre investment and only limited occupier demand to reverse this trend; a lack of supporting facilities such as quality, family oriented eateries; its very poor quality public realm in many respects, including the cluttered streetscape and street furniture, the poorly maintained property and the run-down appearance of the Promenade area; its congestion and pedestrian-traffic conflict problems; the continuing perception of Rhyl as a crime hotspot; and the town centre's close proximity to Wales's most deprived ward and all the attendant problems that brings (crime / anti-social behaviour, and so on).
- 7.2 Key strengths include the untapped expenditure potential of recent in-migrants who currently favour Chester and Llandudno as their main comparison spend locations, and the scope to enhance levels of tourism expenditure. Rhyl also has a healthy convenience sector.

### Prestatyn

- 7.3 Prestatyn – like Rhyl – has more clearly identifiable weaknesses than strengths. Prestatyn's main plus points are its relatively healthy convenience sector which will be bolstered further by the implementation of the Tesco proposal, its relatively low vacancy level and the quite pleasant southern end of High Street, which contains some nice boutiques. Its main weaknesses are: the very small number of national multiple retailers (attractors) present in the town and the low level of identified retailer demand to overcome the problem; a very low-grade environment at the northern end of High Street which will not be improved until the Tesco commitment is implemented; the town centre's relative inaccessibility; the lack of supporting infrastructure including high quality restaurants; and the very limited amount of high quality tourist accommodation.

### Rhuddlan

- 7.4 Rhuddlan's main strengths are: its good range of tourist attractions (castle / river / church), located in an attractive setting; its reputation as a centre for antiques; and its existing reputation as a service centre. Rhuddlan's main weaknesses are: its limited variety of shops (convenience and comparison); the lack of a bank and a coach park; and the continuing failure to fully tap the tourism potential of the Castle.

### St Asaph

- 7.5 St Asaph's principal strengths are its good range service uses (restaurants and professional uses) and its buoyant housing market. Its main weaknesses are the hostile town centre environment (its topography and the problems associated with high volumes of HGV traffic, narrow footways and so on), and its very limited retail offer (both in the comparison and convenience sectors).

### Denbigh

- 7.6 Denbigh's main strengths are its eclectic range of high quality architecture and well-respected ceramics and gift shops. Its main weaknesses are: the insufficient amount of parking for businesses; the very limited comparison shopping offer; the poor linkages to the castle; the very high vacancy level; and its poor quality supporting infrastructure (hotels and restaurants).

### **Ruthin**

- 7.7 Ruthin's main strengths are: its reputation as a centre for high-quality ladies' fashions and its emerging reputation as a centre of hair & beauty services; the range of good restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions; and its attractive setting. Ruthin's main weaknesses are the lack of a strong concentration of Class A1 retail units, the pockets of vacancies in the town centre and the retraction of its niche market in ladies' fashions.

### **Corwen**

- 7.8 Corwen's main strengths are: its good range of local shops and services; its status as a base for outdoor pursuits; and its location in relation to the strategic road network. Corwen's main weaknesses are: the lack of investment in the Pavilion; the lack of a supermarket, with no apparent operator demand to support one; and its very weak housing market.

### **Llangollen**

- 7.9 Llangollen's main strengths are: its local history; its niche market for antiques; and its recently acquired Tourism Growth Area (TGA) status. Llangollen's main weaknesses are: the very limited range of both comparison and convenience shops; insufficient parking and resultant congestion; and the lack of any sizeable or unconstrained development sites.

## 8 THE CENTRE STRATEGIES

### Introduction

8.1 Our recommended strategies for each of the centres contain projects and policy actions under four headings – Strategic Themes, Attractions (diversity and critical mass), Accessibility (mobility and linkages) and Amenities (security and identity). The new *attractions* are needed to meet actual and potential demand, whilst the recommended *accessibility* and *amenity* measures are those that are necessary to secure the new attractions, and to improve the town centres for existing users, which should be a policy aim, even where there is little or no scope for securing new attractions.

### Rhyl

8.2 The strategy for Rhyl includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:

- to tackle the problems of West Rhyl ward as the most economically and socially deprived ward in Wales and a source of many problems for the image of the town centre;
- to develop a retail occupier 'wish list' to assist in target marketing initiatives;
- the promotion of town centre office employment;
- improvements to West Kinmel Street car park, an enhanced park and ride scheme and better enforcement of parking restrictions;
- to re-launch a site assembly initiative in respect of the High Street/Sussex Street/Queen Street/West Parade block – a process which may ultimately require CPO procedures – and to identify high quality private sector development partners which have the wide ranging expertise to take on difficult projects and help to create new markets;
- to sort out the problems of the West Promenade and come to a conclusion on the feasibility and best mix for leisure projects at Foryd Harbour and Ocean Beach;
- to identify private sector partners to provide new hotel accommodation of a higher standard than currently offered in Rhyl;
- target marketing of quality family orientated restaurant operators; and
- environmental enhancement through provision of green spaces and improvement of street furniture and shop fronts.

### Prestatyn

8.3 The strategy for Prestatyn includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:

- to implement the High Street supermarket commitment as a matter of urgency and resolve any clashes of private sector interests which are preventing progress;
- to redesignate the land to the rear of Kwik Save for comparison retail development;
- to develop a retail occupier 'wish list' and undertake an intensive target marketing initiative to assess the conditions which would need to prevail to attract these retailers to Prestatyn and to identify specific property requirements;

- encouragement for a redevelopment of the Scala Cinema;
- enforcement of parking restrictions, traffic calming measures and provision of a shuttle bus service; and
- environmental enhancement of key streets and gateways.

### Rhuddlan

8.4 The strategy for Rhuddlan includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:

- to promote business park development on the Triangle site so as to bring employment and economic activity to the town;
- to target banks and identify the conditions under which a bank can be persuaded (perhaps with grant assistance) to locate in the High Street;
- to upgrade the condition and appearance of the vacant properties on High Street;
- provision of a youth centre; and
- the promotion of Rhuddlan Castle and development of a heritage centre and coach park near to the Castle.

### St Asaph

8.5 The strategy for St Asaph includes the following projects, aspirations or policy action areas:

- to undertake a feasibility study to identify and agree a route for a by-pass and funding sources;
- to encourage the WDA and other relevant agencies to make available grants for environmental improvements and building maintenance, provided that a commitment is given to proceed with the feasibility study and an in-principle commitment is made to proceed with the by-pass;
- to assess the feasibility of providing a new car park and a shuttle bus service to ferry people up and down the steep High Street;
- more efficient enforcement of parking restrictions; and
- to consider the imposition of a weight restriction to remove HGV traffic from High Street.

### Denbigh

8.6 The strategy for Denbigh includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:

- to reverse the decline in the number and quality of independent comparison traders present in the town through the identification of niche opportunities and intensive marketing of the town to potential independent operators/regional multiples;
- to build a car park designated for the use of businesses located in the town centre;
- to encourage family friendly eating establishments which remain open after 5.00pm;

- improved linkages between the town centre and the castle;
- improvements to the public realm; and
- encouragement of improved building maintenance.

### Ruthin

- 8.7 The strategy for Ruthin includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:
- to introduce an even tougher policy stance to ensure that the vacant units are eventually occupied for Class A1 retail uses only;
  - to promote the redevelopment for retail use of land next to the Town Hall and Crown House; and
  - investigation of the potential tourism uses for Nant Clwyd House.

### Corwen

- 8.8 The strategy for Corwen includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:
- to forge linkages with potential private sector investors (existing or new) to ensure that mixed use development of the Common and adjacent areas is expedited, including provision for a new supermarket;
  - to refurbish the Pavilion;
  - provision of subsidised bus services from existing housing estates to the town centre;
  - improvements to the A5/A494 junction, restriction of HGV access to Green Lane and traffic calming on the A5; and
  - continued monitoring of the feasibility of the proposed extension of the steam railway.

### Llangollen

- 8.9 The strategy for Llangollen includes the following projects, aspirations, or policy action areas:
- to secure a larger supermarket than presently exists, perhaps on the site of the Lower Dee Mill if this site was ever to be vacated;
  - find a site for a new car park;
  - to improve the physical links between the Royal International Pavilion and the town centre;
  - to assess the feasibility of a 'park and float' scheme;
  - the introduction of CCTV; and
  - improvement to shop facias.

## 9 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

- 9.1 Our study has demonstrated that Denbighshire's larger retail centres have lost ground in the wider regional retail hierarchy since the mid 1990s, with the diminished vitality and viability particularly noticeable in Rhyl, Prestatyn and Denbigh. The decline in these centres reflects, in part, the greater progress made in the competing centres of Chester, Wrexham and Llandudno and the competition posed by large out-of-centre developments such as Broughton Park and Cheshire Oaks. There are, however, localised factors which have also frustrated progress in the larger centres including the acute level of deprivation experienced in West Rhyl, the need for more focussed partnership between the public sector and business groups, difficulties caused by uncooperative property owners, low levels of entrepreneurial expertise and a dearth of quality development partners.
- 9.2 Similarly, the smaller centres of St Asaph, Rhuddlan and Corwen have not been able to stem the decline in the role they play in the economic and social life of the communities they serve. Only Ruthin and Llangollen can be described as being relatively healthy centres and the latter survives because of its specialist tourism role.
- 9.3 It is clear, therefore, that the time has come for the public sector to take the lead in stimulating public-private partnership initiatives, so as to take action which can improve investment confidence, reduce investment risk and, ultimately, boost vitality and viability. The partnership initiatives will need to succeed, not only in improving accessibility and the quality of the public realm, but also in attracting the new high quality retail and leisure occupiers, which are required to increase expenditure retention and arrest decline. The first task, however, is to find the quality of development partner – with wide ranging expertise across the UK – which has been so obviously not present in Denbighshire for many years.
- 9.4 In Section 8, we identify our recommended strategies for each of the County's eight main centres, with actions clustered under the headings of "Strategic Themes", "Attractions", "Accessibility" and "Amenities". Some of the actions involve further research, target marketing and feasibility assessments, but there are also a range of early win projects which should be capable of implementation in the short term. In this section we identify some of the prerequisites to successful implementation of the overall strategies and the top priority projects which require the Council's immediate attention, even if they are not capable of implementation until the medium to long term.

### Planning Policy Context

- 9.5 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) has only recently been adopted, but one of the aims of the study was to provide a basis for an early review of the UDP's retail strategy. Our need assessment has shown that there is a requirement for further comparison sector development of the right quality in the right locations, so as to increase the unacceptably low comparison expenditure retention rate which exists today. Our research suggests that it would be inappropriate for any review of the UDP to set rigid targets for new floorspace, since developments of the right type and quality in the right town centre locations can create their own capacity by reducing leakage and increasing the retention level. Nevertheless, the minimum nett gain in sales floorspace to improve retention to an acceptable level in the period up to 2011, is around 7,500m<sup>2</sup>. The market will dictate that most new comparison development is directed to Rhyl, but there is clearly scope for further comparison sector development in Prestatyn and to a lesser extent in Denbigh and Ruthin.
- 9.6 However, the town centre comparison development that is so urgently required will not materialise unless the right development opportunities are assembled (through CPO procedures if necessary), and unless progress is made simultaneously in improving accessibility, improving the quality of the public

realm, reducing crime and so on. Moreover, the review of the UDP will need to take a tough stance against out-of-centre retail proposals, both within Denbighshire and in neighbouring authorities.

- 9.7 So far as the convenience sector is concerned, there is no generic shortage of provision, but our research has shown localised needs for improved provision of supermarkets of appropriate scale in Llangollen and Corwen and in the Rhuddlan/St Asaph area. The review of the UDP will need to identify sites of appropriate size to meet these local needs; and the principle of a new supermarket at the High Street site in Prestatyn should be renewed in the UDP review.
- 9.8 Sequentially preferable opportunities which are suitable, viable and likely to become available for comparison led development include:

#### ***Town Centre Sites***

- i) The High Street/Sussex Street/Queen Street/West Parade block in Rhyl - this block was identified in our earlier 1995 study and in the adopted UDP, but little progress has been made. The WDA has acquired some properties on Queen Street, but a CPO process may be required to assemble the main site.
- ii) The area around the old indoor market south of Sussex Street in Rhyl, which appears to be ready for re-development .

#### ***Edge-of-centre Sites***

- i) Morfa Hall, off Bath Street in Rhyl – this site has potential for retail use, but we consider that redevelopment for office purposes may be more beneficial given the site's peripheral location and the need to diversify the economy of the town centre.
- ii) Land to the rear of Kwik Save in Prestatyn – the land to the rear of Kwik Save is currently allocated for employment purposes in the UDP, but we advocate that the allocation be changed to allow for non-food comparison development.
- iii) Land between West Kinmel Street and the main railway line in Rhyl – this site is just about capable of being made to function as an edge-of-centre site and we consider that it is suitable for retail sheds for bulky comparison retailers.
- iv) Land next to the Town Hall and Crown House in Ruthin – this represents a retail redevelopment opportunity which would link well with the nearby PFI project to provide new offices for the Council and it would provide a link between the Coop and the town centre.

- 9.9 Sequentially preferable town centre sites which are suitable, viable and likely to become available for food retail development include:
- i) The High Street site in Prestatyn, for which Tesco has an extant consent.
  - ii) Some of the vacant properties in Rhuddlan High Street.
  - iii) Some of the vacant properties in St Asaph High Street.
  - iv) Some of the vacant premises in Denbigh.
  - v) Some of the vacant units in Ruthin.
  - vi) Corwen Common and some of the vacant units in Corwen.

- 9.10 Sequentially preferable sites which are suitable, viable and likely to become available for commercial leisure, hotel and restaurant uses include:
- i) The Events Arena in Rhyl.
  - ii) The East and West Promenades in Rhyl, including Marine Lake and Foryd Harbour and Ocean Beach.
  - iii) The Scala Cinema site in Prestatyn.
  - iv) Nant Clwyd House in Ruthin.
  - v) Corwen Common.
  - vi) Some of the vacant units in all of the eight town centres.

9.11 Clearly further work will need to be undertaken in identifying and assembling sequentially preferable sites through the UDP review process.

### **Key Recommendations**

9.12 Our recommendations for top priority action on the part of the County Council, the WDA and their associated private and public sector partners, for each of the eight centres, are as set out below, with details of the likely actors and potential funding sources given in the previous Section 8.

#### ***Rhyl***

9.13 The top priorities for Rhyl are:

- i) to tackle the problems of West Rhyl ward as the most economically and socially deprived ward in Wales and a source of many problems for the image of the town centre;
- ii) to develop a retail occupier "wish list" and undertake an intensive target marketing initiative to assess the conditions which would need to prevail to attract these retailers to Rhyl and to identify specific property requirements;
- iii) to re-launch a site assembly initiative in respect of the High Street/Sussex Street/Queen Street/West Parade block – a process which may ultimately require CPO procedures – and to identify high quality private sector development partners which have the wide ranging expertise to take on difficult projects and help to create new markets;
- iv) to sort out the problems of the West Promenade and come to a conclusion on the feasibility and best mix for leisure projects at Foryd Harbour and Ocean Beach; and
- v) to identify private sector partners to provide new hotel accommodation of a higher standard to that currently offered in Rhyl.

#### ***Prestatyn***

9.14 The top priorities for Prestatyn are:

- i) to implement the High Street supermarket commitment as a matter of urgency and resolve any clashes of private sector interests which are preventing progress;

- ii) to redesignate the land to the rear of Kwik Save for comparison retail development; and
- iii) to develop a retail occupier "wish list" and undertake an intensive target marketing initiative to assess the conditions which would need to prevail to attract these retailers to Prestatyn and to identify specific property requirements.

#### ***Rhuddlan***

9.15 The top priorities for Rhuddlan are:

- i) to promote business park development on the Triangle site so as to bring employment and economic activity to the town;
- ii) to target banks and identify the conditions under which a bank can be persuaded (perhaps with grant assistance) to locate in the High Street; and
- iii) to upgrade the condition and appearance of the vacant properties on High Street.

#### ***St Asaph***

9.16 The top priorities for St Asaph are:

- i) to undertake a feasibility study to identify and agree a route for a by-pass and funding sources; and
- ii) to encourage the WDA and other relevant agencies to make available grants for environmental improvements and building maintenance, provided that a commitment is given to proceed with the feasibility study and an in-principle commitment is made to proceed with the by-pass.

#### ***Denbigh***

9.17 The top priorities for Denbigh are:

- i) to reverse the decline in the number and quality of independent comparison traders present in the town through the identification of niche opportunities and intensive marketing of the town to potential independent operators/regional multiples; and
- ii) to build a car park designated for the use of businesses located in the town centre.

#### ***Ruthin***

9.18 The top priorities for Ruthin are:

- i) to introduce an even tougher policy stance to ensure that the vacant units are eventually occupied for Class A1 retail uses only;
- ii) to promote the redevelopment for retail use of land next to the Town Hall and Crown House; and
- iii) secure a tourism role for Nant Clwyd House.

### ***Corwen***

9.19 The top priorities for Corwen are:

- i) to forge linkages with potential private sector investors (existing or new) to ensure that mixed use development of the Common and adjacent areas is expedited, including provision for a new supermarket; and
- ii) to refurbish the Pavilion.

### ***Llangollen***

9.20 The top priorities for Llangollen are:

- i) to secure a larger supermarket than presently exists, perhaps on the site of the Lower Dee Mill if this site was ever to be vacated; and
- ii) find a site for a new car park.

## **The Fundamental Requirements**

9.21 Several of the top priority recommendations have been known about for several years, with little or no progress. The fundamental requirement for future success is to obtain political consensus in different parts of the County and across political parties and announce a firm intention on the part of all the relevant agencies to come together in order to tackle market failure and negative perceptions. In turn, a resolution of market failure will require very careful target marketing of opportunities, filling knowledge gaps on the part of potential retail and leisure occupiers, financial assistance for pump priming investment and so as to reduce investment risk for early investors, publicity as to how accessibility and the public realm are to be improved, and preparation of marketing material which sets out the vision for each of the centres. Market failure is most apparent in Rhyl and the problems of West Rhyl will require a multi-agency, multi-departmental approach and radical measures to reduce social exclusion, encourage a better socio-economic profile and reduce the density and concentration of deprivation through selective property clearance, changed housing policies and concerted support from the police and social services. In addition it is clear that Denbighshire has suffered from the lack of high quality development partners with UK wide expertise which have the ability to take on difficult projects in low demand areas and to create new markets.

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**AGENDA ITEM NO: 5 [CABINET 2003 - 70]**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** **Mike German, Lead Member for Sustainable Development & the Environment**

**DATE:** **20 May 2003**

**SUBJECT:** **Approval of Supplementary Planning Guidance**

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

- 1.1 To seek approval of two attached Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs) for use in development control.
- 1.2 The two SPGs attached in Appendix 1 are :
  - No. 8 - Access for All
  - No. 18 - Nature Conservation & Species Protection

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

- 2.1 The Denbighshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is now adopted and existing SPG's will be updated where necessary. The SPGs attached to this report will supplement various policies of the Denbighshire UDP, which will provide further guidance to members, officers and developers in the submission and assessment of development proposals.
- 2.2 The revised SPGs have been revised to take account of the following:
  - Changes in National Planning Guidance ie Planning Policy Wales 2002
  - New and amended Technical Advice Notes, TANs
  - Any relevant policy changes in the UDP following the Plan Inquiry
  - Representations received during the public consultation period.
- 2.2 Amendments to the SPGs consisted of updates and the inclusion of additional information. There were no material changes to the policy guidance.

- 2.3 The revised SPGs have been subject to public consultation. Once adopted by Council, they can be taken into account as a material consideration in determining applications for planning permission.

### **3. COST IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The SPG on Access has significant cost implications. The financial implications of complying with the DDA has already been considered by Full Council in February 2003.

### **4 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

The financial impact of this matter upon the Council regarding its own property, has been estimated and is built into the Capital Programme for the next few years.

### **5 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 5.1 The attached SPGs were issued for public consultation alongside the Unitary Development Plan Deposit version. The representations received are set out in the table attached as Appendix 2. The table also contains the suggested response to each representation along with any amendments made.

### **6 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

- 6.1 Improve the quality of the environment and the quality of life for residents of Denbighshire.

### **7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 That the attached SPGs as amended be approved by Cabinet and recommended for adoption by the Council.

## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

# **DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **ACCESS FOR ALL**

### **1. Introduction**

**1.1** This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

### **2 Status and Stages in Preparation**

**2.1** The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly), has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals.

**2.2** The purpose of this SPG is to provide guidance to designers / developers / applicants to meet the needs of disabled people through inclusive design in all types of development. Our towns and cities have not been designed with the needs of disabled people in mind; one person in six in Wales has a disability.

### **3. Background**

**3.1** Disability is defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as "someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities", (to include physical and sensory impairments, mental health issues, learning disabilities).

It is estimated that at least one person in three of Denbighshire's population requires help in obtaining access. This figure includes people with children (prams/buggies), elderly people and those with short/long term impairments. Providing an accessible environment benefits society at large.

#### **3.2 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) introduces legislation aimed at ending the discrimination that many disabled people face. It affects virtually everyone who provides facilities information and services to the general public whether paid for or free of charge.

- From October 2004, service providers may have to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

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### **4. Policy**

This note applies to matters subject to planning and building regulations. Separate guidance is available on other matters and set out under Further reading and information in appendix one.

The following policy and related documents are relevant:-

1. Planning Policy Wales, S4
2. TAN (W) 12 Design, S3 and S5
3. Policy Gen 6 (vi) General Development Considerations
4. British Standards 8300:2001
5. Approved Document Part M of Building Standards

The Council is committed to providing equality of access to all public buildings, education (SENDA), health, community, leisure and recreational facilities, open spaces, services and the wider environment for all sectors of the community.

### **5. UDP Policy GEN 6**

Criterion (vi) states

Proposals should .....where appropriate, provides safe and convenient access for persons with disabilities.

In addition to this SPG, Denbighshire County Council is committed through other strategies, policies and advice notes to provide a barrier free environment –

- Access Strategy
- Access for All Advice Note
- Equal Opportunities Policy

### **6. Design Principles**

The arrangements for access to buildings can be a material planning consideration and the arrangements for use by the public, which include disabled people, raises issues of public amenity that can be material to a planning application. (Where appropriate the planning authority may impose conditions requiring access provisions for disabled people.)

#### **6.1 Building Regulations**

Applicants / designers / developers are advised to ensure that, at an early stage in the design process, their proposals will meet the standards set out in **Part M of the Building Regulations 1999 (Access and Facilities for Disabled People)**. Part M of Building Regulations are presently under review.

The regulations require that reasonable provision be made for people with physical and sensory impairments to gain access and use all non-domestic buildings and dwellings. It is expected, however, that Part M will be extended to include existing buildings and change of use. At present New Build and domestic use are covered.

#### **6.2 Means of Escape**

The Approved Document supporting Part B of the Building Regulations 1991 comprises the requirements for fire precautions in a building and guidance on meeting them. Detailed information on means of escape is given in Part 8 of BS5588 Fire Precautions in the Design, Construction and Use of Buildings.

#### **6.3 BSI 8300:2001**

British Standard BS 8300:2001 is the 'Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people, Code of Practice'.

The recommendations in this Standard apply for assessing the accessibility and usability of existing buildings, and where practicable, as a basis for their improvement. This applies to the following types of building.

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- Transport and industrial buildings
- Health and welfare buildings
- Religious buildings
- Dwellings and other residential buildings
- Administrative and commercial buildings
- Refreshment, entertainment and recreation buildings
- Educational, cultural and scientific buildings

**6.4** There are instances where a flexible approach is needed, particularly in existing buildings. It is particularly important that provision is matched to the use of the building e.g. aids to communications hearing loop systems in Theatres, accessible changing facilities in leisure buildings.

### **7. Compliance**

It should be noted, however, compliance with Part M does not guarantee the needs of disabled people have been met. Recommendations through the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and BSI 8300 should also be taken into consideration to ensure suitable and reasonable provision is available for disabled people, promotion of Inclusive Design.

### **8. Non-Domestic Buildings and the Spaces Between Them**

This covers shops, educational buildings, offices, industrial buildings, community facilities, recreational and entertainment buildings and public toilets.

Development of buildings open to the public, buildings used for employment and education purposes should provide suitable access and facilities for disabled people, as customers, visitors and employees. Applicants should be mindful of the following criteria:

- Reserved extra-wide parking facilities
- Accessible approach to, around and into buildings
- Access to all facilities
- Including fixture and fittings
- Facilities for physical and sensory impaired people

#### **8.1 Countryside**

Countryside developments should take into account the needs of disabled people. Much can be done to assist disabled people even where ground conditions and gradients preclude many physically disabled people from reaching all areas. The Council encourages imaginative and innovative ways of providing provisions for disabled people,( to include physical and sensory impaired people).

#### **8.2 Housing**

Where there is dear evidence demonstrated of local need for mobility housing, this will be a material planning consideration in any proposals to adapt existing housing.

Mobility housing is defined as general needs housing modified to a minor extent to make it accessible for disabled people. It

- Increases the range of housing available to disabled people
- Allows greater scope for visiting by all

The value of purpose-built mobility housing will be greatly enhanced when site access and the use of nearby amenities are also part of the scheme.

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Legislation regarding the requirements for the provision of new housing suitable for disabled people, is included in Approved document Part M of Building Regulations and Lifetime Homes standards.

### **8.3 Historic Properties**

Disabled people should have easy access to and within historic buildings. A flexible and pragmatic approach should be taken to an integrated review of access requirements for all visitors and users. It is possible to plan suitable access for disabled people without compromising a building's special interest by striking a balance between conservation and access requirements. (See document 8 in appendix one).

### **8.4 Traffic Management**

Developments incorporating traffic management schemes or alteration to traffic and parking arrangements shall include suitable provision for disabled people. Consideration must be given to access routes for vehicles of blue badge permit holders and public transport ie, buses and taxis. Consideration needs to be given to the size, location and number of parking bays, and the provision of setting down points for buses and taxis. Dropped kerbs should be 'flush' with the road surface.

### **8.5 Pedestrian Environment**

Applicants should be mindful of the following criteria to ensure an accessible barrier-free pedestrian environment:-

Inclusive Design criteria to include:

- the layout and dimensions of footways and footpaths (minimum width of 1350mm, obstacle free)
- the choice, positioning and colouring of street furniture; seats should be provided at intervals along routes where waiting is likely;
- seating should be stable and provided in a range of heights.
- Positioning of bins and lighting not to obstruct the footways.
- the layout and construction of pedestrianised areas to include level and even surfaces

### **9. General Guidelines**

The following recommendations are intended to provide general guideline to meeting the needs of disabled people accessing primarily public services taking into account the Disability Discrimination Act Part III Section 21 (October 2004).

Inclusive Design criteria to include:

- External signage (clear, bold colour contrasts and symbols).
- Good outside lighting, around car parks, paths and entrances.
- Designated car parking spaces with markings and driver head height signs.
- A 'flush' dropped kerb to level well maintained paths with clear signage, and tactile area where appropriate.
- A ramped or level entrance.
- Handrails on both sides of steep ramps, stairs and steps, with handrails that continue 300mm past the steps.
- An automatic door opening device at the principal main entrance (where reasonably practical)
- External door with a level threshold and a minimum clear opening width of 800mm, with easy to grip handles.
- Internal signage (bold clear colour contrasts and symbols)
- Wheelchair user friendly entrance doormat, not coconut matting.
- Good lighting levels throughout the building.
- Sensible use of décor, use bold contrasts of colour to highlight doors, light switches, handrails, stairs, steps, notice boards, telephones etc.

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- Accessible reception desk/counter with low level area.
- Induction loop system should be available at all reception points, training and meeting rooms.
- Fire alarms should include audio and visual communication.
- Unisex accessible toilets with all fittings, including emergency pull cord.
- Facilities at suitable heights, including IT, telephone, work surfaces, noticeboards
- Lifts to all floors with audio and Braille instructions.
- An accessible level or ramped ground floor fire exit, with clear signage and evacuation procedure, safe refuge points for all upper floors including signage.

### **10. Guidance**

Building Regulations include standards of provision for people with physical and sensory impairments. The following notes include some of the requirements of the Building Regulations and British Standards and are intended to provide design guidance for most elements of development.

#### **10.1. Car Parking**

In the case of all non-residential development, the Council will require that appropriately positioned parking places, adequate in size and number, shall be provided for people with disabilities duly issued with blue badge permits. The size of each parking place and the level of provision shall be in accord with the Council's parking guidelines.

Refer to **SPG 3, Parking Requirements in New Developments**

Applicants should be mindful of the following criteria:-

- Size, number and identification of reserved parking spaces
- Convenience of spaces in relation to buildings
- Access to and from car parking areas
- Flat surfaces
- See appendix 3 for details of parking spaces

#### **10.2. Additional information can be found in Appendix 2 and 3 on**

- Car Parking
- Entrances, Doors & Lobbies
- Corridors
- External Ramps
- Handrails
- Toilets
- Lifts
- Signposting

## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

### Appendix 1

#### **Further Reading and Information**

1. Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 76)
2. The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (amended 1976)
3. Building Regulations: Approved Document M (1999), updated as appropriate
4. Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Code of Practice
5. British Standards 8300:2001
6. Technical Advice Note 12 – Design
7. Meeting Part M and designing Lifetime Homes (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
8. Overcoming the Barriers – CADW (Providing Physical Access to Historic Buildings)
  
9. Building Sight by Peter Barker, Jon Barrick, Rod Wilson – JMU Access
10. Sign Design Guide – JMU Access Partnership
11. Access Audits, - Centre for Accessible Environments
12. Designing for Accessibility, - Centre for Accessible Environments
13. Colour and Contrast – JMU Access Partnership

#### **Useful Contacts**

Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) Nutmeg House 60 Gainsford Street London SE1 2NY Tel/texphone 020 7357 8182 Fax 020 7357 8183 Email <a href="mailto:info@cae.org.uk">info@cae.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.cae.org.uk">www.cae.org.uk</a>	JMU Access Partnership C/O RNIB Cymru Trident Court A East Moors Road CARDIFF CF24 5TD Email <a href="mailto:jmuwales@rnib.org.uk">jmuwales@rnib.org.uk</a> Website <a href="http://www.jmuaccess.org.uk">www.jmuaccess.org.uk</a> Website
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Disability Rights Commission Helpline Freepost/MID 02164 Stratford Upon Avon CV37 9BR Tel: 08457 622 633 Texphone: 08457 622 644 Email <a href="mailto:enquiry@drc-gb.org">enquiry@drc-gb.org</a> Website <a href="http://www.drc-gb.org">www.drc-gb.org</a>	CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments Crown Buildings Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ Tel: 029 2050 0200 Fax: 029 2082 6375 Email <a href="mailto:Cadw@Wales.gsi.Gov.UK">Cadw@Wales.gsi.Gov.UK</a> Website <a href="http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk">www.cadw.wales.gov.uk</a>
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Royal National Institute for the Deaf 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor Somerset House 30 Wynnstay Road Colwyn Bay LL29 8NB Tel 01492 534 208 Textphone 01492 534 488 Website <a href="http://www.rnid.org.uk">www.rnid.org.uk</a>	Royal National Institute for the Blind RNIB Cymru Trident Court Cardiff Tel 02920 450 440 Website <a href="http://www.rnib.org.uk">www.rnib.org.uk</a>
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Denbighshire Access Group  
Unit W1 Morfa Clwyd Business Centre  
84 Marsh Road,  
Rhyl  
Denbighshire LL18 2AF  
Tel: 01745 336421  
email [denbigh.access@virgin.net](mailto:denbigh.access@virgin.net)

## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

### Appendix 2

#### 1. Entrances, Doors & Lobbies

- Automatic doors generally offer very good access and are a preferable option.
- Entrance doors, especially transparent doors, should be distinguishable by detailing, colour or other features.
- Door closers should be adjusted to the minimum force necessary (guidance recommends 25-30 newtons).
- Entrance lobbies should be light and spacious.
- There should be space at waiting areas for wheelchair users.
- Thresholds should be flush wherever possible.
- For double doors, each door opening to be minimum of external 800mm/internal 750mm
- Vision panel to give minimum zone of visibility from 900mm to 1500mm from floor level

#### 2. Corridors

- Width of corridors - without passing bays 1800mm
- with passing bays 1500mm
- provide unobstructed space for approaching doors
- splayed or rounded corners desirable
- on narrow and L-shaped corridors, provide a wheelchair turning circle of 1500mm diameter
- appliances and fittings recessed.

#### 3. External Ramps

Ramps and platform / level access are essential to enable wheelchair users and parents with pushchairs to overcome level changes, but ideally they should be accompanied by steps for ambulant disabled people.

- A gradient of 1:20 is considered 'level'. 1:15 is the maximum on ramps up to 10m long, and (1:12 the maximum on ramps up to 5m long, use only where it is not practicable to use alternative gradients).
- Length of ramp between landings/level areas - 5m - 10m for a 1:15 to 1:20 gradient, less than 5m for a 1:12 to 1:15 gradient
- Surface - non-slip.
- Width - surface width 1800mm preferred, 1200mm minimum (1000mm unobstructed)
- Gradients - 1:20 preferred, 1:12 minimum
- Alignment - slopes should be straight, where any turns on level landings
- Landings - to be level, and clear of any door swing. Top & bottom - 1800mm preferred, 1200mm minimum. Intermediate - 1800mm preferred, 1500 minimum
- Sides - any open edge should have a raised kerb 100mm high
- Handrails - at two levels, both sides, continuous (for ramps more than 2000mm long). Top of upper handrails 900mm above surface of ramp and 1000mm above surface of landing. Top of lower handrails 650mm above surface of ramp and 750mm above surface of landing. Extends 450mm (300mm min) beyond top/bottom of ramp with a closed end.
- See diagram in appendix 3

## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

### **4. Handrails**

Handrails give support to people as they negotiate changes of level. They should be securely fixed. To assist visually impaired people, handrails should contrast tonally with their surroundings.

- minimum 45mm from side wall/obstacles
- 50mm above bracket
- Easy to grasp (avoid hard metal surfaces externally)

### **5. Toilets**

Accessible WC's are essential for the freedom of disabled people. Dimensions relating WC pan to basin and associated fittings and equipment, to wheelchair manoeuvring space, are critical for independent use.

- A separate unisex facility is recommended with a 'minimum' area specification of 1500mm x 2000mm.
- External opening door with a minimum door width of 1000mm wide.
- Provision of an emergency bell system within cubicle, to include reset button.
- A space of at least 750mm alongside toilet to aid manoeuvring, (measurable from wall to edge of toilet pan).
- Colour contrasting walls for visually impaired people. there should be a sharp tonal contrast between the main features, equipment and controls
- See diagram appendix 3
- Toilets should be located to provide disabled people with the shortest, most direct route.
- Accessible toilets should be situated at ground level, and/or at the same level as other key facilities, such as main entrances, reception and waiting areas, and refreshment outlets.
- A "disabled toilet" is one which is broken. An "accessible toilet" is available for use. Plans and signs should be marked accordingly.
- It is not acceptable, for reasons of hygiene, to allow baby-feeding in toilets. Litter can compromise the health and safety of disabled users.

### **6. Lifts**

- Lifts should have a minimum internal measurement of 1100mm wide by 1400mm deep.
- Doors to have a clear opening width of 830mm wide (minimum 800mm)
- Controls located halfway along side wall at maximum height of 1200mm to the top button.
- Braille and audio instructions for use of lift
- Height of controls between
- Sufficient circulation space to lift door (approx 1500mm turning circle)

### **7. Signposting**

Information should be clear and unambiguous - carefully sited at convenient heights and be readily distinguishable from the background by the use of strong contrast.

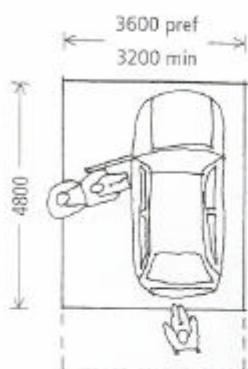
## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

### Appendix 3

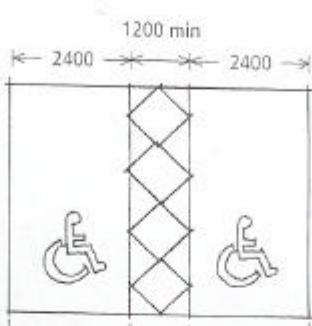
#### External environment

## Car parking

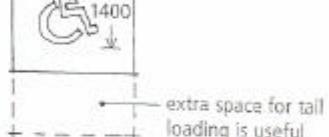
Preferred arrangement – gives wheelchair users the choice of transferring on either side of the bay.



Where space is more limited, hatched transfer area is shared between two adjacent bays.

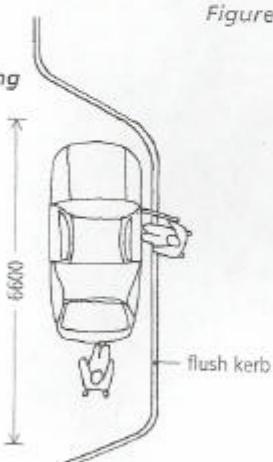


Standard bay, using adjacent footway as transfer area, with flush kerb at junction. Ensure adequate width of footway to avoid obstructing pedestrian flow.



*Figure 1 Accessible off-street parking bays*

*Figure 2 On-street parking*



- Larger parking bays are required to allow people with reduced mobility to get into and out of their cars with the minimum of difficulty (see Figure 1).
- The location of accessible bays should be clearly signposted from the car park entrance.
- Bays should be identified as provision for disabled drivers or passengers only.
- Bays should be close to the entrances to the facilities the car park serves – within 50m if uncovered, 100m if covered.
- Bays need to be wide enough for car doors to be fully opened to allow disabled drivers and passengers to transfer to a wheelchair parked alongside and long enough to allow space for tail loading.
- Kerbs between the parking area and routes to buildings should be dropped to give access to wheelchair users.
- The car park surface should be smooth and even and free from loose stones.
- Layout of on-street parking bays is shown in Figure 2.
- All pedestrian routes within the car park should be level.

#### Minimum recommended number of bays in off-street car parks

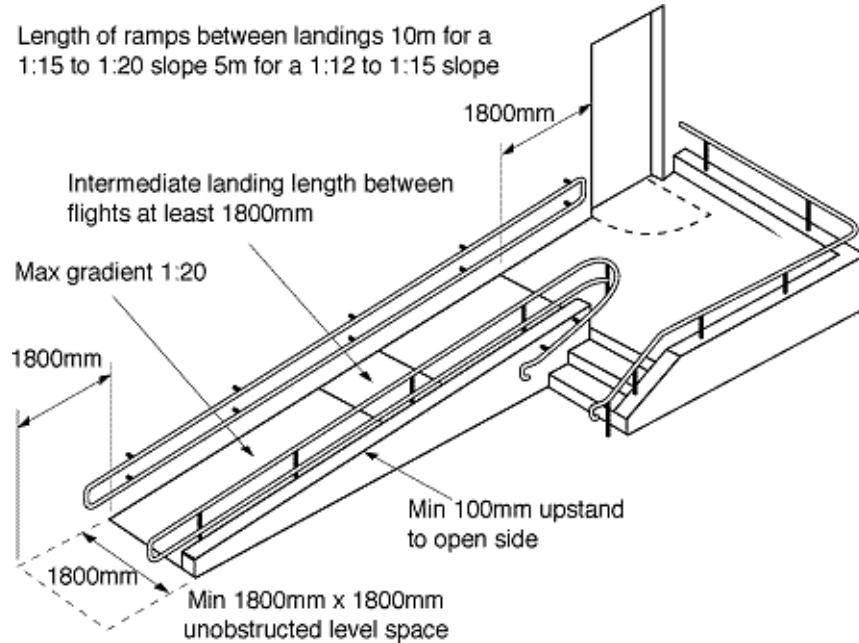
Car park used for:	Car park size:	Up to 200 bays	Over 200 bays
Employees and visitors to business premises	Individual bays for each disabled employee plus 2 bays or 3% of total capacity, whichever is greater	6 bays plus 2% of total capacity	
Shopping, recreation and leisure	3 bays or 6% of capacity whichever is greater	4 bays plus 4% of total capacity	

(source: Reducing Mobility Handicaps, Institution of Highways and Transportation)

## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

### Appendix 3

#### Perspective of external ramp



#### External Ramps

- 1:12 the maximum on ramps up to 5m long, use only where it is not practicable to use alternative gradients, ie 1:20 or 1:15.

## Supplementary Planning Guidance No 8

### Appendix 3

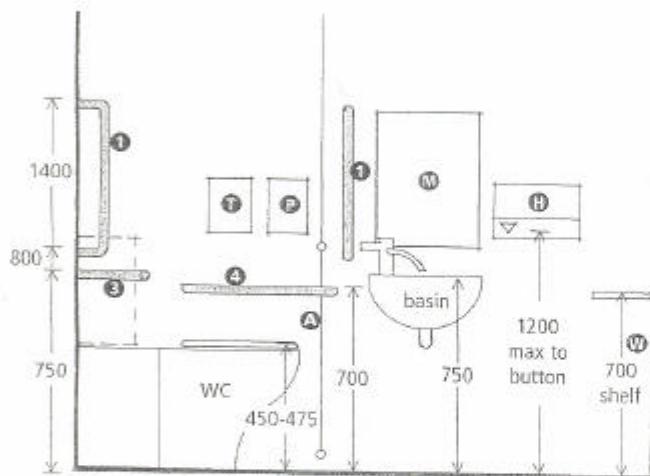
#### Building layout

### WCs

#### The Part M unisex WC

- Can accommodate a variety of methods of transfer and allows most users to wash and dry their hands while seated on the WC before transferring back to their chair.
- Layout 1500mm wide x 2000mm long minimum (see Figure 29; overall dimensions shown are minimum and could be increased to advantage).

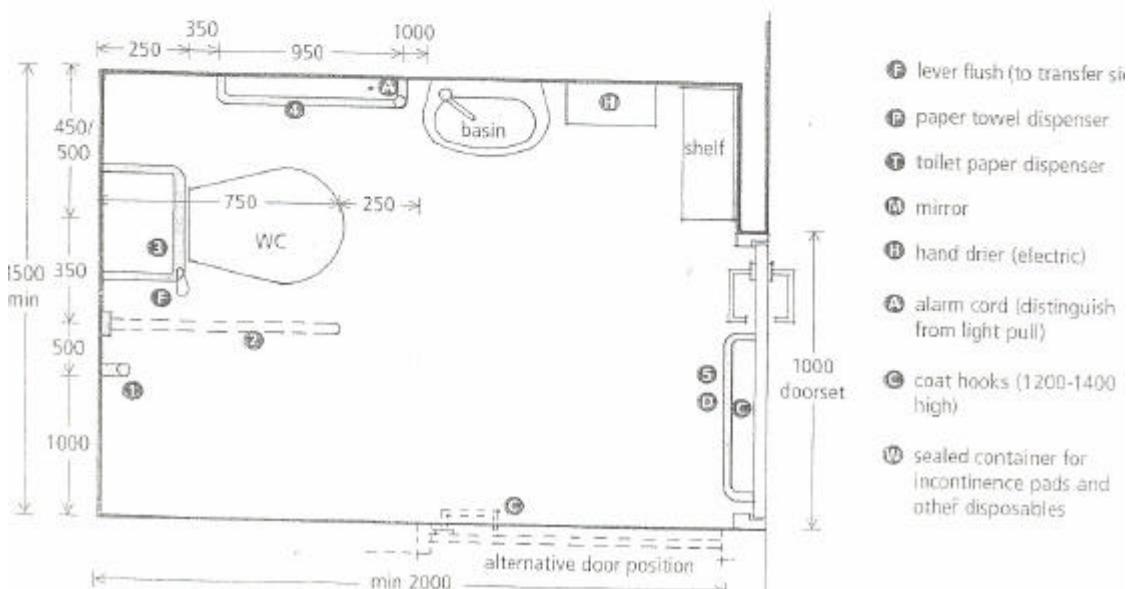
- The dimensions relating WC pan to basin and associated fittings and equipment, and to wheelchair manoeuvring space, are critical for independent use.
- The horizontal rail/backrest to the rear of the WC should be padded if there is no WC lid to rest against. A backrest may not be required if the cistern is low-level.



#### Grab rails:

35mm diameter, good grip when wet, well fixed, contrast with walls

- ① fixed vertical rail
- ② drop-down rail (easy to use from seated position)
- ③ fixed horizontal rail behind WC
- ④ fixed horizontal rail
- ⑤ horizontal door pull (to enable door to be closed when entering)



## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE No. 18

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

# NATURE CONSERVATION AND SPECIES PROTECTION

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Note is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance Notes (SPGs), amplifying the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development. The Notes are intended to offer broad guidance which will assist members of the public and officers in discussions prior to the submission of planning applications and assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

### 2 STATUS AND STAGES IN PREPARATION

- 2.1 The Council's SPG Notes are not part of the adopted plan. However, they have been the subject of both a formal Council resolution and public consultation. The Welsh Assembly Government (The Assembly), has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent Local Planning Authority (LPAs) approval, SPG can be treated as a material planning consideration when LPAs, Planning Inspectors and the Assembly determine planning applications and appeals. This Note was approved by Council on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2003 for use in development control. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the Council's response to these representations is available as a separate document.
- 2.2 These Notes have been prepared in accordance with guidance contained in Planning Policy Wales; Unitary Development Plans (Wales); Technical Advice Notes.

### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Nature conservation and species protection is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, which are likely to result in harm to wildlife habitats or protected species. The majority of wildlife legislation is contained in the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**, **The Badgers Protection Act 1992** and **The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994**, the provisions of which must be taken into consideration by the planning authority in determining planning applications. The Government is also committed to the conservation of 'biodiversity', the variety of plant and animal species.

### 4. PLANNING POLICY

4. The authority is also required to identify areas of wildlife value and wildlife corridors in their area and to identify these in the Development Plan.
- 4.2 The Unitary Development Plan for Denbighshire contains specific policies relating to the protection and safeguard of statutory and non-statutory designated sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites), and protected species.
- 4.3 The purpose of this note is to give broad guidance on the nature conservation requirements of the Development Plan and also that of wildlife conservation legislation as it relates to the impact of development.

- 5. WILDLIFE CONSERVATION LEGISLATION (Refer to Acts including current schedules for more details):**
  - 5.1 **The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981**, defines the various statutory designations which must be taken into account, including Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar Sites, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves.
  - 5.2 Certain plants and animals, including all wild birds, are also given protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
  - 5.3 Schedules 5 and 8 of the 1981 Act give details of protected animal and plant species respectively. These lists are subject to a review every 5 years and current lists should be referred to.
  - 5.4 Currently and in the context of species relevant to Denbighshire, Schedule 5 gives full protection to all bat species, great crested newt, otter, water vole, red squirrel, pine marten and dormouse. The first 4 species are most likely to be encountered on a proposed development site. Although not receiving full protection under the Act certain species are still protected against intentional killing and injury and include grass snake, adder, slow worm (a lizard), and common lizard. In Denbighshire Schedule 8 gives full protection to the plant species Spiked Speedwell and Limestone Woundwort. Some of the rarer and declining species of birds are given additional protection under the Act e.g. barn owls, a species that would be vulnerable if they were to occur in an old building or barn that is proposed for a conversion
  - 5.5 The Badgers Protection Act 1992 gives specific protection to badgers.
  - 5.6 Under the 1981 Act, it is an offence to kill, injure, sell or take protected species or to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct their places of shelter. Bat species receive additional protection and it is an offence to kill, injure or disturb bats found in the non-living areas of a dwelling or any other place (without first notifying CCW).
  - 5.7 The Habitats Regulations 1994 strengthens the law protecting bat species, great crested newts and otters, making it an offence to kill, injure, take or disturb any listed animal species or to destroy their nesting place or breeding sites; or to deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or otherwise destroy a listed plant species. These species are listed in the European Habitats Directive, but only those relevant to Denbighshire are referred to.
  - 5.8 It should be emphasised that many protected species occur outside statutory and non-statutory designated sites.
  - 5.9 Owners have legal obligations in relation to wildlife, and applicants/developers must take account of protected species on their land when planning development proposals. Even if planning consent is given the law requires that reasonable precautions are taken to safeguard protected species and their habitats. Ignorance is no defence in the law. In certain cases a licence is required (see licensing requirements).

## **6. GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS**

**APPLICANTS ARE ADVISED TO CONSULT THE COUNCIL'S PLANNING OFFICERS AND COUNTY ECOLOGIST BEFORE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION.**

- 6.1 Planning Application Details:**
- 6.2** It is the responsibility of the applicant to check land/buildings for the presence of protected species and their habitat and to take them into account at the design stage of a development and before planning permission will be considered.
- 6.3** Where land subject to a development proposal or planning application is known or likely to contain or support a protected species, or where the development is likely to have an impact on a protected species in adjacent areas the applicant should provide the following information, to enable the local planning authority to fully consider the effect of the proposed development on that species and how it will be safeguarded.
- 6.4** Undertake the following:-
- Survey for the presence or absence of a protected species of plant or animal.
  - Survey the land for suitable wildlife habitats (e.g. woodland, scrub, wetland, rough grassland, ditches).
  - Determine population level of protected species.
  - Determine extent of nesting/breeding habitat/critical feeding territory.
  - Undertake an environmental assessment.
  - Prepare a conservation management scheme.

**6.5 Mitigation**

The applicant should consider ways in which to safeguard the protected species and reduce the impact of the development on the protected species. This may involve a re-design of the development to retain important habitat, the re-timing of operations to avoid sensitive times of the year e.g. breeding season, or the phasing of works.

## **7. SPECIFIC SPECIES GUIDANCE**

- 7.1** More specific guidance is given for those protected species that are known to occur in Denbighshire and which are most likely to be encountered when submitting planning applications.

### **7.2 Bird Species**

(Refer to Schedule 5)

- 7.2.1** All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law. Some rare species also have additional protection and should not be disturbed while nesting or rearing young, nor should the dependent young be disturbed.
- 7.2.2** Of particular relevance to planning is the possible presence of BARN OWLS that may be affected by development works that affects outbuildings, including barn conversions. (See also SPG on barn conversions).
- 7.2.3** Where barn owls (or any other specially protected species) is known or likely to occur or be disturbed), in addition to providing planning application details already referred to, consider incorporating design details into the restoration or conversion that will enable the species to continue to use building, so that it is able to continue using adjacent feeding areas in surrounding countryside.
- 7.2.4** The timing of works to avoid sensitive nesting times will also be critical.

7.2.5 Undertake the following:

- Check for the presence of a protected species on the land.
- Check for the presence of barn owls in all buildings.
- Survey the land for the presence of appropriate nesting habitat e.g. hedgerows, woodland, scrub, wetland, rough grassland.
- Locate important feeding areas for barn owls.
- Ensure that works/proposals avoid sensitive nesting periods.

### **7.3 Reptiles**

7.3.1 All lizards and snakes are given protection under the Act. In Denbighshire relevant species are grass snake and adder (snakes) and common lizard and slow-worm (lizards). It is very possible that these species are present and land should be checked for their presence. If any of these species are found to occur on a proposed development site, their removal to an alternative suitable site may need to be considered under animal welfare legislation.

### **7.4 Bat Species**

7.4.1 All bat species including bat roosts are protected from deliberate killing, capture or disturbance. Any structure or place that bats use for shelter or protection is also protected against deliberate damage, destruction or obstruction of access. It is an offence to damage or destroy a bat breeding site or resting place and an offence can be committed even if the actions were unintentional.

7.4.2 The applicant must check all buildings first and as early as possible for the presence of bats and bat roosts.

7.4.3 The types of development or works that are likely to affect or disturb bats include:-

- Loft conversions.
- Roofing work.
- Extension works involving disturbance to roof space.
- Timber treatment.

7.4.4 Any development which affects buildings, roof spaces, loft spaces, cavity walls, mineshafts/adits, caves, tunnels, bridges and old trees potentially could affect or disturb bats and bat roosts. These various structures should be checked for their presence.

7.4.5 If present, consult with CCW immediately.

#### **7.4.6 Information required**

7.4.7 Where bats and bat roosts (including for breeding and hibernation) are known or likely to occur or be disturbed, information should be provided as detailed under planning application details. Mitigation proposals may include re-timing of works, re-design, and the incorporation of audits to enable continued use of structure. (See leaflets). (Also see section on licensing requirements).

N.B. Where roofing or timber treatment works are to be undertaken, it is the legal responsibility of the contractor to check for bats at in the inspection stage, to allow CCW a reasonable time to respond should the presence of bats be indicated.

- 7.4.8 If bats are found during the course of work, the works should stop immediately and CCW be notified and advice sought.

## 7.5 Great Crested Newts

- 7.5.1 Great crested newts (including all stages of life cycle i.e. eggs, tadpoles, juveniles, and adults) are protected by national and international law from deliberate killing, injury, capture or disturbance. This protection also extends to the species' habitat or place of shelter or protection, which includes the breeding pond and the surrounding vegetation required for territory, feeding, shelter and hibernation. Water bodies are required by newts for breeding purposes, but they also spend much of their time on the surrounding land. Adult newts return to these breeding ponds from late January onwards, but are mostly found between April and June. Hatched tadpoles will still be present until late autumn, before pond migrating onto surrounding land, possibly up to 500 metres away from the pond.
- 7.5.2 If great crested newts are found to occur or to be affected by a development proposal then the details of the development may have to be amended in order to provide for their protection.

### 7.5.3 Information required

- 7.5.4 Where great crested newts are known or likely to be present or the development is likely to have an impact on this species, information as specified under planning application details should be provided.
- 7.5.5 Undertake the following:-
- Check for the presence of eggs, larvae, adults on the land.
  - Survey the land for the presence of suitable habitat, including breeding ponds and water features, and adjacent or nearby scrub, woodland, rough grassland, builders rubble etc., that may support newts (up to 500m).
  - Determine the extent of required territory used by newts.
  - Undertake an environmental assessment.
  - Prepare conservation measures to safeguard the species and habitat.

(See section on licence requirements).

## 7.6 Otters and Water Voles

- 7.6.1 Otters and water voles are fully protected by law. Development proposals/planning applications affecting or in close proximity to rivers and streams are likely to affect otters and/or water voles. If water voles or otters including otter holts or resting places are present or affected by a proposed development , it will be necessary to consider the impact of the development on this species and put forward appropriate measures for its conservation.

### 7.6.2 Information required

7.6.3 Where the species is known or likely to be present or affected, provide information as under planning applications details, including the presence of the otter's shelter or holt, and otter movements.

## **7.7 Badgers**

7.7.1 Under the 1992 Act, badgers are protected from killing, injury, capture and ill-treatment. It is also an offence to interfere with a badger sett, to damage or destroy a sett or any part of it, to obstruct the access or entrance of a badger sett, and to disturb badgers while occupying a sett.

### **7.7.2 Information required**

7.7.3 In addition to information specified under planning application details, the following details should also be provided where badgers and setts are known or likely to be present or affected.

7.7.4 Undertake the following:

- Check for the presence of badgers and badger signs.
- Survey land for the presence of appropriate habitats such as woodland, scrub, rough grassland.
- Locate all badger setts and determine social groups.
- Locate badger paths.
- Determine the extent of foraging territory and water sources.
- Undertake an environmental assessment.
- Prepare a conservation management scheme.

(See section on licensing requirements).

## **8. PLANNING CONDITIONS AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS**

8.1 If permission is given, planning conditions will be attached to planning consents in order to safeguard species and habitats and to minimise the impact on wildlife. If a licence is required from CCW, a condition will be attached requiring the applicant to contact CCW in order to obtain a licence before commencing any works that will cause damage or disturbance. Conditions will be attached for protected habitats and species, but also for locally rare species, particularly important in a biodiversity context.

8.2 Where appropriate, a Section 106 management agreement will be requested as a means of achieving management and enhancement of habitats and species.

## **9. CONSULTATION PROCEDURES**

9.1 CCW must be consulted if any development proposed is within or adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Where a protected species is known to be affected, the views of CCW should be sought. In certain cases, it will be necessary to apply to CCW for a licence.

- 9.2 CCW must be notified of any proposed action affecting bat species immediately and allowed a reasonable time to advise on the effects of this action and the methods to be used to avoid or minimise damage to bats and their roosts.
- 9.3 Where county wildlife sites are involved, advice should be sought from the Wildlife Trust and/or County Ecologist. Many protected species occur outside SSSI's and Wildlife Sites.

## **10. LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

- 10.1 Any development proposals that affect or disturb bat species, great crested newts or badgers (including place of shelter and habitat) will require a licence from CCW, regardless of whether or not planning consent is given. A licence is only given to carry out work to protect these species.
- 10.2 If planning consent is given the applicant would still be required to comply with the provisions of the Acts and take reasonable precautions to avoid unnecessary harm or disturbance to these protected species and their habitats. Such action will still require a licence from CCW.
- 10.3 Translocation of species may be a considered option, but should only be considered as a last resort and if a suitable and sustainable habitat is available. If a licence is given to remove the species, then an alternative suitable site must be identified and prepared well in advance.
- 10.4 Conditions specified in a planning consent may also require a licence from CCW.

## **11. Sources of Advice**

- 11.1 Always seek the advice of a qualified ecologist for the survey of protected species and conservation advice. The following will also give advice: -

- CCW
- NWWF
- County Ecologist
- Local Badger Group
- Local Herpetological Group
- Local Bat Group

## **12. Other sources of information**

- 12.1 Refer to the following leaflets for further information/advice:-

Great crested newts - Guidelines for developers - English Nature 1996  
Badgers - Guidelines for developers - English Nature 1995  
Barn Owls on Site - A Guide for Developers and Planners - Barn Owl Trust 1995  
Wildlife and Buildings - Guidelines for Property Owners - Gwynedd Bat Group and NWWF  
Focus on Bats - English Nature 1992  
Bats - Countryside Council for Wales  
Wildlife on Site - A Guide for Developers and Planners - Babtie 1996  
Technical Advice Note 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning (Welsh Office, 1996)

**APPENDIX 1**  
**DCC - TOPIC BASED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**  
**REPRESENTATIONS SUBMITTED AT CONSULTATION STAGE**

<b>SPG No. &amp; TITLE</b>	<b>REPRESENTOR</b>	<b>REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>RESPONSE &amp; RECOMMENDATION</b>
8 Access for all	Council for British Archaeology	Needs to be a stronger note or policy of caution for increased car parking , wider access facilities etc to the sites of Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Gardens and Parks open to the public. The Council's Archaeologist, Conservation Architect and Landscape Architect should always be contacted for advice.	Agreed – reference CADW publication – Breaking down the barriers.  Noted
	House Builders Federation	The section on housing on page 2 should be deleted in its current form. A substitute paragraph should be inserted to the effect that Part M of the Building Regulations is to be extended to include all new dwellings as from October 1999.	Agreed. New Part M now in place Referenced Lifetime Homes publication
	Denbighshire Access Group	In the 'Non-domestic buildings...' Section add GP surgeries and dentists. The 'Pedestrian environments' section should be amended to read 'e) extra wide parking specification'. The 'Car parking' section should refer to 'Blue' badges in line with EU legislation being phased in over 3 years from January 2000. It should have an additional point 'v) surface cover ie tarmac' as gravel or uneven surfaces including some type of flags are unsuitable. The size of a disabled person's parking bay should be a minimum of 4.8 by 3.6m. In the 'Countryside' section the guidance should be more specific regarding ground access ie gates and styles sizes to accommodate a wheelchair. Signs need to be clear, large and colour contrast where possible, braille to be used as well where possible. Where gradients of slopes or steps are unacceptable	Agreed Inclusive Design paragraph and reference to BS 8300 and inclusion of diagrams cover these points.

	<p>hand rails should be provided where possible. The Building Regs Part M quote should refer to 1999 not 1991.</p> <p>In the 'Design specification' section mention should be made of aids to communication in theatres, conference centres ie loop systems and seating in cinemas. In leisure facilities, provision should also be made for showers for wheelchair users and a hoist for use in connection with swimming pools.</p> <p>In the section 'Paths and Routes' the word 'ample' should be deleted as too much tactile material can be used. There are also more than one type of tactile paving that can be used.</p> <p>In the 'External ramps and steps' section the maximum gradient preferred is 1:15 and 1:20 is too steep for most independent wheelchair users.</p> <p>In the 'Doors and lobbies' section sufficient space should be left between each set of doors ie should be able to move clear of one door before opening the next door. Internal doors should have glazed panels down the side or centre to give visibility to other side of door. Spring loaded doors should be adjustable.</p> <p>In the 'Lifts' section controls should have markings for the visually impaired to operate and or voice stating which floor.</p> <p>The 'Toilet' section should include 'by a helper, and a space of at least 750mm to the side of the toilet for transfer (where possible to both sides of the toilet). Preferred height of toilet is 700mm for wheelchair transfer. The door should open outwards and have a width of no less than 1000mm. There should be support / grab rails to both sides of the toilet, also on the back of the door. An emergency bell system, mirror with its lower edge no higher than 900mm above floor level. Own basin with a clear space of 750mm below. Hand drying facilities, a disposable bin and any other facilities provides should be</p>	
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		accessible to a wheelchair user. Where door opens direct onto public corridors, a shower curtain should be considered to ensure privacy to user when helper leaves the toilet'.	
16 Conversion of Rural Buildings			

<b>SPG</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>	<b>Date of adoption at Full Council</b>
1	Standards for New Residential Developments	Pending, likely to be incorporated into a new SPG on Design (in progress)	Autumn 2003
2	Landscaping New Developments	Approved by March Cabinet.	Anticipated June 2003
3	Parking Requirements in New Developments	Awaiting response from internal Hways, NW Authorities may consider regional adoption of Wrexham SPG.	
4	Open Space in New Developments	Adopted	March 2003
5	Extensions to Dwellings	Adopted	July 2001
6	Trees & Development	Adopted	March 2003
7	Self Contained Flats & Houses in Multiple Occupation	Adopted	January 2003
8	Access For All	Report to Cabinet May 2003	Anticipated June 2003
9	Agricultural & Forestry Workers Dwellings	Adopted	January 2003
10	Infill Housing in the Countryside	Adopted	January 2003
11	Hot Food Takeaways	Adopted	March 2003
12	Shop Fronts	Adopted	July 2001
13	Conservation Areas	Adopted	January 2003
14	Listed Buildings	Adopted	January 2003
15	Archaeology	Approved by March Cabinet.	Anticipated June 2003
16	Rural Conversions	Approved by March Cabinet.	Anticipated June 2003
17	Advertisements	Adopted	January 2003
18	Nature Conservation & Species Protection	Report to Cabinet May 2003	Anticipated June 2003
19	Children's Day Care	Adopted	July 2001
20	Minerals	Progress Under Consideration	Unknown
21	Wind Energy	Progress Pending Anticipated New National Guidance on renewable Energy	Unknown
22	Retail Kiosks	Adopted	July 2001
23	Private Hire (Taxi) Vehicles	Adopted	July 2001
24	Telecommunications	Progress Under Consideration	Unknown
25	Static Caravan & Chalet Development	Adopted	March 2003
26	Welsh Language	Consultants appointed – Final Report Due October 2003.	March 2004
27	Design	Progress Under Consideration	Autumn 2003

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 6 [CABINET 2003 - 71]**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** Cllr. David M Morris, Lead Member for Communications  
Cllr. Rhiannon Hughes, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning

**DATE:** 20 May 2003

**SUBJECT:** ONE STOP SHOPS / CASH OFFICES FOR ST ASAPH AND RHUDDLAN

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

- 1.1 That in line with the Delivering Quality Services policy and the IEG Statement, Cabinet agrees to support the expansion of One Stop Shops to Rhuddlan and St Asaph [including the relocation of St Asaph Cash Office] and for these to be located in the Libraries
- 1.2 That Cabinet approve the capital and revenue implications [the capital for St Asaph Library is included in the Capital Plan report on the agenda for 20.04.2003].
- 1.3 That the capital implications for the St Asaph scheme be forwarded to Council for approval.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

**2.1 Implementing Electronic Government Statement**

Section 1.21 of the Denbighshire IEG Statement outlines the vision of libraries as “community focused information and learning centres”, supported by an “information portal containing all of the information necessary to provide the majority of responses to our customers at the first point of contact”. Combined, these two developments would ensure a single access point and a seamless interface for person-to-person contact with the Council.

### **2.3 Improving Customer Services**

Developing One Stop Shop and cash handling facilities at both Rhuddlan and St Asaph libraries increases public access to Council services and facilities, strengthens the Council's presence at both localities, and brings together a number of customer-focused services under one roof. Corwen Library and One Stop Shop provides an excellent model of an integrated service with library, information, advice and cash handling facilities for the local community, all delivered from the one location.

2.4 Library hours at both Rhuddlan and St Asaph are currently inconsistent, with different opening and closing times on most days (see Appendix 1). The development of new services at both locations allows an opportunity to standardise and increase service opening hours - to provide a less confusing timetable, and a more consistent pattern of delivery for the local community. This would also assist the Library and Information Service in meeting some of the statutory requirements of the Minimum Standards for Public Libraries in Wales in relation to accessibility and opening hours.

2.5 Repositioning the St Asaph Cash Office at St Asaph Library offers many benefits, including immediate parking, free Internet use, access to local and national newspapers, books, information, a learning centre of 6 PCs, and a coffee machine. The library also benefits from exposure to new and potential library users, many of whom may be unaware of the range of services on offer at their local library. The integration also provides increased security (for staff and members of the public) with no further need for lone working at either the library or the cash office, enabling the Council to project a positive image of a protected and safe environment for the delivery of front line services.

2.6 Rhuddlan Library provides a safe and good quality environment from which it delivers library and information services, a learning centre of 6 PCs with free internet access, and a Community Arts Gallery. Automatic front doors provides disabled access. The library is the only publicly accessible Council service in Rhuddlan, and the development of a One Stop Shop and cash

handling facility will greatly increase access to council information and services.

## **2.7 Best Value Inspection**

The Library and Information Service was considered unlikely to improve following the 2001 Best Value Inspection. However, improvements have been achieved in a number of areas highlighted in the report, and one area in particular - the failure to reflect new government agendas and initiatives, particularly around E Government, is being addressed with this proposal for the One Stop Shops.

## **2.8 Staffing**

The staffing structure at each location would include Cashiers/OSS Assistants on Sc4, One Stop Shop/Library Assistants on Sc3, and Library Assistants on Sc2, reflecting the different responsibilities and generic roles and their associated pay scales and conditions of service, and providing a career structure for Council staff involved in front-line service delivery.

## **3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 - Promotion of Economic, Social and Environmental well being.

## **4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Revenue costs**

All options have been costed - see Appendix 2. Option 1 for St Asaph would cost £5,550 in this financial year, whilst Option 1 for Rhuddlan would cost £10,575. Together they total £16,130 for this financial year, which would be met from the E Government SCA.

Full year costs (2004/2005) of Option 1 for St Asaph would be £7,628, whilst full year costs for Rhuddlan would be £14,523. Total costs for 2004/2005 would be £22,151 and would need to be considered as part of the budget process for 2004/2005.

#### **4.2 Capital costs**

An application to the Capital Fund will address the associated capital costs of relocating the St Asaph Cash Office should Members approve this proposal. The estimated costs of relocating the Cash Office and setting up the One Stop Shop at St Asaph is not greater than £25,000.

### **5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

Ongoing revenue implications from the proposals will need to be considered as part of the budget setting exercise for 2004/5 during the Autumn.

Estimated Capital costs for the Rhuddlan scheme are not yet available but are thought to be minor. The cost of moving the Cash Office in St Asaph to the Library has been reported to the Asset Management Committee. The costs in relation to the One Stop Shop are unlikely to be much greater than the £25,000 already bid for.

### **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

The Senior Management Task Force on Implementing Electronic Government has considered and supported the proposal and, dependant on Cabinet approval, is prepared to fund the revenue implications of Option 1 for 2003/2004.

Rhuddlan and St Asaph Local Members are being consulted and their views will be reported at the meeting.

Existing staff at Rhuddlan and St Asaph have been consulted.

### **7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

The development of integrated services to provide a better customer experience is integral to the E Government policy. The sharing of resources (premises, energy and staffing) also allows for greater economies - which impacts on Best Value. The Library and Information Service is also a statutory service which impacts on Lifelong Learning (access to information, learning

opportunities, literacy development). Extending the remit of the current range of services has implications on the wider Social inclusion policy in reaching out to those who are currently excluded from services at both Rhuddlan and St Asaph.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 That Cabinet agrees to support the expansion of One Stop Shops to Rhuddlan and St Asaph and for these to be located in the Libraries [including the relocation of St Asaph Cash Office].
- 8.2 That Cabinet approve the capital and revenue implications.
- 8.3 That the capital implications for the St Asaph scheme be forwarded to Council for approval.

## APPENDIX 1

St Asaph: current position			Rhuddlan : current position		
Library Opening Hours			Library Opening Hours		
Day	Time	No. of hrs	Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	10 – 7	9	Mon	9.30 – 6	8.5
Tues	2.30 – 5.30	3	Tues	Closed	0
Wed	10.30 – 5.30	7	Wed	9.30 – 5.30	8
Thurs	Closed	0	Thurs	9.30 – 5.30	8
Fri	9.30 – 6	8.5	Fri	9.30 – 1	3.5
Sat	9.30 – 12.30	3	Sat	9.30 – 12.30	3
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>30.5</b>	<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>31</b>
Staff			Staff		
Staff	Scale	Hours	Staff	Scale	Hours
P/t Lib Assistant	2	30	Senior Lib Assistant	4	37
P/t Lib Assistant	2	16	P/t Lib Assistant	2	16
P/t Lib Assistant	2	16	P/t Lib Assistant	2	12
<b>Total staff hours</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>Total staff hours</b>		<b>65</b>
Cash Office Opening Hours					
Day	Time	No. of hrs			
Mon	9 – 5	7.5			
Tues	9 – 5	7.5			
Wed	9 – 5	7.5			
Thurs	9 – 5	7.5			
Fri	9 – 5	7			
Sat	closed	0			
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>37</b>			
Staff					
Staff	Scale	Hours			
F/t Cashier	4	37			
<b>Total staff hours</b>		<b>37</b>			

## APPENDIX 2

### **Option 1: St Asaph**

- ✓ Relocate Cash Office and Cashier to St Asaph Library
- ✓ Standardise and increase library opening hours to 35 hrs per week.
- ✓ Retain one evening until 7pm.
- ✓ Remain closed on Thursday (implications for Cash Office)
- ✓ Extend opening hours on Tuesday
- ✓ Enhance existing 30hr Scale 2 Library Assistant vacancy to 37hr Sc3 generic One Stop Shop& Library Assistant post.
- ✓ Increase Sc2 staffing by 4 hrs.

### **Option 1: Rhuddlan**

- ✓ Develop One Stop Shop and cash handling facility at Rhuddlan Library
- ✓ Standardise and increase library opening hours to 35 hrs per week.
- ✓ Extend one evening from 6pm to 7pm
- ✓ Remain closed on Tuesday
- ✓ Extend opening hours on Friday
- ✓ Existing Sc4 Senior Library Assistant to provide cash handling, OSS & library services.
- ✓ Establish new 25hr Sc3 Lib & OSS Assistant post to provide additional OSS & library cover.

#### **Proposed Opening Hours**

Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	9.30 – 5	7.5
Tues	9.30 – 5	7.5
Wed	9.30 – 5	7.5
Thurs	closed	0
Fri	9.30 – 7	9.5
Sat	9.30 – 12.30	3
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>35</b>

#### **Proposed Opening Hours**

Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	9.30 – 7	9.5
Tues	closed	0
Wed	9.30 – 5	7.5
Thurs	9.30 – 5	7.5
Fri	9.30 – 5	7.5
Sat	9.30 – 12.30	3
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>35</b>

#### **Costs**

	<b>03/04 9 months</b>	<b>04/05 full year</b>
Enhance Sc2 vacancy to f/t Sc3	3,571	4,904
Increase Sc2 staffing by 4hrs per week	1,384	1,900
Relief cover for additional hrs	600	824
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,555</b>	<b>7,628</b>

#### **Costs**

	<b>03/04 9 months</b>	<b>04/05 full year</b>
New Sc3 post	9,450	12,978
Relief cover for additional hrs.	1,125	1,545
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,575</b>	<b>14,523</b>

#### **Summary of Option 1 Costs:**

<b>Costs</b>	<b>03/04 9 months</b>	<b>04/05 full year</b>
St Asaph	5,555	7,628
Rhuddlan	10,575	14,523
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,130</b>	<b>22,151</b>

### Option 2: St Asaph

- As Option 1 but including
- ✓ Standardise and increase library opening hours to 42.5 hrs per week.
  - ✓ Open 9.30 – 5 on Thursday (currently closed)
  - ✓ Enhance existing 30hr Scale 2 Library Assistant vacancy to 37hr Sc3 generic One Stop Shop& Library Assistant post.
  - ✓ Increase Sc2 staffing by 20 hrs.

#### Proposed Opening Hours

Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	9.30 – 5	7.5
Tues	9.30 – 5	7.5
Wed	9.30 – 5	7.5
Thurs	9.30 - 5	7.5
Fri	9.30 – 7	9.5
Sat	9.30 – 12.30	3
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>42.5</b>

#### Costs

	03/04 9 months	04/05 full year
Enhance Sc2 vacancy to Sc3	3,571	4,904
Increase Sc2 staffing by 20 hrs per week	6,920	9,503
Relief cover for additional hrs	1,210	1,662
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,781</b>	<b>16,069</b>

### Option 2: Rhuddlan

- As Option 1 but including
- ✓ Standardise and increase library opening hours to 42.5 hrs per week.
  - ✓ Open 9.30 – 5 on Tuesday (currently closed)
  - ✓ Establish new 37hr Sc3 Lib & OSS Assistant post to provide additional OSS & library cover.
  - ✓ Increase Sc2 staffing by 10 hrs

#### Proposed Opening Hours

Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	9.30 – 7	9.5
Tues	9.30 - 5	7.5
Wed	9.30 – 5	7.5
Thurs	9.30 – 5	7.5
Fri	9.30 – 5	7.5
Sat	9.30 – 12.30	3
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>42.5</b>

#### Costs

	03/04 9 months	04/05 full year
New Sc3 post	13,950	19,158
Increase Sc 2 staffing by 10 hrs per week	3,585	4,923
Relief cover for additional hrs.	2,174	2,987
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,709</b>	<b>27,068</b>

#### Summary of Option 2 Costs:

Costs	03/04 9 months	04/05 full year
St Asaph	11,781	16,069
Rhuddlan	19,709	27,068
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,490</b>	<b>43,137</b>

### Option 3: St Asaph

- As Option 2 but including
- ✓ Standardise and increase library opening hours to 47 hrs per week.
  - ✓ Open 9.30 – 5 on Saturday (currently closing at 12.30)
  - ✓ Enhance existing 30hr Scale 2 Library Assistant vacancy to 37hr Sc3 generic One Stop Shop& Library Assistant post.
  - ✓ Increase Sc2 staffing by 26 hrs.

### Proposed Opening Hours

Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	9.30 – 5	7.5
Tues	9.30 – 5	7.5
Wed	9.30 – 5	7.5
Thurs	9.30 - 5	7.5
Fri	9.30 – 7	9.5
Sat	9.30 – 5	7.5
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>47</b>

Costs	03/04 9 months	04/05 full year
Enhance Sc2 vacancy to Sc3	3,571	4,904
Increase Sc2 staffing by 26 hrs per week	8,996	12,354
Relief cover for additional hrs	1,573	2,161
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14,140</b>	<b>19,418</b>

### Option 3: Rhuddlan

- As Option 2 but including
- ✓ Standardise and increase library opening hours to 47 hrs per week.
  - ✓ Open 9.30 – 5 on Saturday (currently closing at 12.30)
  - ✓ Establish new 37hr Sc3 Lib & OSS Assistant post to provide additional OSS & library cover.
  - ✓ Increase Sc2 staffing by 25 hrs

### Proposed Opening Hours

Day	Time	No. of hrs
Mon	9.30 – 7	9.5
Tues	9.30 - 5	7.5
Wed	9.30 – 5	7.5
Thurs	9.30 – 5	7.5
Fri	9.30 – 5	7.5
Sat	9.30 – 5	7.5
<b>Total opening hours</b>		<b>47</b>

Costs	03/04 9 months	04/05 full year
New Sc3 post	13,950	19,158
Increase Sc 2 staffing by 25 hrs per week	8,650	11,879
Relief cover for additional hrs.	2,700	3,708
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,300</b>	<b>34,745</b>

### Summary of Option 3 Costs:

Costs	03/04 9 months	04/05 full year
St Asaph	14,140	19,418
Rhuddlan	25,300	34,745
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39,440</b>	<b>54,163</b>

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 7 [CABINET 2003 - 72]**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor A Owens - Cabinet Lead Member for Finance

**DATE:** 20 May 2003

**SUBJECT:** Capital Plan 2003/04

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

To recommend to Council the proposed revisions to the 2003/04 Capital Plan.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

The estimate of capital payments has been re-profiled to take account of latest revisions in projected costs anticipated in 2003/04. This has enabled three additional items to be included in the Plan:

- Cash Office facility within St. Asaph Library - £25,000
- Rhyl Leisure Centre Community Access Project - £284,000
- Objective One Match Funding Block Allocation - £150,000

The first two items have been considered and approved by Asset Management Committee at its meeting of 2 May, 2003.

The requirement for the Objective One Match Funding Block Allocation has arisen following recognition that the County Council has potential access to further significant amounts of European resources. For the first half of the Objective One Programme the Council has been able to secure external match funding to meet the total costs of projects. An allocation of funds to provide limited match funding for regeneration projects is now necessary to meet the initial costs of project work, site assembly and to cover the emerging deficiencies in external match funding. The Block Allocation will be used to lever both additional match funding and European resources for approved projects.

The Plan has also been updated to incorporate the estimated cost of three Refuse vehicles to be acquired under operating leases. These purchases were approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 29 April 2003. In addition, provision has been made for the estimated cost of three Winter Maintenance vehicles, also to be acquired under Operating Leases, which are to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting of 20 May, 2003.

### **3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

Part IV of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 sets out the current arrangements under which local authorities can capitalise expenditure and how such expenditure can be financed.

### **4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

The development of the Capital Plan will assist in ensuring that capital resources available for use in 2003/04 are fully utilised.

### **5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

Capital Spending must be contained within the level of capital resources available for the year.

### **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

Projects are prepared and subsequently monitored in consultation with service managers.

### **7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

Projects have been reviewed to ensure that they satisfy the Council's Corporate Objectives.

### **8 RECOMMENDATION**

That the revisions to the 2003/04 Capital Plan are recommended for approval by Council.

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CAPITAL PLAN 2003/04	General Funded 2003/04	Special Funded 2003/04	Capital Receipts 2003/04	Operating Leases 2003/04	Total 2003/04
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Environment Directorate</b>					
<b>Highways and Transportation</b>					
Flood damage reinstatement - SWG	250	800			1,050
Flood prevention schemes - NAFW 85%	478	2,234			2,712
Structural maintenance,bridges etc	800		200		1,000
Sea Defence works	100	50			150
Local Road Safety Grant		61			61
WDA Schemes		234			234
Transport Grant		1,183			1,183
Refuse Vehicles				315	315
Winter Maintenance Vehicles				264	264
	1,628	4,562	200	579	6,969
<b>Public Protection &amp; Community Services</b>					
Housing Improvement Grants	1,900		100		2,000
Public Conveniences Refurbishment Programme.	130				130
Playgrounds Improvement Programme	150				150
Waste Management Strategy		103			103
Renewal Areas		1,700			1,700
Strategic Housing Schemes		803			803
	2,180	2,606	100	0	4,886
<b>Economic Regeneration</b>					
Business Development Grants	130				130
Community/Rural Key Fund		341			341
Industrial Sites		978			978
Objective One - Match Funding	150				150
	280	1,319	0	0	1,599
<b>Design and Construction</b>					
Agricultural Estates			270		270
Property - Block Allocation	150				150
Health & Safety - Requirements - DDA	700				700
Asbestos Survey & Removal Programme	450				450
	1,300	0	270	0	1,570
<b>Total - Environment</b>	5,388	8,487	570	579	15,024
<b>Lifelong Learning Directorate</b>					
<b>Schools</b>					
Furniture Block Allocation	100				100
School Buildings Improvement Grant		1,208			1,208
School Buildings Improvement	900		200		1,100
New Opportunities funding for PE and Sports		1,316			1,316
	1,000	2,524	200	0	3,724
<b>Lifelong Learning Directorate</b>					
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure</b>					
Llangollen Old Chapel	100				100
Plas Newydd Garden Restoration	174				174
Rhyl Leisure Centre - Community Access Project	486	1,150			1,636
Castell Dinas Bran	17				17
Countrywide Grants Scheme	35				35
	812	1,150	0	0	1,962
<b>Total - Lifelong Learning</b>	1,812	3,674	200	0	5,686

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CAPITAL PLAN 2003/04	General Funded 2003/04	Special Funded 2003/04	Capital Receipts 2003/04	Operating Leases 2003/04	Total 2003/04
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
<b>Personal Services Directorate</b>					
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>					
		1,396	520		1,916
<b>Strategic Planning</b>					
Adaptations to homes of disabled	80				80
	80	0	0	0	80
<b>Total - Personal Services</b>	80	1,396	520	0	1,996
<b>Chief Executive, Resources and Corporate &amp; Miscellaneous</b>					
<b>Resources Directorate</b>					
e-Government		173			173
Cash Office facility - St. Asaph Library	25				25
Pre-contract Feasibility Study Fees			100		100
	25	173	100	0	298
<b>Corporate &amp; Miscellaneous</b>					
Community Projects - Block Allocation	330		100		430
Match Funding - Block Allocation	100				100
PFI Offices - Provision for fees and associated works ( net costs )	200				200
Essential IT systems	350		150		500
	980	0	250	0	1,230
	1,005	173	350	0	1,528
<b>Total All Services</b>	8,285	13,730	1,640	579	24,234
<b>Contingency</b>	85				85
<b>Total Capital Plan</b>	8,370	13,730	1,640	579	24,319
<b>Finance:</b>					
BCA/GCG	8,063	1,146			9,209
SCAs		3,621			3,621
Capital Receipts	307		1,640		1,947
Capital Grants		8,963			8,963
Operating Leases				579	579
<b>Total Finance</b>	8,370	13,730	1,640	579	24,319

**AGENDA ITEM: 8 [CABINET 2003 - 73]**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER : Cllr A. Owens, Lead Member for Finance**

**DATE : 20 May 2003**

**SUBJECT : PROJECTED REVENUE POSITION 2002/03 & 2003/04**

**1. DECISION SOUGHT**

- 1.1 That Members note the latest estimated outturn figures for 2002/03 for both services and corporate budgets.
- 1.2 That Members consider the implications of the improved Council Tax yield for 2002/3 and 2003/4 and agree the revised spending proposals contained in the report.

**2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

- 2.1 The latest information from Directorates suggests an overall budget overspend for 2002/3 of £317k. Work is still continuing to finalise the figures and some Directorates may end up with small levels of underspending that can be carried forward to the new financial year. One area of major overspend remains, namely the Lifelong Learning Directorate, as previously reported.
- 2.2 The Council set its budget for 2002/3 based upon the settlement figures received from the Assembly together with the resulting impact upon the Council Tax requirement. This Council Tax requirement was translated into a Band D equivalent charge by;
  - i) using the Council's data base of domestic property within the County
  - ii) making an assumption of the likely level of collection and the need to provide for bad debts

Members will be aware of the major turn around in performance by the Council Tax staff which has resulted in a marked increase in the level of collection and a reduction in the levels of arrears.

As a result of the Council Tax Department being more up to date the previous backlog of new properties to be input into the tax base has been eliminated. In addition the Council is benefiting from several new housing developments.

The combination of these factors has allowed the Council Tax yield to be significantly increased. This improvement also reflects how the willingness of Cabinet and Council to invest in Revenues functions in 2001 is now providing a positive contribution to the financial recovery as indicated below.

- 2.3 The increase in the yield from Council Tax payers for 2002/3 is £1.2m. This income will recur in future years although there will be an impact upon the level of Assembly support from 2004/5 which is expected to offset this to a large degree.
- 2.4 The boost to the Council's financial position from the additional Council Tax revenue in 2002/03 means that the predicted general balances are likely to be £1.9m at 31 March 2003, i.e. +£0.9m. The strategy to achieve £3 million in general balances should now be largely delivered by 31 March 2004, as follows;

	£m
31 March 2003	1.9
31 March 2004	2.9
31 March 2005	3.0

This will put the Council in a stronger position for 2004-05 and after a small further contribution in 2004/5 of £100k will end the requirement for top slicing. This will release £500k annually for investment in services.

- 2.5 It is expected the additional Council Tax revenue will be achieved again in 2003-04 which means that, together with the contingency allocations, there is up to £2.468m additional resources available in the current year although £550k has already been earmarked. Details of these figures can be found in appendix 2. The stronger position from 2004/05 also suggests that we could now

consider allocating the majority of PIG money despite the ongoing concern about achieving all targets.

2.6 The result is that:

- (1) the likely overspend of £650k by Lifelong Learning Directorate in 2002/03 can be funded in full without any impact on the Directorate's budget for this year. In effect, Education and Culture and Leisure will have been able to spend £650k more than the budget set by the Council for 2002/03 with the vast bulk of the benefit having been felt in Education.
- (2) while there are additional resources to be allocated during the current year, we still need to achieve the £1m contribution to balances. Therefore the Council needs to be firm in expecting Services to keep expenditure under control and within the budgets that have been set.
- (3) if we remain on course to achieve nearly £3m in general reserves by March 2004, the Council can reduce contributions to reserves in 2004-05 to £100k and release £500k a year for ongoing improvement in services.
- (4) there needs to be consultation with Scrutiny Committees about allocation of the additional resources during the current year but members may wish to ensure decisions on additional spending are made no later than July, so that the benefit can be felt quickly. There are some items however where early decisions are required for timing reasons (such as the peak tourist season).

2.7 It is therefore proposed that:

- (a) the Cabinet agrees to revise the financial strategy as outlined above and that its recommendations to Council on the budget for 2004/05 should be prepared accordingly;
- (b) Members review the level of funding of the Personal Services Directorate in the light of the likely outcome of the Joint Review process. This is likely to highlight the need for the Council to increase funding for the service. The Directorate received little

additional support for 2002/03 because of the need to provide £700k to compensate for the underprovision by the Assembly for costs resulting from the transfer of Preserved Rights and Residential Allowances costs from 1 April 2002. A sum of £500k is suggested and included in appendix 2.

- (c) an additional sum of £270k be allocated immediately for the Environment Directorate for visible improvements in image throughout the County such as increased grass cutting, street sweeping and litter collection, increased frequency of emptying recycling centres, increased frequency of cleaning of toilets etc. The detail of the proposed programme will be agreed by the Lead Member for the Environment;
- (d) a sum be allocated immediately for a programme of events at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod and for a pilot programme of artistic and other events elsewhere in the County (see separate report on the agenda);
- (e) consideration be given to allocating resources to allow One Stop Shops to be opened in St Asaph and Rhuddlan, improving the Council's services in those towns (see separate report);
- (f) Scrutiny Committees be asked to prioritise other items for additional expenditure totalling £800k in 2003-04, £400k immediately with a further £400k to be released in the Autumn when the detail of some of the funding is clearer, making a possible £800k in total. This additional expenditure will need to be of a one off nature as suggested by the content of Appendix 2. On going commitments need to be restricted to the level already suggested in column 2 of appendix 2. Delegated budgets for schools have of course already been set and cannot therefore be revisited. Items identified should be in line with the priorities that were set by the Council for this year. The expectation should be that they would be drawn from among the bids that were not successful in the budget round, and should generally not involve significant elements of recurrent expenditure.

### **3. POWER TO MAKE DECISION**

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

### **4. COST IMPLICATIONS**

The detailed figures for service budgets and projected final costs are shown in appendix 1.

The position regarding contingency and additional resources together with current known pressures requiring funding in the current financial year are shown in appendix 2.

### **5. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

The additional income puts the Council in a much improved position to deliver the Financial Recovery Plan. It is however essential that the Council continues to demonstrate tight financial control to achieve the £3m reserves target and maintain financial stability on an ongoing basis.

### **6. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

Lead Cabinet Members consult on an ongoing basis with Heads of Service to review the budgetary performance of services.

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committees are consulted on how to prioritise the additional funding in 2003/04.

### **7. IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

The level of funding available to the Council together with budgetary performance, impacts upon all services of the Council.

### **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i) That Members note the projected revenue outturn position for 2002/3

- ii) That Cabinet agrees to revise the financial strategy as outlined in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.6 and to prepare recommendations to Council on the Budget for 2004/5 accordingly.
- iii) That Cabinet considers and takes decisions on the other proposals in paragraph 2.7 for additional expenditure in 2003/4.

## APPENDIX 1

### Estimated Outturn 2002/03

	BUDGET £000	PROJECTED £000	Variance £000
Lifelong Learning			
Schools delegated budgets	35,552	35,552	0
Education - nonschools	9,587	10,229	642
Culture & Leisure	6,004	6,016	12
NNDR savings	0	-120	-120
Environment	16,990	16,990	0
Personal Services	23,614	23,614	0
CEO	2,312	2,312	0
Resources	4,675	4,675	0
Corporate & Benefits	4,619	4,819	200
Levies	4,130	4,113	-17
Capital Finance/Interest Funds	10,177 -35	9,777 -35	-400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>117,625</b>	<b>117,942</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>FUNDING</b>			
Revenue Support Grant	-76,767	-76,767	0
Business Rates	-18,088	-18,088	0
Council Tax	-23,681	-24,881	-1,200
<b>NET</b>	<b>-911</b>	<b>-1,794</b>	<b>-883</b>
General Balances 1 April 2002	-89	-102	-13
General Balances 31 March 2003	-1,000	-1,896	-896

**APPENDIX 2****Bids for Additional Funding**

	<b>2003/04</b>	<b>2004/05</b>
<b>Contingency available</b>	£000	£000
- per Budget	100	100
- PIG max possible	997	0
- estimated additional 6th Form funding	171	171
- reduced top slicing for reserves	0	500
- increased Council Tax yield	1,200	500
<b>MAX potentially available</b>	<b>2,468</b>	<b>1,271</b>
<b>Current approvals</b>	£000	£000
- Achieving PI Targets - Educ	65	0
- Achieving PI Targets - Soc Serv	109	0
- Fostering	150	150
- Project management	20	0
- Zurich building	130	200
- Staff moves	10	0
- Plas Brondyffryn legal costs	40	0
- Lifelong Learning Accountant	26	45
	550	395
<b>Potential further bids</b>		
- SEN	200	200
- Transport	100	100
- Joint Review response	500	500
- Image improvements	270	0
- Events	30	0
- One Stop Shops	10	10
	1,660	1,205

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 9 [CABINET 2003 - 74]**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor G Kensler, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire

**DATE:** **20 May 2003**

**SUBJECT:** **Denbighshire Events 2003/04**

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

To support a pilot programme of events and attendant costs for 2003/2004 for the purpose of attracting new visitors to Denbighshire.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

Events contribute effectively to increasing the profile of Denbighshire, attracting new visitors to the area and contributing to the local economy as well as providing an enhanced service to local residents. The pilot events which are recommended fall into two categories: an enhancement to existing events to evaluate the effects of modest resource investment or new events to show how different venues can be used; and to explore innovative new initiatives. Evaluation will be undertaken and reported back to cabinet. The proposed events are as follows:

Llangollen International Eisteddfod, July. To increase the quality of the environment and participatory activities at Denbighshire Marquee and Eisteddfod. £5,500

CBBC Road Show (Blue Peter) against fierce competition from both Cardiff and Swansea. This event will take place at Rhyl Arena, August, with an estimated audience of 15,000. Cost £5,000

Line Dancing Festival at Rhyl Events Arena, August. Estimated audience 5,000. Cost £800

Active 8, A rolling roadshow promoting participation in eight sports for children and young people in towns and villages around the County throughout the summer, culminating in a large inter village/town competition and celebration at Denbigh Leisure Centre. Cost £2,000

Jazz evening in the court yard of Yr Hen Garchar, August. Ticketed event with free entry to the Gruelling Experience. Cost £2,000

Cam Wrth Gam, Step By Step Walking Festival, Friday 19th, Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st September. First year to focus on Prestatyn, Denbigh and Ruthin. Providing a range of easy, medium and difficult animated and guided walks together with a series of themed events in the towns. Cost £5,000

Winter Wonderland at Rhyl, December. An extravaganza involving ice skating and a Santa Run (in association with the NSPCC) Cost £7,500.

World War II Family themed day at Yr Hen Garchar, Ruthin, Free entry with discounted entry to the Gruelling Experience. Cost £2,000.

### **3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 - Promotion of economic, social and environmental well being.

### **4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

The total cost of this pilot programme is £29,800. This funding will also attract matching funding from North Wales Tourism, Rhyl Town Council and Leader Plus.

### **5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

A bid for the relevant level of funding for these proposals is included in the report on the projected outturn for 2002/3, elsewhere on the agenda.

## **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

Consultation has been undertaken with North Wales Toursim regarding the Walking Festival and Rhyl Town Council regarding the events in Rhyl. Both are supportive of this initiative.

## **7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

None

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

To agree to support this innovative programme of events for 2003 and to make additional monies available.

AGENDA ITEM NO: 10 [CABINET 2003 - 75]

CABINET REPORT

CABINET MEMBER      COUNCILLOR M A GERMAN, LEAD MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT

DATE                    20 MAY 2003

SUBJECT                REPLACEMENT OF WINTER MAINTENANCE VEHICLES

1. Decision Sought

That Cabinet agree that capital funding for the purchase of 3 Dual Use (Winter Maintenance/General Highways) Vehicles to replace 3 dedicated gritters, be included in the Capital Plan for 2003-04.

2. Reason for Decision

3 Gritter Vehicles have reached the end of their viable use in that 2 vehicles are approaching 10 years of age and coming to the end of their primary lease, and 1 vehicle is approaching 11 years of age (owned by Denbighshire C.C.) which has also reached the end of its economic life.

In accordance with current good practice when such vehicles are no longer viable, opportunity to replace with dual use vehicles is considered. In the case of these vehicles noting the current County Vehicle Portfolio, this is recommended because of the economic and operational benefits which will accrue from this course of action.

In addition the vehicles' ages are above the County's replacement age threshold - 7 years.

3. Power to Make Decision

Provision of general highway services under the Highways Act 1980.

#### **4. Cost Implications**

The vehicles are to be purchased utilising leasing arrangements and will be charged to the Highways & Transportation Budget. The costs are to fund replacement vehicles, but with the expectation of dual use throughout the year. The leasing and operational cost of each vehicle is estimated at £18,000 per annum (based upon a Capital purchase cost of £88,000 each).

#### **5. Financial Controller Statement**

The costs in connection with the proposed leases will need to be contained within the service budget concerned.

The proposal has had to be considered prior to the normal quarterly report on such issues because of the long lead in period for ordering and assembling the gritters in time for use during the winter.

#### **6. Consultation Carried Out**

Detailed consultations have taken place with the Head of Highways and Transportation and other key operational staff. Deemed essential to replace to carry out statutory related duties.

#### **7. Implications on Other Policy Areas including Corporate**

The vehicles will be used to provide direct services to the Community enhancing safety, operational efficiency, raising the image of the County and providing an improved level of customer service.

#### **8. Recommendation**

That Cabinet agree that capital funding for the purchase of 3 Dual Use (Winter Maintenance/General Highways) Vehicles to replace 3 dedicated gritters be included in the Capital Plan for 2003-04.

**AGENDA ITEM NO: 11 [CABINET 2003 - 76]**  
**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR D M MORRIS, LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNICATIONS**

**DATE:** **20 May 2003**

**SUBJECT:** **PRESENTATION OF CABINET REPORTS**

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

To confirm use of 14 point print for all reports to Cabinet and Asset Management Committee.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

To ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.  
To comply with best practice guidance from the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the council's own guidelines on making documents accessible.

**3 ADVICE**

I was asked at the annual meeting of the Denbighshire Access Group to make documents more accessible to people with impaired sight. 14 point print is considered best practice for ensuring that as many people as possible can read a document. 14 point print is also easier for blind people to scan onto computers because there are fewer scanning errors - particularly if plain typefaces such as Arial are used.

An information sheet from RNIB Cymru is attached (available in English only) which shows that over 5% of Denbighshire's population suffers from severe sight loss i.e. they cannot read a newspaper even with corrective glasses. This is higher than the Welsh average and, as our ageing population grows, is likely to increase still further. Given the average age of Denbighshire's Councillors, it is probable that one or two members fall within the definition of severe sight loss.

Adopting best practice will minimise the risk of challenge to the council under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, because the council can demonstrate that it has made a reasonable adjustment.

#### **4 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

Part VA, Local Government Act 1972; section 21, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people)

#### **5 COST IMPLICATIONS**

Some reports will be a page or two longer and therefore use more paper. This will be offset by savings in staff time from not having to produce documents, whether automatically or on request, in more than one print size.

#### **6 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

No obvious, major financial implications result from the content of this report.

#### **7 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

Denbighshire Access Group, RNIB Cymru, social services - all support use of 14 point print.

#### **8 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE**

Improving access to the Cabinet's documents supports the council's policies on social inclusion and democratic participation.

#### **9 RECOMMENDATION**

That Cabinet confirms use of 14 point print for all reports to it and the Asset Management Committee.

# Prevalence of people with severe sight loss in Wales

Source: Office for National Statistics Mid Year Estimates 1999 & RNIB Needs Survey 1991

Unitary Authority	All ages	0-15	16-59	60-74	75+	% pop.
Blaenau Gwent	2,936	61	327	496	2,052	4.1
Bridgend	5,368	108	607	920	3,734	4.1
Caerphilly	6,084	149	789	1,158	3,988	3.6
Cardiff	11,836	274	1,560	1,918	8,085	3.6
Carmarthenshire	8,073	127	748	1,375	5,823	4.8
Ceredigion	3,300	50	333	548	2,369	4.6
Conwy	6,296	83	474	936	4,803	5.6
Denbighshire	4,618	73	393	704	3,448	5.1
Flintshire	5,376	120	702	990	3,565	3.6
Gwynedd	5,373	90	521	905	3,857	4.6
Merthyr Tydfil	2,155	51	253	397	1,455	3.8
Monmouthshire	3,731	68	396	642	2,625	4.3
Neath Port Talbot	6,053	110	624	1,039	4,280	4.4
Newport	5,359	122	626	969	3,641	3.9
Pembrokeshire	4,891	92	506	901	3,392	4.3
Powys	5,790	96	567	998	4,128	4.6
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	9,091	200	1,130	1,612	6,149	3.8
Swansea	9,923	177	1,060	1,680	7,006	4.3
The Vale of Glamorgan	4,868	104	551	860	3,354	4.0
Torfaen	3,434	78	413	613	2,331	3.8
Wrexham	4,985	101	588	853	3,442	4.0
Ynys Mon	2,987	53	286	516	2,132	4.6
<b>Wales</b>	<b>122,529</b>	<b>2,387</b>	<b>13,454</b>	<b>21,029</b>	<b>85,659</b>	<b>4.2</b>

## Vision for an Inclusive Society

RNIB Cymru's Vision is "To have communities in Wales where people with severe sight problems enjoy the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and quality of life as people who are sighted."

For further information contact one of our Community Development Officers

Tel: 01492 533 999 or email: [cfteam@rnib.org.uk](mailto:cfteam@rnib.org.uk)



# Severe Sight Loss

## Severe sight loss in Wales

Sight loss is one of the most common causes of disability in Wales. Over 120,000 people in Wales have such severe sight loss such that they cannot read a newspaper even with corrective glasses.

## Prevalence of severe sight loss

Compared to the general population the distribution of people with severe sight loss is strongly skewed towards older age groups, with 90% over the age of 60. For the population aged 75 and over 1 in 3 have severe sight loss, with 70% of all people with severe sight loss being from this age group. 2 in every 1000 children will be registerable as blind or partially sighted, with around 10,000 people with severe sight loss being of working age.

## An ageing population

The proportion of people over the age of 75 increased by over 11% in Wales in the 5 years up to 1999. If this trend continues as analysts predict there would be could see a 35% increase in the prevalence of severe sight loss in Wales within the next two decades

## Comparison across the UK

The prevalence of severe sight loss in Wales is nearly 10% higher than the UK, over 15% higher than in Scotland and over 30% higher than in Northern Ireland.

18 of the 22 authorities in Wales have a prevalence of severe sight loss above the UK average, and in one authority the prevalence is over 50% higher than across the UK average

## RNIB Cymru and Communities First

RNIB Cymru has received funding from the National Assembly for Wales to identify the main barriers to social inclusion for people with severe sight loss, and then develop the priorities for action to overcome these barriers.