

**CABINET**

Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held in the Conference Room 1, The Dean's Library, St Asaph on Tuesday 27 September 2005 at 11.00 a.m.

**PRESENT**

Councillors S A Davies, Lead Member for Business & Communications; P A Dobb, Lead Member for Health & Wellbeing; E C Edwards, Lead Member for Communities; R W Hughes, Leader and Lead Member for Regeneration; M A German, Lead Member for Children and Young People; P J Marfleet, Lead Member for Finance and Personnel; D Owens, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning; S Roberts, Lead Member for Promoting Denbighshire and J Thompson Hill, Lead Member for Property and Asset Management and Councillor E W Williams, Lead Member for Environment.

Observers: Councillors R E Barton and M LI Davies.

**ALSO PRESENT**

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

**APOLOGIES**

Chief Executive.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

- 1 The Corporate Director: Environment informed Members that Denbighshire had been successful and gained the Public Sector Innovation of the Year Award in the Energy Saving Trust's Green Fleet Awards. Councillor E W Williams echoed the Corporate Director's sentiments and said he had been pleased to accept the award with both Graham Taylor, Transport Manager and Chris Brown, Assistant Fleet Manager who had both worked hard on the project.

The Corporate Director also informed Members that a complimentary article on mountain biking in the Clwydian Range and Llandegla had appeared in the Single Track magazine. He took the opportunity to thank Adrian Walls, the Highways Information Manager and a member of the North Wales Mountain Bike Association for all his work in organising the Merida 100km Mountain Bike Marathon for the third year in the Ruthin area, which had been a wonderful tourism opportunity as 1100 people from all over the UK were involved in the event. Councillor M A German also congratulated the officer, on both his work and enthusiasm.

2 Councillor R W Hughes said that Councillors P A Dobb, S Roberts and herself has raised approximately £300 for the Childline Charity by participating in Denbighshire's Walking Festival.

3 A Vision for Denbighshire - A Vision for the County: Councillor R W Hughes said the Vision had been launched on 26.09.2005 and the first seminar with some of the Authority's partners was to be held on 30.09.2005.

## 1 URGENT MATTERS

There were no Urgent Matters.

## 2 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 September 2005 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 September 2005 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

## 3 IMPROVING THE COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Cabinet to note progress on consultations with Members and tenants, and with Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and sought approval to consult with all tenants on the basis that the Improvement Programme could be delivered through the Housing Stock Business Plan whilst giving fair information about the alternative option of Stock Transfer. Following the consultation process, a further report would be presented to Cabinet to lead to a final recommendation to Council.

Members agreed a seminar for all Members be held, probably in November 2005 to appraise all Councillors of the very latest situation and implications.

Councillor Dobb said the revised Housing Stock Business Plan allowed borrowing to be repaid over 30 years with the right to buy set at 60 in year 1 and reducing by 1 each year to 31 in the 30th year. This amendment was at the request of the Assembly. The financial due diligence work would be carried out on the financial model whilst consultation took place.

Councillor P J Marfleet asked what would be the effect of the loss of up to £172m over the years by not taking the stock transfer option. He also queried the right to buy. The Head of Housing said the previous year the Authority had 250 right to buy properties, whilst 125 were sold last year. It was likely to be 60 right to buy in the current financial year, mainly because prices have risen and this would lead to a reduction to perhaps 20 or so right to buy in 6 years time. The fewer properties owned by the Authority meant that the maintenance cost was lower.

Councillor M LI Davies stated that the Government appeared to be steering Authorities towards stock transfer whilst many tenants were opposed to such transfers and asked what effect stock transfer would have on the Council Tax in the Authority. The Head of Housing said there would be an impact in year 4 on the Council Tax Capital Fund programme but this was not as significant as 18 months earlier with the possibility of stock transfer rather than prudential borrowing. However, there would be an impact from year 4 on the Council Tax Capital Fund programme. It was not possible to categorise the people who purchased Council owned properties as some people receiving full benefits purchased properties.

**RESOLVED** that:

- [i] *Cabinet note progress on consultations with Members and tenants, and with Welsh Assembly Government (WAG).*
- [ii] *Cabinet approves consultation with all tenants on the basis that the Improvement Programme can be delivered through the Housing Stock Business Plan whilst giving fair information about the alternative option of Stock Transfer.*
- [iii] *following the consultation process, a further report be presented to Cabinet to lead to a final recommendation to Council.*

#### **4 SUPPORTING PEOPLE OPERATIONAL PLAN**

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to agree the Supporting People Operational Plan for 2006/07.

Councillor R W Hughes and Councillor S A Davies took the opportunity to thank officers for the excellent and well prepared seminar on learning disabilities held recently. Councillor E W Williams spoke of the idea from a Social Worker where vulnerable people could leave canisters in their fridges containing information on medical condition and medication which was being implemented through local village shop deliveries.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree the Supporting People Operational Plan for 2006/07 and support the projects identified to meet the needs of vulnerable people.

#### **5 “SOCIAL WORK IN WALES: A PROFESSION TO VALUE” ~ THE GARTHWAITE REPORT**

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to:

- 1 give a commitment to work immediately towards increasing Social Worker/Senior Practitioner and linked pay on an interim basis in Denbighshire to a level commensurate with the higher levels currently being paid by Welsh local authorities

- 2 do this in a way which provides incentives to assist the recruitment of newly qualified staff, and the retention of experienced staff and those making additional specialist contributions
- 3 to work with other local authorities across North Wales to enable this to be achieved in a synchronized way
- 4 to pursue job evaluation for these jobs as a matter of urgency in Denbighshire, using the statements of Roles, Responsibilities, Tasks and Functions contained in the Garthwaite Report as key baselines
- 5 to agree, in principle, the use of market supplements for these jobs, if required
- 6 to consider how the funding of 1 can be reflected in the 2006/07 budget process
- 7 to agree collaborative recruitment and retention arrangements with other North Wales authorities
- 8 to reiterate support for a broad based approach to social work recruitment and retention issues in Denbighshire incorporating attention to staff accommodation, workload, career, training and development opportunities, absence management and management development, as well as pay
- 9 to support, in principle, longer-term national work to develop pay structures for social workers which address “pay drift” and aim to deliver permanent pay scales comparable with other parts of the public sector.

Councillor Dobb said there was an increasing need for Social Workers across Wales and an incentive was required to retain those in post as well as a requirement to address any training needs. Many people did not think of Social Workers until times of need.

Councillor M A German echoed Councillor Dobb’s sentiments and said it was important to balance the cost of increased pay against the enormous cost of not having the required number of staff.

Councillor P J Marfleet supported the report and said Social Workers in many instances were paid so much less than teachers for example. He asked whether the £120k per year proposed interim salary scales in Denbighshire would have an effect on pay in the private sector. The Corporate Director: Personal Services said in terms of private supply workers, the Authority was already paying higher salaries. It was hoped this would lead to less use of agency staff and cross-Authority working in North Wales should also help.

Councillor R W Hughes said the WLGA recently agreed to ask the Welsh Assembly Government for extra funding across Wales and the matter has also been raised at a meeting with Sue Essex AM, Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services.

Councillor E W Williams said the Health Sector also offered better conditions and he welcomed the County initiative but a more widespread initiative was required. The Corporate Director: Personal Services said the Health Sector employed Occupational Health Workers but did not employ Social Workers.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree:

- 1 *to give a commitment to work immediately towards increasing Social Worker/Senior Practitioner and linked pay on an interim basis in Denbighshire to a level commensurate with the higher levels currently being paid by Welsh local authorities*
- 2 *to do this in a way which provides incentives to assist the recruitment of newly qualified staff, and the retention of experienced staff and those making additional specialist contributions*
- 3 *to work with other local authorities across North Wales to enable this to be achieved in a synchronized way*
- 4 *to pursue job evaluation for these jobs as a matter of urgency in Denbighshire, using the statements of Roles, Responsibilities, Tasks and Functions contained in the Garthwaite Report as key baselines*
- 5 *to agree, in principle, the use of market supplements for these jobs, if required*
- 6 *to consider how the funding of para 1 above can be reflected in the 2006/07 budget process*
- 7 *to agree collaborative recruitment and retention arrangements with other North Wales authorities as set out in para 2.7 of the report*
- 8 *to reiterate support for a broad based approach to social work recruitment and retention issues in Denbighshire incorporating attention to staff accommodation, workload, career, training and development opportunities, absence management and management development, as well as pay*
- 9 *to support, in principle, longer-term national work to develop pay structures for social workers which address “pay drift” and aim to deliver permanent pay scales comparable with other parts of the public sector.*

**6 COMMUNITIES FIRST**

Councillor M A German presented the report for Members to note the changes to the Communities First programme set out in the report and agree participation in the temporary governance arrangements for West Rhyl Communities First as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report. Cabinet were also asked to receive a further report when the “projects” to be taken forward in West Rhyl are negotiated, and the governance arrangements for South West Rhyl have been clarified.

The Corporate Director: Personal Services said this was the beginning of a new stage for Communities First and links in the programme between West and South West Rhyl were unclear and it was important that Communities First became more productive. Some Local Councillors in South West Rhyl had concerns with their involvement in the process.

Councillor E C Edwards supported the changes to the Communities First programme and he hoped the North Wales Police would move the programme forward.

Members expressed their concern that vulnerable people had suffered as the funding given had not been spent in the area.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the changes to the Communities First programme set out in the report and agree participation in the temporary governance arrangements for West Rhyl Communities First as set out in paragraph 2.6 of the report. Cabinet also agree to receive a further report when the “projects” to be taken forward in West Rhyl are negotiated, and the governance arrangements for South West Rhyl have been clarified.

## **7 CHILDRENS’ SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES**

Councillor M A German presented the report seeking Cabinet agreement to the Children’s Services Improvement Priorities for 2005-6:

improving Placement Choice and Quality for Children Looked After by increasing the number of Denbighshire Foster Carers and their range of skills; improving the timeliness, quality and quantity of initial and core assessments to Children in Need;

delivering an effective well used preventative service which reduces the risk of harm to vulnerable children and reduces the number of children who need to be looked after by the Council;

continue to improve the quality of care planning and improve the life chances of Children Looked After;

introduce a commissioned approach to the development and delivery of services underpinned by improved contracting arrangements;

improve Staff Retention and Recruitment and make Denbighshire Children’s Services a rewarding place to work.

Members discussed the provision of foster care, particularly the shortages in rural areas and asked whether the stringent CSIW risk assessments was a factor in the shortages. The Head of Children and Family Services said the CSIW risk assessments had an effect and some foster carers had left due to either deregulation or retirement but there were many reasons why people were not attracted into foster care work. The estimated length of time for being foster carers was now 4 years rather than the 20-30 years previously. For every 10 enquiries received, perhaps only 1 would be approved as a foster carer. There was intense competition from the independent sector in some instances due to higher allowances. The recent increase in salary rates has helped to retain the carers and also helped with recruitment. The Welsh Assembly Government was considering national minimum pay scales for

foster carers and if implemented, would have cost implications for the Authority.

**RESOLVED** that:

*Cabinet agree Children's Services Improvement Priorities for 2005/2006 as being:*

- 1. Improving Placement Choice and Quality for Children Looked After by increasing the number of Denbighshire Foster Carers and their range of skills.*
- 2. Improve the timeliness, quality and quantity of initial and core assessments to Children in Need.*
- 3. Deliver an effective well used preventative service which reduces the risk of harm to vulnerable children and reduces the number of children who need to be looked after by the Council.*
- 4. Continue to improve the quality of care planning and improve the life chances of Children Looked After.*
- 5. Introduce a commissioned approach to the development and delivery of services underpinned by improved contracting arrangements.*
- 6. Improve Staff Retention and Recruitment and make Denbighshire Children's Services a rewarding place to work.*

## **8 IMPLEMENTATION OF DCC'S WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Councillor E W Williams presented the report seeking approval to the course of action, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report, in relation to the County's Waste Management Strategy and in particular to the proposed changes to the Council's waste collection arrangements. All Members had discussed the Strategy in detail in the recent County Council meeting. He confirmed that smaller sized bins would be the standard issue but the larger sized would be available if requested.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- [i] approve the proposed course of action (outlined in Appendix One of the report) in relation to Denbighshire's Waste Management Strategy, in particular the intention to introduce alternate weekly collections of green waste and residual waste for the majority of households within Denbighshire, on a phased basis.*
- [ii] note the mandatory legal requirements placed upon the Council, to reduce the tonnages of waste that it sends to landfill, and recognise the need to address the financial consequences of these requirements in forthcoming budget rounds.*
- [iii] note that service delivery methods will be determined largely by operational considerations, and that different approaches will be therefore be appropriate for different areas of the County.*
- [iv] agree the need for further information/educational visits for Members, i.e. to enable them to examine best practice elsewhere, and to plan the detailed implementation within Denbighshire.*

## 9 DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR CABINET MEETINGS

Councillor R W Hughes presented the report seeking Cabinet's recommendation to Council an amendment to the Cabinet procedural rules at Part 4.4 of the Constitution to incorporate under paragraph 2.3 a protocol on the attendance at Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings by Councillors who are not Cabinet Members. She said a similar protocol would be available for Scrutiny Committees and the protocol would give the Chair of any meeting discretion as to whether a non Committee member would be able to speak at the meeting.

Councillor E W Williams supported the protocol but said it was important that a Ward Member be given the opportunity to speak on a relevant item if they had been unable to give prior notice.

Councillor J Thompson Hill welcomed the report and its flexibility.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommend to Council an amendment to the Cabinet procedural rules at Part 4.4 of the Constitution to incorporate under paragraph 2.3 a protocol on the attendance at Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings by Councillors who are not Cabinet Members.

## 10 REVENUE BUDGET 2005-2006

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the appendices to the report and consider any actions necessary to bring the Directorates' projected spending in line with available budgets. The potential overspends had risen to £351k from £333k in the last report.

Councillor Marfleet said the projected situation had worsened since the last report, particularly in Lifelong Learning due to overspends on SEN and an increased demand on the Speech Therapy service. The recent fires in the schools had cost implications for the Authority as the insurance excesses had to be paid out of unbudgeted funds.

The Land Charges element in the Environment Directorate would be funded corporately.

Personal Services had started the year with a substantial carry forward and were currently operating £350k outside their budgeted figure.

In response to a query from Councillor E W Williams regarding top slicing because of inaccurate Census information, the Financial Controller said some Census information in Cardiff had been excluded from the population figures. He said it was possible to consider 2003/04 and 2004/05 as the accuracy of population figures was still under discussion. However, if significant amounts were involved the Authority would receive back payments. It had not been



possible to reconsider the residential allowances as the case had not been strong enough.

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said Sue Essex AM, Minister for Local Government, Finance and Public Services had been presented with information about the impact of transient population on the Authority. It was important that the Authority pressed for further consideration on this issue. Councillor Marfleet agreed and said the Minister was surprised about the high number of static caravans in Denbighshire which could be housing people for up to 10 months of the year which would have an enormous impact on services. It was essential that up to date and accurate information was provided at all times.

The Corporate Director: Lifelong Learning agreed to investigate the cost of providing sprinklers in schools but said it was likely to be prohibitive. Also the cost of water damage from sprinklers would need to be considered.

In response to a query from Councillor R E Barton, the Corporate Director: Environment said income generation from car parking would not be considered as efficiency savings but the income was being used to help with cutbacks from other departments. He said there would be no extra funding in the next financial year to support the Authority's priorities from the Assembly.

The Corporate Director: Personal Services said the Directorate had made savings of £600k in addition to the corporate savings.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the figures in the Appendices and that Lead Members consider remedial actions to align projected spending levels with approved budgets.

## 11 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2005 / 2006

Councillor P A Dobb presented the report for Members to note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2005-2006, which showed a potential net underspend of £332k at the year end.

Councillor Dobb said work was on schedule with the capital schemes and work on window installation in houses was going well and as planned. Some apprentices had been hired by the firms carrying out the work.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account for 2005-2006.

## 12 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources presented the annual report on the performance of the treasury management function in accordance with the Authority's Treasury Policy Statement. The report detailed previous expectations of the economic climate, the resultant strategy

agreed, the actual interest rate performance and the actions undertaken by Council in response. Members were asked to approve the treasury activities undertaken in 2004-2005 as detailed in the appendix to the report. A revised Appendix 2 Prudential Indicators was circulated at the meeting.

The Authority had increased its borrowing in the current year as interest rates were low and had been able to invest at a higher rate than the borrowing repayment rate.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet approve the Annual Treasury Report for 2004-2005.

At this juncture (12.45 p.m.) the meeting adjourned for 10 minutes to allow Members to participate in refreshments.

### **13 PROPOSALS FOR STAFF AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources presented the report seeking agreement to proposals of how to continue the development work taken place over the last nine months.

The report outlined work undertaken during the last 6 months, the main outcomes of which were the need for a new performance appraisal system and leadership/management training. The message from staff who were consulted as part of the Focus Groups was that good performance was not being recognised and managers were not addressing poor performance. The Personal Development Review would be developed into a performance appraisal system which would have key competencies built in of what was required at each grade. The Deputy Chief Executive / Corporate Director: Resources said it was important that staff were confident with the new process and that it was dealt with in a confidential and sensitive manner when implemented.

Members' 'job descriptions' would be developed and the Chief Executive was in the process of developing a statement of values. The role of the Monthly Management Conference was also important and an effective way of delivering the organisational development was required. Although the Resources Directorate was currently financing the development and had carried forward some monies from last year, it was evident that Personnel would be struggling to deliver the organisational development programme alongside Single Status and the HR System and it was therefore envisaged that a strengthening of the team was required.

Councillor P J Marfleet said he supported the outcomes in the report and had been pleased with the constructive input from the Unions. The new appraisal system was an opportunity for staff to express their views and aspirations for career development whilst the employer had an opportunity to address performance. It was evident that widescale management training would have an impact on costs.

Councillor E C Edwards strongly supported the report and stressed the importance of giving staff confidence in the appraisal system. He agreed that good performance was not always recognised and poor performance was not being addressed in many cases. Members agreed with his suggestion that further discussions on organisational development should be held.

Councillor D Owens Hill welcomed the report and saw it as a way of development for the Authority. Councillor J Thompson Hill agreed with Councillor Owens and said the Authority had an excellent resource in its staff.

Councillor R W Hughes also supported the report. She said issues such as some Members commenting to the press inappropriately had a huge impact on staff. Comments had also been made by staff on Members' behaviour.

Members agreed that 'job descriptions' for Members should not tie them down with too much red tape. It was important for Members to know their roles and the Leader and Chair of the Authority roles be clarified.

**RESOLVED** that Members note the main outcomes of the work undertaken to date and agree in principle the need to develop an Authority-wide performance appraisal system and supporting leadership and management development training as outlined in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 of the report. It was further agreed to support the ongoing work as outlined in paragraph 2.8 of the report.

#### **14 CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT 2004 - FORMATION OF JOINT EMERGENCY PLANNING TEAM**

Councillor E C Edwards presented the report seeking Members' agreement to develop a joint Emergency Planning Team with Flintshire County Council on the basis of a collaborative approach that would enable the Council to better meet the new duties placed on it by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. He reminded Members that Denbighshire had previously had an excellent service provided before the 2 staff members had left to take up posts in other Authorities.

Councillor Edwards expressed his disappointment that no financial savings would be gained in the early years of the project.

The Corporate Director: Environment thanked the Lead Member for his support all the way along with the new collaborative approach and said it was hoped that one emergency planning team across two Authorities would provide an excellent service.

**RESOLVED** that:

[i] Cabinet receive and agree to the collaborative proposals, contained within the report, for a Joint Emergency Planning Function between Denbighshire County Council and Flintshire County Council

- [ii] delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director: Environment to appoint Flintshire's County Emergency Planning Officer to take forward the collaborative arrangements*
- [iii] delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director: Environment to determine the most appropriate location for this function*
- [iv] delegated authority is given to the Corporate Director: Environment to review the joint arrangements at 3 year intervals.*

## **15 CABINET FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor S A Davies presented the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

Members suggested that the Cabinet and Scrutiny Forward Work programmes be linked.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the Cabinet Forward Work Programme.

## **16 URGENT ITEMS**

There were no Urgent Items.

## **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 7, 8 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **PART II**

## **17 CAPITAL PLAN 2005-2006**

Councillor P J Marfleet presented the report for Members to note the latest projected position in the 2005/06 element of the capital plan.

Councillor Marfleet reported that a further £50k had been included for the works at Rhyl Leisure Centre, which now totalled £309k. However, a positive outcome from the Ruthin Craft Centre redevelopment was that for every £1 invested by the Authority, it received £8 from outside financing but the Authority would have to pay for any overspending. Once received, the sale proceeds from the former temporary car park in Ruthin would be allocated to schools maintenance work. £1m would be required to fund the Tir Morfa project which would leave £750k in the capital fund. It was essential that further capital receipts were received.

Councillor J Thompson Hill said a special Asset Management Committee was to be convened to discuss the capital disposal programme for the next 3 years.

The Financial Controller informed Members that the estimated capital requirement for the Prestatyn Mini Pitch project was £35k and not £25k as stated in the report.

In response to a query from Councillor E C Edwards, the Financial Controller said funding for both the 3 year CCTV programme and Rhyl Police Station would need to be considered by Cabinet before inclusion in the Capital Plan. Councillor Edwards suggested the 3 year CCTV programme be funded from the Ruthin car park receipts.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet note the position of the 2005/06 element of the Council's agreed 3 Year Capital Plan and agree to allocate £35k from the match funding block allocation to support the provision of the Scansis Mini Pitch at Prestatyn.

## 18 DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL [HIGH STREET AND CHURCH LANE] COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

[Mr I K Hearle, County Clerk declared an interest in the item and left the room during its discussion.]

Councillor E W Williams presented the report seeking Members' agreement to extend the indemnity agreement currently in place until 31.10.2006, following its expiration on 31.01.2006.

Councillor R W Hughes said Prestatyn Members were eager to use this opportunity to have further discussions with Tesco's to seek assurances of a commitment to the time programme. The Corporate Director: Environment informed Members that the request was for an extension of the period as the Compulsory Purchase Orders process would take some time, and extend beyond the current agreement. Members discussed the reasons for the time taken to progress the compulsory purchase order and sought information about likely future timescales.

Members discussed the matter in detail and agreed to defer the report until further discussions had been held with Tesco's.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet defer the report to allow further discussions with Tesco's and following an agreement on timescales, the report be re-presented a future Cabinet meeting.

The meeting concluded at 1.45 p.m.

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor D Owens, Lead Member for Lifelong Learning

**DATE:** 25<sup>th</sup> October 2005

**SUBJECT:** School Admissions

**1. DECISION SOUGHT**

- 1.1. To approve a review of school admissions criteria
- 1.2. To approve the proposed criteria and their prioritised ranking when considering admissions to all Denbighshire schools
- 1.3. To approve the proposal to consult widely on the proposed revised criteria in accordance with the indicated time scales

**2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

**2.1. Background**

Admissions to Denbighshire schools are managed in accordance with guidance currently published annually in the Schools Information Guide. The recent Estyn inspection of Lifelong Learning Strategy and Resources on Access to Education noted:

"The Authority has established an appropriate policy on admission arrangements for schools. The admissions booklet published each year is clear and well set-out, and contains all the required and relevant information. There are appropriate consultations with neighbouring Authorities, Diocesan Authorities and schools." Estyn 2005

Although distinct from each other, the Standard Number and Admissions Criteria are the principle tools available to DCC as the Admissions Authority to manage admissions applications for its schools. It is, therefore, important that they are able to be used effectively in the consideration of applications for admissions to schools.

**2.2. The Case for Change**

Recent experience of a declined admission request being overturned on appeal has highlighted the need to review Admissions Criteria.

- 2.3.** Officers have sought guidance from officials at the Welsh Assembly Government who commented that the present ranking of criteria for admissions to Denbighshire schools published annually in the Schools Information Guide is not supportive of the intended policy that children should attend their nearest appropriate school. It is, therefore, appropriate that the admissions criteria are reviewed to support the future admissions policy aspirations,
- 2.4.** The current oversubscription criteria stated in the Schools Information Guide are (in rank order):
- a) The authority will maintain the links between certain infant and junior schools and between certain junior or primary schools and certain secondary schools.
  - b) The authority will normally allow younger brothers and sisters to follow older ones to the school
  - c) Proximity of the child's home to the school for which a preference has been expressed. The Authority will ensure as far as possible that a place will be offered at the child's nearest appropriate school.
  - d) The Authority will consider the special educational needs of children..., other special circumstances and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.
- 2.5.** This rank order clearly gives precedent to 'out of area' siblings in perpetuity potentially denying local children a place at their nearest appropriate school.
- 2.6. Proposed Changes**

In order to make the criteria for the management of admissions to schools easier to apply, a revised list of criteria is proposed as follows:

"Admissions to all schools will be considered according to the following, in rank order

1. Pupils for whom there are exceptional social reasons (e.g. looked-after children) which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director for Lifelong Learning, justify admission to the school.
2. Pupils resident within the designated geographical area (or catchment area, where defined) which the school is intended to serve.
3. Pupils for whom it is the nearest school suitable for their age, parental language preference or parental denominational preference – as measured by walking distance from the nearest available school gate to the pupil's home.
4. Siblings of pupils already admitted under 2.
5. Siblings of pupils already admitted under 3.

6. Pupils for whom there are exceptional medical, or educational reasons which, in the opinion of the Corporate Director for Lifelong Learning, justify admission to the school.
7. Siblings of pupils already admitted under 6.
8. Pupils living nearest to the school, measured by the shortest walking distance from the nearest available school gate to the pupil's home.
9. Siblings already admitted under 8."

## **2.7. Timetable for Implementation**

A proposed Action Plan for implementation is included at section 8 below.

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

- 3.1 Section 88 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides Denbighshire with delegated authority for determining admission arrangements for schools. This is supported by the provisions of the Code of Practice on Schools Admission Arrangements (Wales) 1999. The duty to consult on such proposals is contained within section 89 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998."

## **4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Over time the new admissions criteria may help regulate home school transport costs (e.g. by making it clear that there is no automatic right for siblings of present pupils to be admitted as is the case under present criteria).
- 4.2 The cost of consultation would need to be met from within existing resources and budgets.

## **5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

- 5.1 Any additional costs must be carefully monitored and contained within departmental budgets.

## **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 6.1 The following have been consulted on the proposed review and consultation plan:

Officers of the Lifelong Learning Directorate  
CET members  
Lead Member for Lifelong Learning  
Chair and Members of LLSC  
Officials at WAG



## 7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

7.1 A review of Admissions Arrangements for Denbighshire schools will impact upon, and be impacted by, the following policy developments:

- WAG consultation on School Capacity Assessment and Standard Numbers
- Transport Policy Review – WAG/DCC
- Disability Discrimination Act - WAG/National
- Corporate & Directorate Asset Management Plans
- Education Strategic Plan
- School Organisation Plan
- Community Learning Resource

7.2 A review of Admissions Arrangements would be undertaken within the context of the Modernising Education Programme presently being developed.

## 8 ACTION PLAN

### 8.1 Timetable for implementation

Action	By When/Deadline	Key People
Draft proposals and take to LLSC October 05	5/10/05 for 19/10	DGE/TJ
Present to Cabinet Oct 05 for agreement & approval to consult county-wide	11/10/05 for 25/10	DGE/TJ
Consult - until end Mar 2006 (Public, Schools, Admissions Forum, et al) 5 x Area based Public Meetings	Meetings: Nov 05 – Jan 06 (Responses by End Mar 06)	DGE/TJ
Determine to adopt changes - by End April 06	April 06 Cabinet	HWG/DGE/ Cabinet
Include in SID - guide to parents for publication Summer 06	April/May 06	TJ/GY/GW
Publish and implement for Sept 07	Publish Sept 06 to take effect Sept 07	TJ/GY/GW

## 9 RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

9.1 approve a review of school admissions criteria

9.2 approve the proposed criteria and their prioritised ranking when considering admissions to all Denbighshire schools

9.3 approve the proposal to consult widely on the proposed revised criteria in accordance with the indicated time scales

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR S DAVIES, LEAD MEMBER FOR BUSINESS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

**DATE: 25 October 2005**

**SUBJECT: REVISED WELSH LANGUAGE SCHEME**

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

To recommend, the revised Scheme, (attached at annex 1), for approval by full Council, prior to final approval by the Welsh Language Board.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

2.1 The Council's current Welsh Language Scheme was prepared under the provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and was approved by the Welsh Language Board in January 1997

2.2 There is a requirement to periodically review Schemes in light of organisational, legislative and other changes and in order to progress public bodies delivery of bilingual services to the public in Wales. The Welsh Language Board has recently requested authorities that have not recently reviewed and revised their schemes to do so by the end of 2005.

**3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

The revision and implementation of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme is a statutory duty under the Welsh Language Act 1993

**4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

The majority of costs associated with the revised Scheme should be able to be met within existing expenditure and resources. Implementation of the Scheme will involve officer time, translation costs, printing costs, recruitment and training costs and costs associated with bilingual consultation processes. It is therefore difficult to accurately cost the full associated expenditure required to implement the Scheme at this time.

**5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

Costs in connection with this matter will need to be contained within existing relevant service budgets.

**6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

The Welsh Language Board has viewed the draft scheme and their comments have been incorporated where appropriate and following discussion with them.

The advice note regarding revision of the Scheme and the draft Scheme itself have been circulated to Heads of Service, CET, the Lead Member for Equality and key staff for whom certain sections of the scheme are likely to be particularly relevant. This draft revised Scheme has also been to all four Scrutiny committees. As this is a revision and not a new scheme consultation with the public is not a requirement.

A number of amendments to the revised scheme were recommended by the four scrutiny committees these are listed below:

Recommended changes:-

6.1 At Para 4.1 the cross reference should be changed to 14.4

6.2 At Para 13.3 amend to read “Welsh Language Translators employed or contracted by the Council will be members of Cymdeithas Cyfiethwyr Cymru or be able to evidence equivalent experience”

6.3 At Para 16.4 amend to read “Where annexes to papers are provided these will be provided bilingually where they are short in length (up to 4 sides) and when longer, where bilingual versions are available”

6.4 At Para 16.4 amend to read .....planning application forms. Officer communications within planning files, pertinent to the decision making process, which are available for public scrutiny will be made available bilingually.

Costings of implementing the recommendations will be made available at the meeting.

Following advice from the Welsh Language Board, the revised Scheme will now cover a five year period, but the action plan will cover a three year period, at the end of which the action plan will be reviewed and revised.

## 7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The Scheme is linked to the Council’s Integrated Equality Policy and is a corporate issue. Its requirements apply across the Council. Education is covered under the Council’s Welsh Education Scheme which sits under the Council’s main Language Scheme and was agreed in October 2004.

## 8 ACTION PLAN

		Action by	When
1.	Recommend the revised Scheme with proposed amendments to Full Council	S. Davies	22 November 2005

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 To recommend the revised scheme for approval by full Council prior to final approval by the Welsh Language Board.

9.2 To consider whether any of the changes recommended by Scrutiny at paras 6.1 to 6.4 above should be incorporated.

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# Denbighshire County Council Welsh Language Scheme Revised 2005

This revised scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board under Section 14 (1) and 16(3) of the Welsh Language Act on XX of XXX 2005.

Denbighshire County Council has adopted the principle that in the conduct of its business with the public, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality. This scheme sets out how the Council will continue to develop this principle when providing services to the public.

# DRAFT

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 Under the Welsh Language Act 1993 every public body providing services to the public in Wales has to prepare a scheme setting out how it will provide those services in Welsh. This is our scheme. It describes how we will give effect, so far as is both appropriate in the circumstances and reasonably practicable, to the principle established by the Welsh Language Act that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

1.2 The scheme covers the services that Denbighshire County Council provides to the public. In this scheme, the term public means individuals, legal persons and corporate bodies. It includes the public as a whole, or a section of the public, as well as individual members of the public. The term includes voluntary organisations and charities. Directors and others representing limited companies are also within the meaning of the term 'public'. It does not, however, include persons who are acting in a capacity which is representative of the Crown, Government or the State. Consequently, persons who fulfil official functions of a public nature, even though they are legal persons, do not come within the meaning of the word public when they are fulfilling those official functions.

1.3 Further information about the scope and purpose of Welsh language schemes can be found in the Welsh Language Board's guidelines ([www.Welshlanguage-board.org.uk](http://www.Welshlanguage-board.org.uk)).

Any queries, comments or complaints regarding this scheme should be sent to:

Colette Bennett  
Corporate Equality Officer  
Trem Clwyd  
Canol y Dre  
Ruthin  
Denbighshire  
LL15 1QA or by e-mail to [Colette.bennett@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:Colette.bennett@denbighshire.gov.uk)



## 2. Background

2.1 Denbighshire is a mainly rural county with a population of 95,600<sup>1</sup>. The main towns in the County are Ruthin; Denbigh; Rhyl and Prestatyn. The Council has main offices in each of these locations plus numerous smaller offices and depots as well as schools at locations throughout the County.

2.2 In terms of Welsh Language in 2001 26.4% of the population or 23,760 people said they could speak Welsh this was an increase of 467 from 1991, but a percentage decrease of 0.3%. In terms of percentage of population, a greater percentage of people identify as Welsh speaking in the South of the County than in the North with the highest percentages being in the electoral divisions of Llandrillo (64%); Llanrhaeadr yng Nghinmeirch (59%) Gwyddelwern (53%); Efnechtyd (52 %) and Corwen (51%), whilst the lowest percentages are in the wards of Prestatyn North (12%); Rhyl West (12%); Prestatyn North West (13%); Rhyl East (13%); and Rhyl South West (15%). Because of the way population is distributed in the County, this often contrasts with the picture when looking at numbers of individuals, where the trend is reversed, with higher numbers of Welsh speakers found in the North than the South. This is clearly represented on the map showing numbers of Welsh speakers in appendix 2 and associated table giving numbers of Welsh Speakers at ward level. Further details on the levels of people identifying as Welsh Speaking in the County can be found at *appendix 1 and appendix 2*.

2.2 Denbighshire County Council is responsible for providing the majority of local government services to the people of Denbighshire. The services provided by the Council for the public are very wide-ranging. They include services which the Council is required to provide by statute and those which it has powers to provide. These include: adult education, children and family support, special educational needs, youth services, library services, housing, public protection, support services for disabled people, residential and day care services, community safety, planning; countryside access; economic development, tourism, business support, leisure services including theatres and leisure centres, waste collection, recycling, maintenance of highways and transport, Council tax and the benefits administration. This list is not exhaustive.

2.3 The Council has responsibility for providing schools and ensuring sufficient school places, and, through regulation of the curriculum and the character of schools, for the strategic direction of Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The delivery of education is otherwise substantially through Governing Bodies of Schools, who decide their arrangements and the application of resources in staffing, supplies and administration. These aspects and the Council's policy regarding developing Welsh Medium Education are included in the Council's Education Welsh Language Scheme.

2.4 The Council provides support services for schools and delivers some services, such as student grants, directly to the public. Services provided generally to the public, by the Lifelong Learning Directorate, such as dealing with phone calls, correspondence, publishing documents etc. falls within the remit of this Scheme not the Education Welsh Language Scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> Mid Year Estimate 2004

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2.5 The Authority is structured into four Directorates covering the different services that the Council provides. These are the Directorate of Resources; the Directorate of Lifelong Learning; the Directorate of Environment; and the Directorate of Personal Services. The structure within these four directorates is shown in *appendix 4*.

### 3. Political structure

3.1 Under the current constitutional arrangements the full Council agrees the policy framework and certain other decisions reserved to it. The Cabinet has the power to act to make decisions in accordance with the constitution and within the policy and budgetary frameworks. Four scrutiny committees review the decisions of Cabinet and make recommendations. They review policy and performance and are consulted on any proposals to change the policy framework. There are a number of other Committees and panels the main ones being the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee which deal with the granting of planning permission and licences respectively.

3.2 Denbighshire County Council aims to safeguard and promote the use of the Welsh language throughout Denbighshire through the services it provides, through the partners it works with and through its role as a major employer and contractor within the County.

3.3 The Council's Welsh Language Scheme is linked to its Integrated Equalities Policy which is designed to assist the Council in working towards:

- Fair treatment for all
- Elimination of disadvantage and
- Recognition and inclusion of previously excluded groups

3.4 The Council aims to achieve a situation where staff who come into contact with the public are bilingual and that the services it provides to the Public are available bilingually. In doing so the Council will ensure it is:

- a) Offering the public the right to choose which language to use in their dealings with the Council;
- b) Recognizing that members of the public can express their views and needs better in their preferred language;
- c) Recognizing that enabling the public to use their preferred language is a matter of good practice, not a concession;
- d) Recognizing that denying people the right to use their preferred language could place them at a real disadvantage.

3.5 The Council's Welsh Language Scheme has been reviewed in the light of developments and changes in the structure and functions of the County Council since 1997 when the first Scheme was adopted.

3.6 Following good progress towards most targets set in the original Scheme, the County Council has identified the need to set itself more challenging targets to further develop the Welsh Language within the county and meet the needs of the community.

3.7 The Welsh Language Board undertook a monitoring visit in 2004 looking at how well the Council was managing and implementing its Scheme. It judged that the

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Council's compliance with its scheme in relation to service delivery was fair and improving and its management of the scheme was good and improving.

3.8 Key areas identified for further improvement or development were:

- a) Ensuring bilingual availability of the Council's new Corporate Customer Service Centre as it evolves;
- b) Monitoring and maintaining awareness of the requirements of the scheme and the availability of bilingual services by staff and the public;
- c) Reviewing the translation service to ensure a high quality service is maintained;
- d) Ensuring that Council staff have the appropriate skills to ensure delivery of a bilingual service;
- e) Ensuring appropriate monitoring systems are in place to identify strengths and weaknesses in complying with the scheme;
- f) Building on work already undertaken in relation to third party service delivery to ensure external contractors deliver services in line with the requirements of the scheme.

3.9 Other areas for improvement or development addressed within this revised Scheme are directed by the Welsh Assembly Government's action plan for a bilingual Wales "Iaith Pawb" within which is the ambitious target to increase the % of those who speak Welsh to 25.8% by 2011; and linked to this, the advice from the Welsh Language Board on revising Welsh Language Schemes including the use of a number of key performance measures relating to increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the County and ensuring more service are delivered through the medium of Welsh.

3.9 The Council has prepared an action plan as part of this Scheme which can be found at *appendix 3* of this document. The plan details specific actions and targets relating to the implementation of the Scheme and to achieving progress in relation to the areas mentioned in sections 3.8 and 3.9 above. Progress against this action plan will be reported to Council annually and made available to the public. The Scheme and action plan will be formally reviewed within three years of the date of approval.

#### 4. Application of the Scheme

4.1 Implementation of the Scheme will be undertaken by Council staff and elected members alike. In relation to implementing the scheme elected members will be considered to be internal to the Council as opposed to members of the public, therefore for example they may be communicated with on an individual basis as with any other members of staff in Welsh or English as appropriate for all parties concerned (see also 14.12b).

4.2 It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the scheme and for managers at all levels to ensure its implementation. The Council has appointed a Corporate Equality Officer whose role incorporates that of Welsh Language Officer, to co-ordinate the work required to deliver this scheme. In addition, the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning's responsibilities encompass a corporate lead on bilingual policy.

4.3 Elected members have a vital role to play in promoting use of the Welsh Language and in enhancing the image of the Council as a bilingual authority. Elected members should do this by:

- a) Ensuring that the work of the Council is used as a vehicle for promoting the Welsh Language;
- b) Speaking the language of their choice at public meetings held by the Council;
- c) Forwarding complaints and suggestions to improve Welsh Language services within their local communities to the Corporate Equality Officer;
- d) Supporting work within their local communities to promote the use of Welsh.

4.4 The Leader has appointed a lead Councillor for Equal Opportunities who as part of this role will champion the Welsh Language.

4.5 Copies of the Scheme are available in Welsh and English on the Council's Website at [www.denbighshire.gov.uk](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk) as are copies of the Council's Education Welsh Language Scheme which covers delivery of education within the authority. Hard copies of the Scheme are available from the Corporate Equality Officer whose details are at the beginning of the Scheme.

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### 5. Policies, legislation and initiatives

5.1 This scheme has been prepared in the context of the following national and international language policy frameworks and relevant legislation:

- a) The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages
- b) The Assembly Governments Welsh Language Scheme
- c) The Local Government Equality Standard
- d) Iaith Pawb - The Welsh Assembly Government's national Action Plan for a Bilingual Wales
- e) The Welsh Language Act 1993

5.2 The Council will have due regard to the principles, targets and legislative requirements of the above in its implementation of this scheme.

### 6. Mainstreaming

6.1 The Council will mainstream the Welsh Language within its policies and service delivery. This means we will consider the Welsh Language in all aspects of the Council's work and in everything that the Council does. The Council will aim to ensure that every opportunity is taken to promote and support the Welsh Language and a bilingual Wales and to plan, provide and evaluate services in Welsh and English.

6.2 The Council will do this through incorporating Welsh Language and Bilingual issues within its developing impact assessment methodology; through its performance management systems, the Bilingual Forum and through the work of its Customer Care and e-Quality group (CCeG).

6.3 In particular the Council will ensure that matters concerning the Welsh Language are included as relevant elements when developing and implementing policies or services. We will discuss with our partners how we can further develop and improve Welsh Language usage over the next three years in relation to policies and services for Children and Young People and will also give particular attention to Welsh Language issues in relation to two of the main access channels to information, our website and our new customer call centre. We will work towards answering an increasing number of telephone queries via the customer call centre and providing an increasing volume of information via the web thus ensuring an increase in our ability to deliver services in Welsh.

### 7. Service planning and delivery

7.1 Our policies, initiatives and services will be consistent with this scheme. They will support the use of Welsh and will, whenever possible, help the public in Denbighshire to use Welsh as part of their day to day lives. When we contribute to the development or delivery of policies, initiatives, services or new legislation led by other organisations, we will do so in a way which is consistent with the aims and objectives of this scheme.

7.2 We will continue to support community work in relation to promoting the use of the Welsh Language in Denbighshire through the vehicle of Menter Iaith and through

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sponsorship and support of events like the Urdd National Eisteddfod which will be held in Ruthin in 2006.

7.3 Our policies, initiatives and services will, help develop use of the Welsh language.

7.4 Both Welsh and English are currently used by staff in the internal administration of the Council. The Council will encourage and support staff to use both languages as appropriate in their day to day work and will reinforce and develop a positive environment for Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh in the workplace.

### **8. Delivering services**

8.1 Our normal practice will be to ensure that our services are available to the public in Welsh and English. We will let the public know when services are available in Welsh. This will be done through publicity materials e.g. notices at reception; leaflets; posters and County Voice as well as by encouraging staff to indicate their ability to speak Welsh through the Welsh Language Board's "Iaith Gwaith" scheme.

8.2 The way in which a service is delivered to the public varies according to its nature and size. Some are provided from the Council's main office centres, whilst others operate through centres, depots, homes and other workplaces. Additionally, in Denbighshire, delivery of services takes place through the One Stop Shops and via other outlets afforded by e-government.

### **9. Our regulatory functions – and services undertaken on our behalf by third parties**

9.1 Any agreements or arrangements which we make with third parties will be consistent with the relevant parts of this scheme, when those agreements or arrangements relate to the provision of services to the public in Wales. This will include services which are contracted out, granting licences and granting other permissions. Sections 28.1 and 28.2 of our current standard contract for contracts over £100,000 relate to the requirements on our contractors in relation to the Council's Welsh Language Scheme.

9.2 Provision will be made to monitor compliance with the relevant parts of this Scheme by contractors, agents and other third parties within the standard monitoring arrangements, including a contractual requirement to provide regular performance reports from contractors and agents. It will be the responsibility of the contract manager to ensure these monitoring requirements are met.

9.3 All third party service providers will be provided with a copy of this scheme as part of the tendering and contracting process. We will develop a means of monitoring compliance with regard to the Welsh Language aspects of contracts and will provide guidance on this as part of the tendering and contracting process.

9.4 This Scheme applies to any outside agency, company, or voluntary body, which provides a service on the Council's behalf as it does to the Council itself.

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9.5 Where services are delivered to the public by other organizations, such as schools and Community Councils, the Council will, encourage, facilitate and support the use of Welsh by promoting its Scheme and offering advice and assistance.

### **10. Awarding grants and loans**

10.1 When administering funding, loans and grants for organisations, the Council will consider:

- a) Including Welsh language criteria on application forms together with recommendations as to what activities could be provided bilingually;
- b) Ensuring that organisations consider the need to assist and promote the use of the Welsh language.
- c) If organisations hold public events or activities for the public, they must ensure they are bilingual as far as is practicable.
- d) Ensuring that the grant scheme complies with the Council's Language Scheme.

In awarding grants and funding, particularly to smaller voluntary organisations, we will have regard to the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on awarding grants and loans.

### **11. Regulatory Functions**

11.1 These functions encompass such matters as the grant of licenses and permissions for entertainment, street collections and lotteries, street trading and markets and planting on highway verges. They also include building regulations, planning applications and consents.

11.2 In relation to these functions the Council will:

- a) encourage third party organisations who provide services to the public to use the Welsh language in their service delivery;
- b) refer the organization to the Council's Language Scheme and good practice established in it, including measures in relation to using the Welsh Language in service agreements, service licenses or in other regulatory documentation;
- c) offer guidance and support to organisations.

### **12. Partnerships (Formal and Informal) with Public, Voluntary and Private Sectors in the Provision of Public Services**

12.1 The Council works in partnership with public bodies, organizations from the voluntary sector and other agencies. The Council works on many levels when working with others and accepts it has responsibility to bring linguistic considerations to the attention of all partners. When forming partnerships the Council will ensure the issue of how the partnership will operate with regard to the Welsh Language is discussed and agreed as part of the Terms of Reference and/ or constitution of the partnership.

12.2 When the Council is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision is compliant with the Welsh Language Scheme.

12.3 When the Council joins a partnership in which another body is leading, the Council's input to the partnership will comply with the Welsh Language Scheme and the Council will encourage other parties to comply giving priority to services provided to the general public.

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12.4 When the Council is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt a bilingual policy. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Council will act in accordance with its Welsh Language Scheme.

12.5 When the Council joins or forms a partnership, it will ask prospective partners about their Welsh Language Schemes, Language Policies or the means by which they will operate bilingually. With any partnership the Council will offer advice and support to other partner organisations.



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### 13. Quality Standards

13.1 Services provided in Welsh and English will be of equal quality and will be provided within the same timescale.

13.2 The Council will monitor the standard and consistency of Welsh Language service delivery through the use of sample surveys and through the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

13.3 Welsh Language Translators employed or contracted by the Council will be members of Cymdeithas Cyfiethwyr Cymru (Society of Interpreters and Translators in Wales) or working towards membership.

13.4 Staff working through the medium of Welsh will be supported to do so to a high standard through the provision of support materials and appropriate technology such as Welsh Spellcheckers, dictionaries and language guides as well as through appropriate training.

13.5 The Council will try to ensure that the form and style of its public material in Welsh and English is understood by the public and is clear to read and to reply to.

### 14. Dealing with the Welsh speaking public

14.1 Written Correspondence. Our normal practice will be as follows: When someone writes to us in Welsh we will issue a reply in Welsh (if a reply is required). Our target time for replying will be the same as for replying to letters written in English.

14.2 When we initiate correspondence with an individual, group or organisation, we will do so bilingually unless we know that they would prefer to correspond in Welsh or English only when it may be sent in that language only or bilingually.

14.3 When we send standard or circular correspondence to several recipients, it will be bilingual unless we know that all recipients would prefer to receive it in Welsh or English only when it may be sent in that language only or bilingually.

14.4 Information will be provided in the following hierarchy of options

- a) bilingually - the format will be that the Welsh will be above the English or to the left for letters, forms, e-mails, bilingual letters and longer documents where we seek to promote language equality e.g. County Voice
- b) Bilingual – back to back format for longer documents over 5000 words
- c) separate language documents - acceptable only in exceptional circumstances .g. very large documents 10000 words +; Council papers (not agendas) and the web site

14.5 For very large documents or where there are justifiable reasons for producing separate Welsh and English versions e.g. complicated forms aimed at audiences with low literacy levels then the following point (14.6) will apply:

14.6 If the Welsh and English versions of any correspondence or document have to be published separately, our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are

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available at the same time. Both documents will state that copies are available in the other language and how to obtain them.

14.7 Enclosures sent with bilingual letters will be bilingual, except where they are annexes to Council papers; or where they are produced by another agency, when they will be provided bilingually if available but not otherwise.

14.8 Enclosures sent with Welsh letters will be Welsh or bilingual, when available except where they are annexes to Council papers; or where they are produced by another agency when they will be provided bilingually if available but not otherwise.

14.9 The above will apply to electronic correspondence as well as paper Correspondence.

14.10 All hard-copy Welsh correspondence that we issue will be signed, in the case of standard or circular mailings a photocopied signature is appropriate for both Welsh and English correspondence.

14.11 In services where it is appropriate, we will develop a system to record the language preference of those who wish to correspond with us in Welsh or English.

14.12 The Council produces a wide range of hard copy and electronic documents including documents that

- provide information on the Council's services.
- explain and give guidance on the Council's policies, initiatives, developments and new services including those resulting from new legislation.
- seek general consultation on issues and matters on which the Council wishes to know the public's view.
- issue specific information to the general public on aspects of the services provided for the public e.g. complaints procedure.
- and may be recurring annual or periodical publications, or single-issue documents.

14.13 These may include pamphlets, booklets and circulars, e-mails, bye-laws, regulations, certificates and posters as well as major documents such as Council Committee papers, the improvement plan; Policy documents; and newsletters. They will also include such printed items as licenses, cards, passes, tokens and tickets.

14.14 The following criteria will be used to decide whether any particular document; standard or circular correspondence or electronic communication need not be produced in Welsh, English or bilingually. The following will normally apply:

- a) If the intended audience is the public as defined in the Welsh Language Act then the document or correspondence must be available in the language of choice of the recipient or bilingually;
- b) If the intended audience is internal to the Council then it need not be in Welsh other than where it is specifically aimed at Authority Schools; where it is communication sent to all Councillors or a specific group of Councillors e.g. a committee; or if it relates to performance, benefits, pay and conditions of staff when it should be available bilingually.- Where staff wish to use Welsh in internal communications with colleagues they will be encouraged and supported to do so;

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- c) Where a document conveys detailed administrative, legal and / or technical information and is likely to have a restricted readership the member of staff responsible for the document must make a decision based on all the factors concerned as to the appropriateness of providing the document bilingually. Where the conclusion is reached not to provide such a document bilingually then this decision and the reasons for it must be conveyed to the Corporate Equality Officer..
- d) Where a member of the public requests a document under the Freedom of Information Act the letter or e-mail of response will be in the language of the request whilst the document containing the information requested will be provided in the language in which it is available. If a translation of the document is required this can be arranged and an appropriate fee can be charged. Further information relating to the Council's FOI Publication Scheme can be found on the Council's web site at [www.denbighshire.gov.uk](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk)
- e) English need not be used for items produced by the Council for the purposes of promoting Welsh Language events such as the Urdd and/or National Eisteddfod

### 15. Telephone communications

15.1 Our normal practice is to ensure that the public can speak in Welsh or English when dealing with us by telephone. Our switchboard staff will answer with a bilingual greeting. Our main switchboard will use a bilingual message on its answer phone. The rest of our staff and officers will answer the telephone with a bilingual greeting and use bilingual messages on their individual answer phones, as detailed in the Council's Corporate Telephone answering policy.

15.2 Where a non Council answering service is in place e.g. British Telecom we will encourage the supplier to provide a bilingual message.

15.3 If the caller wishes to speak Welsh, our switchboard will connect the call to a Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry – we will monitor the levels at which we are able to do this and implement actions 1c and 2 in the Scheme's action plan to measure and improve performance in this area. If a caller rings one of our direct lines and wishes to speak Welsh, but the person taking the call cannot do so, they will try to transfer the call to a Welsh speaking colleague qualified to deal with the enquiry.

15.4 If no Welsh speaker qualified to deal with the enquiry is available, the caller will be given the choice, as appropriate, of having a Welsh speaker phone back as soon as possible, continuing the call in English or submitting their query in Welsh, by letter or e-mail.

15.5 If the preferred choice is to have a Welsh speaker call back later a timescale must be agreed with the member of the public which should be either an agreed time slot e.g. someone will call you back between 10 and 10:30 or should be a time limit of within 8 working hours of the initial call.

15.6 The Council intends to move to operating a call centre approach to dealing with common queries. Our automated telephone systems and customer call centre will give callers the choice of conducting their phone call in Welsh or English. This service will be available to customers whose telephones are linked to a digital telephone

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exchange and to those who have not withheld their telephone numbers.

15.7 When we set up our customer call centre we will provide a Welsh language service. This will be advertised alongside the English language service. Both services will share the same telephone number initially and then move to separate numbers for Welsh language and English Language calls.

15.8 Helplines – Where helplines are set up in regard to specific issues we will aim to ensure these are available in Welsh and English.

### **16. Public meetings**

16.1 We will provide simultaneous translation from Welsh into English at our public and Council meetings unless we have established that all participants are likely to use the same language e.g. invitation only meetings.

16.2 Invitations and advertisements for public meetings will be bilingual and either note that translation facilities will be available or invite the public to let us know in advance in which language they wish to speak.

16.3 We will let those attending public meetings know when translation facilities are available – and encourage contributions in Welsh. Staff and elected members attending training on Charing Meetings will be provided with guidelines on how to Chair Bilingual meetings effectively and in such a way as to encourage the use of Welsh. Guidelines will be provided to staff arranging meetings and booking rooms with regard to provision of translation support.

16.4 For meetings of the Council, Cabinet , Scrutiny , Planning and Licensing committees and public meetings we will ensure that agendas, papers and minutes are issued bilingually and simultaneously with the exception of Planning Committee reports for which data is provided by members of the public in the language in which they have submitted their planning application forms . Where annexes to papers are provided these will be provided bilingually where bilingual versions are available.

16.5 Correspondence or reports from outside organisations need not be bilingual, but their substance will be summarised in bilingual form in presenting papers to the Council or its Committees and bilingual copies should be circulated if they are available.

16.6 For internal meetings, agendas, papers and minutes need not be produced bilingually and may be produced in Welsh, English or bilingually as appropriate to members of the relevant group.

16.7 When selecting staff to attend public meetings or events, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary and to ensure that the public attending the meeting are greeted bilingually.

16.8 Staff will be signposted to additional guidance on arranging bilingual events available on the Welsh Language Board's website at [www.welsh-language-board.org.uk](http://www.welsh-language-board.org.uk)

## **17. Other meetings with the public**

17.1 When we arrange or attend face-to-face meetings with members of the public, we will establish their language preference at the earliest opportunity and, whenever possible, ensure that a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff deals with those whose preferred language is Welsh.

17.2 If no suitably qualified Welsh speaker is available, we will offer the choice of continuing the meeting in English, arranging a meeting with an interpreter or dealing with the subject by corresponding in Welsh. The above will also apply to meetings held using videoconferencing and similar equipment.

17.3 We recognize that in some circumstances in particular, where customers may be vulnerable or under stress an inability to provide a suitably qualified Welsh speaking member of staff means that the quality of service received will be reduced. Where such situations exist we will prioritise recruitment and training to address the identified gaps.

## **18. Other dealings with the public**

18.1 When we undertake public surveys, our normal practice will be to ensure that all aspects of communication with the public will be bilingual. Whenever practicable, respondents will be asked if they wish to respond to the survey in Welsh or English and given the opportunity to do so.

18.2 When we arrange seminars, training courses or similar events for the public, we will assess the need to provide them in Welsh. Our normal practice will be to ensure that announcements made over public address systems are made in Welsh and English. Any audio-visual displays, audio tours or interactive media that we prepare will be bilingual or provide a language choice. Wherever practical, presentations to the public using PowerPoint or similar equipment will be bilingual.

18.3 Messages in the lifts in our offices will be in Welsh and English.

## **19. Our public face**

19.1 Publicity campaigns, exhibitions and advertising. All of the publicity, public information, exhibition and advertising material we use in Wales will be produced bilingually, or as separate Welsh and English versions. If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be equal with regard to size, prominence and quality - and both versions will be available simultaneously and will be equally accessible.

19.2 The Council's main recruitment channel is County Voice which is fully bilingual.

19.3 Any advertisements placed in English language newspapers (or similar material) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales will be bilingual. In Welsh language publications advertisements will be in Welsh only with a brief summary in English.

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19.4 Television, cinema and radio advertising will be conducted in Welsh and English. Television campaigns which appear on S4C during Welsh programming hours will be in Welsh. Radio campaigns broadcast on Radio Cymru or during Welsh language programmes on commercial radio stations will be in Welsh.

19.5 Our normal practice will be to avoid using Welsh language subtitles other than for Deaf or hard of hearing people, or dubbing adverts into Welsh. Telephone response lines and other ways of responding to campaigns in Wales will be bilingual or will include a Welsh response service.

19.6 When staffing exhibitions stands and displays, our normal practice will be to ensure that suitably qualified Welsh speakers attend, as necessary.

## 20. Publications

20.1 Our normal practice will be to publish material made available to the public bilingually, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document and with the Welsh above or to the left of the English. If this is impractical then the next option will be to publish the document bilingually in back to back format.

20.2 If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately (for instance, where a single document would be too lengthy or bulky), both versions will be of equal size and quality - and our normal practice will be to ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

20.3 The criteria identified in *section 14* will be used to identify objectively when material should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents.

20.4 If not available free of charge, the price of a bilingual document will not be greater than that of a single language publication - and the price of separate, Welsh and English versions will be the same.

20.5 The above will also apply to material made available electronically on our website, on CD Rom or otherwise. All information produced bilingually whether separately or together should be produced and published simultaneously.

## 21. Websites

21.1 Our websites will include pages in both Welsh and English. Our normal practice will be to provide Welsh versions of the interactive pages on our websites. When designing new websites, or redeveloping our existing websites, we will take into account the Welsh Language Board's guidelines on website design.

21.2 Whenever we post publications on our websites, the Welsh and English versions will be posted at the same time, except where they are produced by another organisation and not available bilingually. In emergency situations where people's

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health, safety and/or welfare are at risk, urgent communications may be published in English only, with the Welsh version posted as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### **22. Forms and associated explanatory material**

22.1 Our normal practice will be to ensure that all forms and associated explanatory material for use by the public in Wales will be fully bilingual, with the Welsh and English versions together in one document. This will include interactive forms published on our websites.

22.2 If the Welsh and English versions have to be published separately, both versions will be of equal size and quality - and we will ensure that both versions are available at the same time and are equally accessible. Each version will note clearly that the material is available in the other language.

22.3 We will use a scoring system, to be agreed with the Board, to identify objectively when forms should be published as separate Welsh and English versions or as bilingual documents and will include this as an appendix to this Scheme once agreed.

22.4 When we enter information on Welsh versions of forms that are sent to the public, we will do so in Welsh. When we enter information on bilingual forms that are sent to the public, we will do so bilingually unless we know that the recipients would prefer to receive the information in Welsh or English only. When other organisations distribute forms on our behalf, we will ensure that they do so in accordance with the above.

### **23. Corporate identity**

23.1 The Council believes that its image and public face should reflect the fact that it uses two languages in the community within which it delivers services. The Council has therefore adopted a bilingual corporate identity. Our name, contact details, logo, slogans and other standard information appear in Welsh and English on all material which displays our corporate identity. This includes our stationery - and material such as business cards, identity badges, passes, tickets, invitations and vehicles.

23.2 Where we use items supplied by other organisations such as Royal Mail franking services or Business Reply services we will encourage the supplier to supply these services bilingually.

23.3 We may use Welsh only branding for some initiatives such as the Urdd.

### **24. Signs & notices**

24.1 Our normal practice will be to ensure that all of our permanent and temporary signs, which give information to the public using text, will be bilingual with the Welsh and English text being treated equally with regard to size, legibility and prominence. As with written correspondence the Welsh will be to the left of or above the English. We will adhere to this practice whenever signs are being installed for the first time, or whenever we are replacing signs unless prohibited from doing so by other legislation.

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24.2 Signs which have been defaced by having either the Welsh or English aspects obliterated will be cleaned in line with the traffic and transportation department's graffiti removal policy. The Council will develop a system to monitor such incidents.

24.3 IN accordance with the Street Naming and Numbering Policy, the Council encourages developers to choose Welsh names for new housing estates and other developments as and when they submit planning applications, taking into consideration the local character of the area and in consultation with local Town and Community Councils, Local Members and the Emergency Services.

24.4 Where a query arises over a place name, the Council will consult the Welsh Language Board's place name consultation service for advice on the standardised forms of place names.

24.5 The above will apply to all types of signs, including electronic signs.

24.6 Notices - Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices. Official notices, public notices and staff recruitment notices placed in English language newspapers (or similar media) distributed mainly or wholly in Wales, will be bilingual. Notices will be in Welsh in Welsh language publications with a brief summary in English.

24.7 The Welsh and English versions will be equal in terms of format, size, quality and prominence with the Welsh above or to the left of the English. In the English language media, posts where the ability to speak Welsh is essential may be advertised bilingually or in Welsh only, with a brief description in English.

24.8 Recruitment notices placed in English language journals (and other publications) with a UK-wide distribution may be in English, unless the post is one where the ability to speak Welsh is essential, in which case the notice may be fully bilingual, or in Welsh with a brief explanation in English. Any official notices, public notices or staff recruitment notices placed elsewhere in Wales will be bilingual.

24.9 Recruitment notices are usually advertised locally through the Council's own paper "County Voice" which is fully bilingual.

## **25. Press releases and contact with the media**

25.1 Press releases to the press and broadcasting media in Wales are issued in Welsh and English when initiated by the Council - or according to the language preference of the recipient media organisation or publication when produced in response to specific requests. Where possible, we will ensure that Welsh speakers are available to undertake interviews with the Welsh language press and broadcasting media.



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### 26. Implementing the scheme

26.1 Staffing. All of our workplaces that have contact with the public need access to sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speaking staff to enable those workplaces to deliver a full service in Welsh. The following procedures will be implemented accordingly:

26.2 All posts in the Council are designated either Welsh desirable or Welsh essential. Heads of Service in conjunction with the Head of Personnel will identify which workplaces and jobs are designated Welsh desirable and which Welsh essential. This requirement may be defined as a component of a workplace or team, or it may be attached to a particular post.

26.3 The Council uses the following criteria to assess whether a post; workplace or team is designated as Welsh essential or Welsh desirable:

- a) the linguistic makeup of the geographical area (based on %) where the service is delivered – i.e. Prestatyn v Corwen or whole county
- b) the frequency of contact with the public
- c) the current ability of the service to provide a bilingual service
- d) the type of contact required e.g. written; face to face; telephone
- e) the impact on the customer of not being able to provide a Welsh language service
- f) posts already identified as Welsh essential have the Welsh requirement written into the Job Description and the person spec, which is reviewed periodically.

26.4 We will develop a scoring or audit system linked to these criteria to ensure consistency in the designation of posts across the Council. (ref action 4 in the action plan)

26.5 We will use information provided through our Human Resources system to regularly establish the number, ability, level and location of staff that can understand, speak, read and write Welsh (including staff that are learning Welsh) within the constraints of other relevant legislation such as the Data Protection Act.

26.6 We will also identify staff who wish to learn Welsh through our Personal Development Review (PDR) system. The results of these two exercises will be compared to identify workplaces where there is a shortage of Welsh speaking staff. Services which have a high level of contact with the public or where the inability to deliver the service in Welsh will have a high impact on the quality of service delivered will be prioritised for training and recruitment of Welsh Speakers.

26.7 We will respond to any shortages through our recruitment and training activities. In consultation with unions and staff we will also consider transferring Welsh speaking staff to specific workplaces or posts and reorganising duties and responsibilities to meet service delivery needs particularly in any identified high impact areas. Our normal practice will be to ensure that our main reception areas, one stop shops, main switchboards and customer call centre are always able to offer a service in Welsh.

26.8 Our main reception areas are County Hall, Ruthin; Caledfryn, Denbigh; Ty Nant, Prestatyn; and Russell House, Rhyl.

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26.9 We will develop further our linguistic skills strategy to identify exactly how we will meet our staffing needs in regard to bilingual skills and to provide detailed guidance to staff.

### **27. Recruitment**

27.1 When recruiting staff we will be guided by the information gathered by the procedures described under Staffing above. All job advertisements state that Welsh is desirable except those where fluency in Welsh is considered to be essential where this is stated in job competencies and advertisements.

27.2 All staff are encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh with support being prioritised for those whose posts are Welsh essential or who have greatest contact with the public.

27.3 A candidate unable to speak Welsh or whose level of Welsh needs improving may be appointed to a post for which Welsh is considered essential, but where time can be allowed to learn the language. In these cases, learning the language to the required level of competence, within a reasonable agreed period, will be a condition of employment.

27.4 When no suitable Welsh speaking candidates can be found for a post where Welsh is essential (or whilst a candidate unable to speak Welsh has been appointed and is learning the language) we will make temporary arrangements under which the Welsh language service can be provided (by using, for example, translation services or Welsh speaking staff from elsewhere in our organisation to deliver parts of the service).

27.5 If a suitable Welsh speaking candidate can not be appointed to a post then we may leave the post vacant and re-advertise at a later date or fill the post on a temporary basis and review the situation at the end of the temporary appointment.

27.5 Information packs and application forms will be provided in Welsh and English for all of our jobs

### **28. Language training**

28.1 Our staff will be encouraged to learn or improve their Welsh – and we will support those who wish to do so in line with our linguistic skills strategy. We will fund this training and allow staff to attend courses during work hours.

We will also deliver Welsh Language Awareness training to new staff within 6 months of joining the authority and to all existing staff who have not already received such training.

### **29. Vocational training**

29.1 We will develop the ability of our Welsh speaking staff to operate in Welsh by providing vocational training in Welsh, whenever practicable.

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### **30. Information and Communications Technology**

30.1 The need to provide information and services in Welsh, and operate in accordance with this scheme, will be catered for as we develop, design and purchase information and communications technology products and services.

30.2 Whenever reasonably possible, we will modify our existing information and communications technology systems to ensure that they enable us to provide information and services in Welsh - and operate in accordance with this scheme.

### **31. Internal arrangements**

31.1 The measures in this scheme carry the full authority, support and approval of our organisation. Managers will have the responsibility of implementing those aspects of the scheme relevant to their work.

31.2 Heads of Service will be required to ensure implementation of this Scheme within their service and to provide relevant monitoring information to the Corporate Equality Officer on a regular basis.

31.3 The Council has prepared and will continuously update, a detailed action plan setting out how we will ensure that we operate in accordance with this scheme (*appendix 3*). The action plan will come into effect on the date on which the Scheme comes into effect. And will be for a period of 3 years when both the Scheme and associated plan will be reviewed. The plan includes targets, performance indicators, and deadlines. A report on progress against the plan will be presented to Full Council annually.

31.4 The scheme will be publicised to our staff, elected members and to the public in Wales. It will be published on our website in a prominent place.

31.4 Existing guidance used by our staff, will be amended to reflect the measures contained in this revised scheme. We will arrange briefing and training, sessions for our staff and elected members to increase awareness of this scheme - and to explain how it will affect their day to day work.

31.5 Any form of contact with the public in Wales, which is not specifically dealt with by this scheme, will be undertaken in a manner which is consistent with the general principles enshrined in this scheme.

#### Complaints

32.1 The corporate complaints procedure states that:

When a complaint is received a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the complainant within five working days, with the intention of fully resolving the complaint within 15 working days.

32.2 Where it is known by the Council that it will not be possible to resolve the complaint within 15 days a letter will be sent within five working days explaining why it is not possible and what the complainant can expect.

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32.3 Complaints relating to the implementation of this scheme should be sent to the Corporate Equality Officer whose details are at the beginning of this document.

### 33. Monitoring

33.1 We will monitor our progress in delivering this scheme against the targets set out in its accompanying action plan (*appendix 3*). Our existing Quarterly Performance Management monitoring and reporting procedures will include reference to progress in delivering this scheme, as appropriate.

33.2 We will send an annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Board, outlining progress in delivering this scheme.

33.3 The annual Monitoring Report to the Board will seek to achieve the following aims:-

*(i) To assess whether the Council is conforming to the Scheme - in performing against the set **timetable***

*(ii) To measure the **quality** of frontline services through the medium of Welsh*

- data; (WLI 2 & 6)
- assessment by the Board on face to face service.

*(iii) To measure whether the **management / administration** of the Scheme is adequate*

- evaluation by the Board;
- Focus report on services provided on behalf of the Council by third parties (WLI 1)

*(iv) To measure the adequacy of its **language skills** by comparing need and resource*

- language skills data - personnel (WLI 4 & 5)

*(v) Chapter on **mainstreaming***

- proven examples of mainstreaming in action including:
- corporate steps or measures taken by services to promote Welsh medium **services**;
- use of Welsh in the community
- increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the County

*(vi) Analysis of the Council's performance according to priority/**target**;*

- role of scrutiny
- is the Council accomplishing what it seeks to do?

33.4 The Council will summarise its findings in the form of a brief narrative (with evidence) to be submitted to the Board and will identify any fundamental weaknesses/risks, and draw up an action plan of corrective measures, together with a timetable to be agreed with the Board. The Council will also draw attention to progress, good practice and compliance levels.

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33.5 The monitoring officer for the scheme will be the Corporate Equality Officer whose details can found at the beginning of this scheme.

33.6 Investigations under Section 17. If the Board is required to carry out an Investigation under Section 17 of the Act, the Council will be prepared to fully cooperate by providing information – reports, documents or clarification - to the Welsh Language Board.

33.7 The Council will be prepared to do this in both written and verbal forms and the Board will be able to have discussions with:

- a) Elected members;
- b) Local Authority employees;
- c) Contracted service providers and their employees;

33.8 The Council will also co-operate with any inspections carried out by other statutory inspection bodies and implement any agreed recommendations from such inspections.

### **34 Reviewing and amending the scheme**

34.1 The Council will review this scheme within three years of its coming into effect. Also, from time to time, we may need to review this scheme, or propose amendments to this scheme, because of changes to our functions, or to the circumstances in which we undertake those functions, or for any other reason. No changes will be made to this scheme without the Welsh Language Board's approval.

### **35. Publicity**

35.1 The Council will publicise this Scheme to the Public; staff and Councillors via the Web site; County Voice, the Intranet, Headlines (staff magazine) and through its networks with partner organisations. We will also ensure that copies are available in key locations including One Stop Shops and libraries. We will let the public know about services available in Welsh as described in section 8.1 of this Scheme.

35.2 Copies of the annual report to Council regarding progress against the actions and targets outlined in the Scheme's action plan (appendix 3) will be published on the website and made available in hard copy on request.

**Appendices**

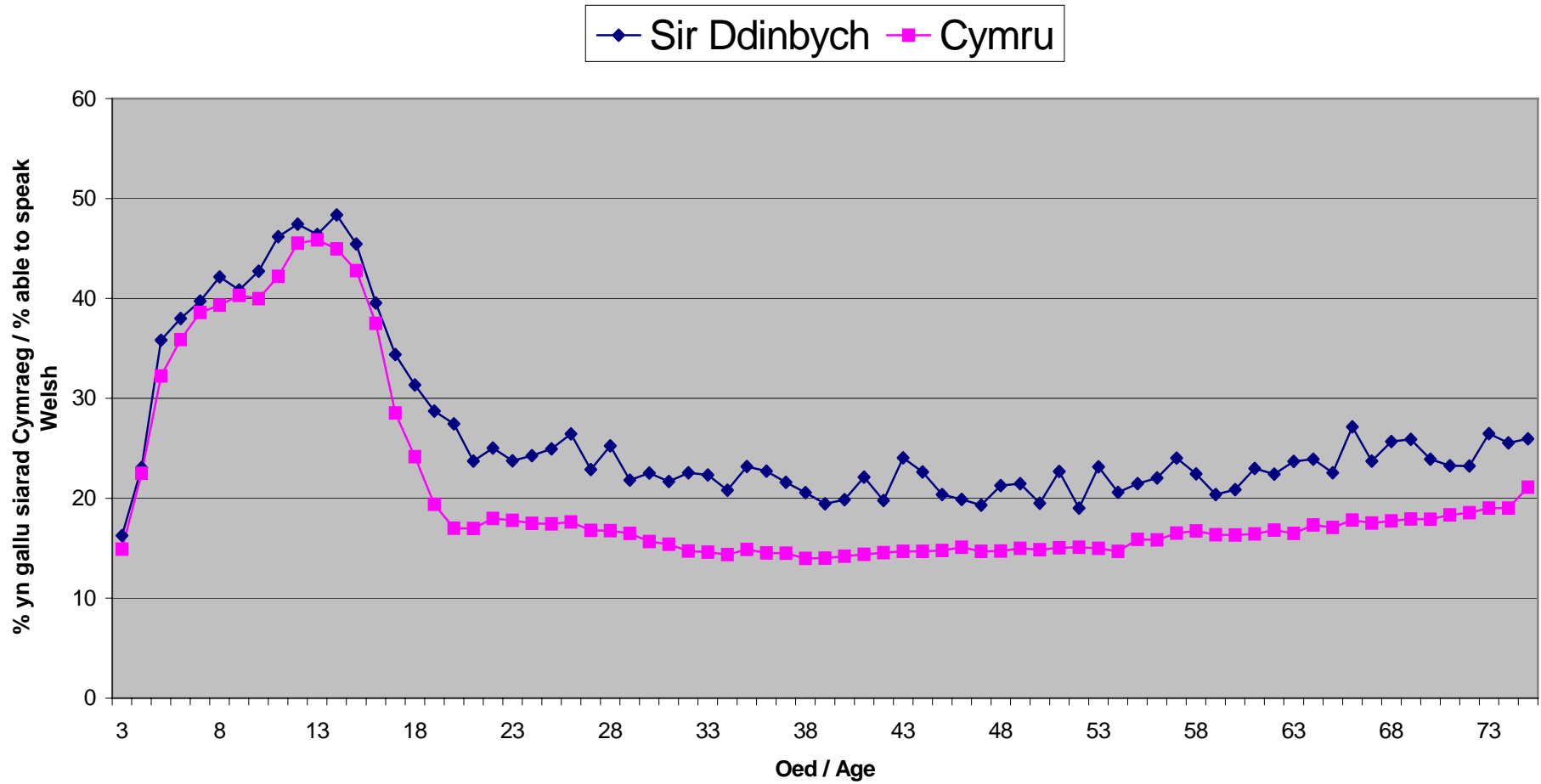
Appendix 1            % Able to speak Welsh by age (2001)

Appendix 2            Welsh Speaking – All aged 3 and over (2001)

Appendix 3            Action Plan December 2005 - 2008

Appendix 4            Structure Diagram

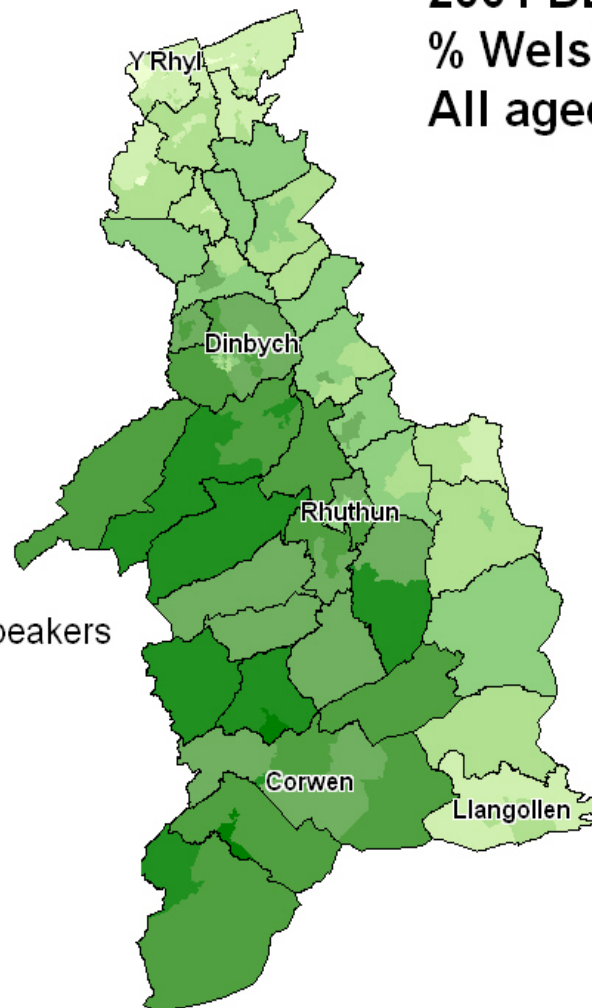
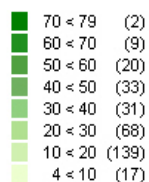
# % yn gallu siarad Cymraeg yn ôl oed % able to speak Welsh by age



**SIR DDINBYCH 2001**  
**% yn siarad Cymraeg**  
**Pawb 3 oed a throsodd**

**2001 DENBIGHSHIRE**  
**% Welsh speaking**  
**All aged 3 and over**

**% siaradwyr Cymraeg / % Welsh speakers**  
 Mewn Ardaloedd Cynnyrch / In Output Areas

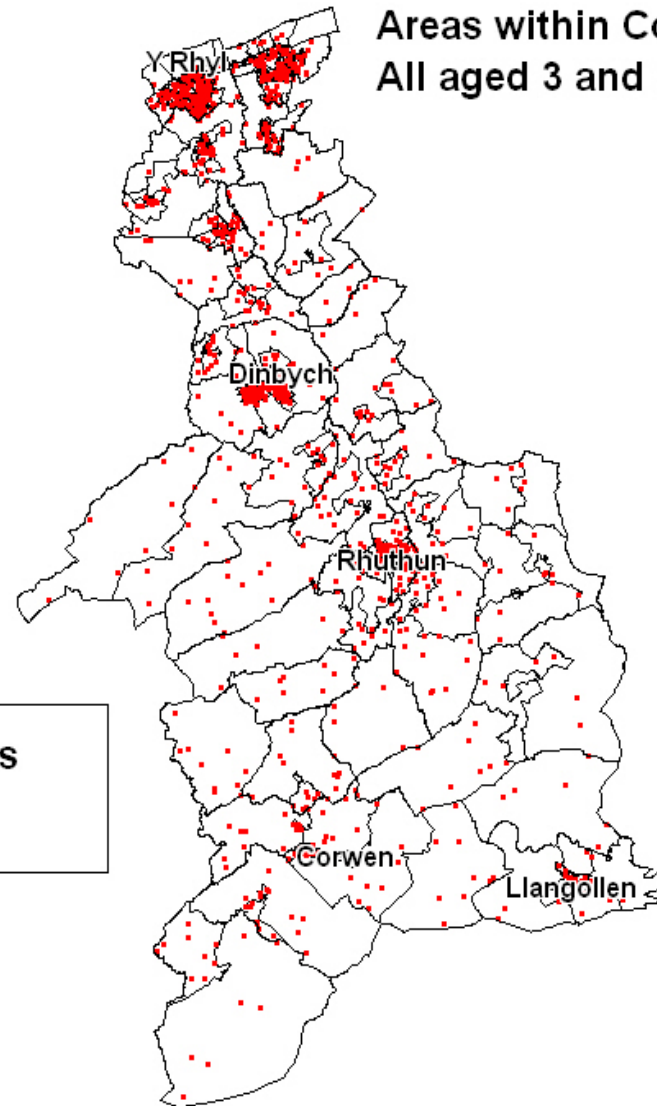


Ffynhonnell: Cyfrifiad 2001. Tabl KS25. Hawffraint y Goron 2004. Atgynhyrchir deunydd y Cyfrifiad â chaniatâd Rheolydd HMSO.  
 Source: 2001 Census. Table KS25. Crown Copyright 2004. Census material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller HMSO.



**SIR DDINBYCH 2001**  
**Ardaloedd o fewn Cymunedau**  
**Pawb 3 oed a throsodd**

**2001 DENBIGHSHIRE**  
**Areas within Communities**  
**All aged 3 and over**



**Siaradwyr Cymraeg 2001 Welsh speakers**

Pawb 3 oed a throsodd / All 3 and over

 **1 Dot = 20**

Ffynhonnell: Cyfrifiad 2001. Tabl KS25. Hawlfraint y Goron 2004. Atgynhychir deunydd y Cyfrifiad â chaniatâd Rheolydd HMSO.  
 Source: 2001 Census. Table KS25. Crown Copyright 2004. Census material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller HMSO.

## 2001 Census of Population Welsh Speakers

Source: Office for National Statistics

Electoral Division	Number Welsh speakers	% of Welsh speakers
Bodelwyddan	366	18.1
Corwen	1,197	51.4
Denbigh Central	708	36.7
Denbigh Lower	1,896	44.3
Denbigh Upper/Henllan	1,094	36.2
Dyserth	508	20.6
Efenechtyd	821	51.6
Llanarmon-yn-Ial/Llandegla	555	25.4
Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd/Llangynhafal	512	33.9
Llandrillo	701	64.4
Llandyrnog	832	41.3
Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd/Gwyddelwern	1,167	53.4
Llangollen	758	19.9
Llanrhaeadr-yng-Nghinmeirch	1,085	59.0
Prestatyn Central	634	18.2
Prestatyn East	746	17.7
Prestatyn Meliden	405	19.4
Prestatyn North	611	12.3
Prestatyn South West	396	12.5
Rhuddlan	888	21.4
Rhyl East	601	13.5
Rhyl South	618	17.6
Rhyl South East	1,127	16.1
Rhyl South West	755	15.3
Rhyl West	506	12.4
Ruthin	2,172	42.9
St. Asaph East	439	25.5
St. Asaph West	382	23.3
Trefnant	587	32.6
Tremeirchion	473	30.6

## Action Plan December 2005 – November 2008

## Appendix 3

Ref No.	Action/Aim	Target	Performance Indicator	By When	Lead Responsibility
1a	Carry out an audit of the linguistic skills of staff within the Council and input information onto the new HR database	100% of staff sent a linguistic skills questionnaire	No and % of questionnaires sent out in payslips	Dec-05	Personnel
1b		90% of staff have linguistic skills field completed on HR database	No and % of staff that have completed the linguistic skills field on the HR system	Jul-06	Directors
1c	Where consent has been given by the individuals concerned, indicate on the corporate phone book or similar centralised database the linguistic skills of staff in each department.	70% of staff have an indication of linguistic ability against their name in the phone book or similar accessible database	No and % of staff that have the linguistic skills field on the Phone book or similar database	Jul-06	IT with support from Heads of Service
2	Arrange two "mystery shopper" exercises to be carried out annually to look at face to face contact; telephone contact and written contact (inc e-mail)	90% compliance level achieved	% of random sample contacts that comply with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme	Twice between Jan & Dec each year	Equalities unit
3	Set up a Councillor Bilingual Forum to keep under review the Council's policy of bilingualism	Group formed and meeting at least twice per year	Number of meetings held per year with at least 2/3 attendance level	01/01/2006 and then ongoing	Corporate Equality officer

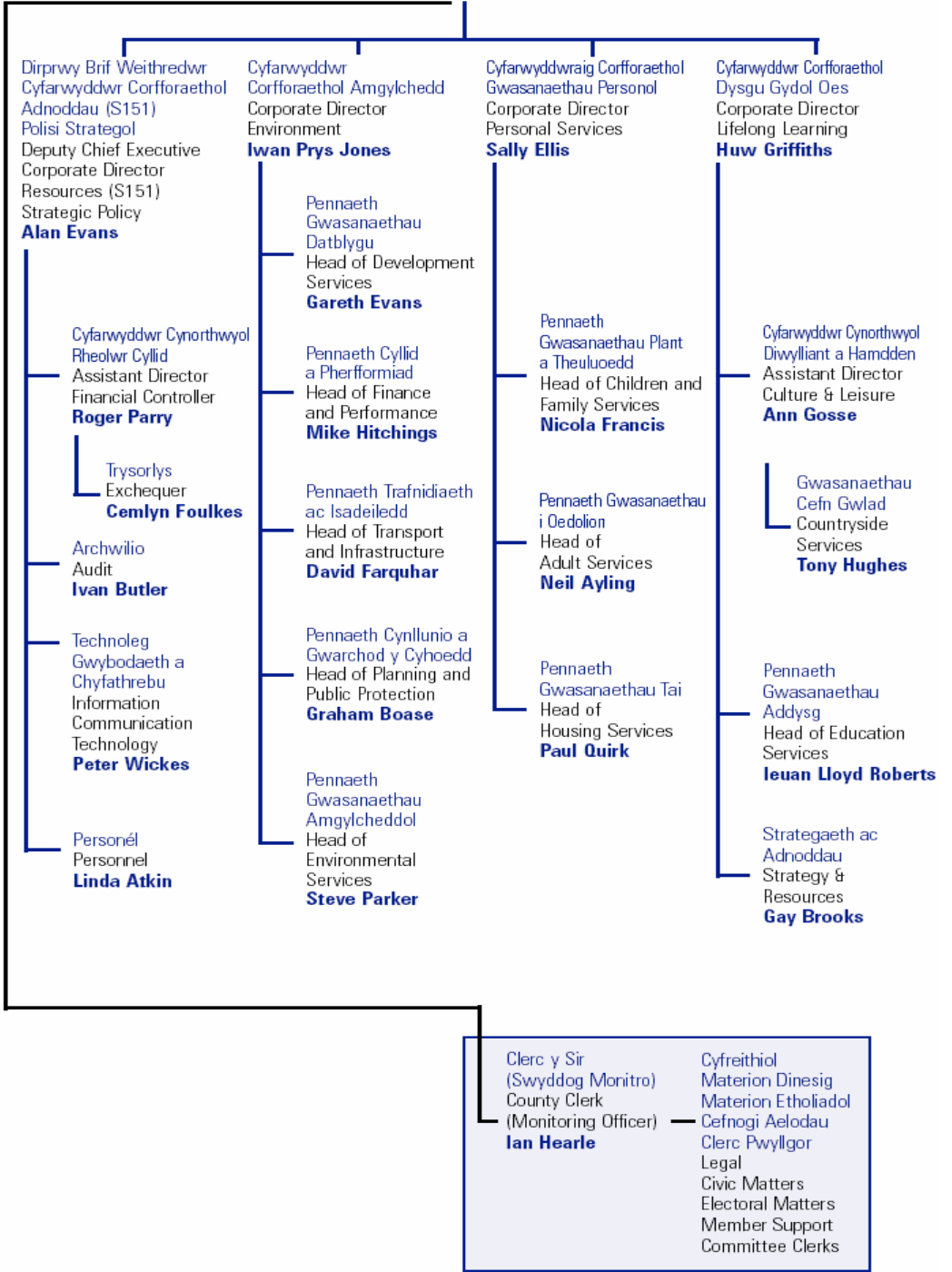
<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Action/Aim</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>
<b>4</b>	Agree a standard set of scored criteria to assess the linguistic requirements of posts within the Council	Criteria agreed	Clear data on number and location of Welsh essential posts available through HR system.	Dec-08	Personnel
<b>5</b>	90% of Committee papers, minutes and agendas (Council, Cabinet & Scrutiny) to be produced simultaneously in English and Welsh	90% compliance achieved	% of Committee papers, minutes and agendas (COUNCIL, Cabinet & Scrutiny) produced simultaneously in English and Welsh	Jan 06 - Dec 07	County Clerks; Scrutiny Support; & Cabinet Support
<b>6</b>	Undertake an internal review of the Council's translation Service	Review undertaken	Action plan Agreed	Dec-05	Translation Manager & Corporate Equality Officer
<b>7</b>	Develop and implement a Language Skills Strategy	Strategy agreed with WLB	Agreed Strategy Published	Dec-05	Personnel & Equality Unit
<b>8</b>	Undertake a customer satisfaction survey (or incorporate within an existing survey) a measure of satisfaction in relation to the delivery of a Welsh Language service to the public.	Customer Satisfaction Survey completed	80% satisfaction rate achieved	Between Jan 06 and July 06	Communications
<b>9</b>	Undertake a benchmark audit of staff awareness of the Revised Welsh Language Scheme.	Audit completed	90% awareness level achieved	Jun-06	Equalities Unit with support from communications

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Action/Aim</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>
<b>WLI 1</b>	The Council will ensure that the requirements of its Welsh Language Scheme are clearly communicated to third parties delivering services to the public on the Council's behalf.	% of the sample of third parties monitored that conform to the requirements of the Welsh Language Scheme in the following areas (minimum sample size of 3) :	Mechanisms for monitoring developed and implemented	Dec-07	All services who utilise third parties to deliver services to the public.
		i) care services	70%	Jul-08	Head of Personal Services
		ii) youth and leisure services	80%	Jul-08	Head of Culture & Leisure
		iii) pre school provision	80%	Jul-08	Head of Education Services
<b>WLI 2</b>	100% of main receptions, one stop shops and call centres able to deliver a bilingual service by December 2008	Number and % of Main reception, call centres and one stop shop posts that have been denoted as "Welsh Essential" and have been filled by staff who are bilingual	Main receptions 100% One Stop shops 100% Call Centres 100%	Dec-08	Information Librarian Information Librarian Implementing Electronic Government Project Manager
<b>WLI 3</b>	To be agreed with the Welsh Language Board in light of their Information Technology Strategy and Standards currently under consultation (2007)	TBA	TBA	TBA	Implementing Electronic Government Project Manager
<b>WLI 4</b>	To increase the number of staff in the workplace who are able and who do work through the medium of Welsh in order to meet the requirements for providing quality services	a) the number and % of staff who have received training in Welsh to a specific qualification level.	1% of the workforce	Per year	Personnel

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Action/Aim</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Lead Responsibility</b>
		b) the number and % of staff who have received language awareness training	100% of new staff	Within 6 months of starting in post.	Personnel
<b>WLI 5</b>	To increase the number of staff in the workplace who are able and who do work through the medium of Welsh in order to meet the requirements for providing quality services	The number and % of staff within the Council's services who are able to speak Welsh (not including school teachers and staff)	Baseline ascertained then 1% increase per year achieved	Jul-06	Personnel
		According to service division			
		according to grade			
		according to according to workplace			
<b>WLI 6</b>	To maintain and improve the quality of Welsh services to the public.	Number of complaints received in relation to the implementation of the Language Scheme and the % dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate standards.	a) Benchmark set December 05 1% decrease annually in complaints to December 2008 b) 100%	between December 05 and December 08	Corporate Equality Officer

## Strwythur Rheolaeth Management Structure

PRIF WEITHREDWR CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
**Ian Miller**



**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor M A German - Lead Member for Children and Young People

**DATE:** 25th October, 2005

**SUBJECT:** "Children Don't complain...." The Children's Commissioner for Wales' Review of the operation of complaints and representations and whistleblowing procedures, and arrangements for the provision of children's advocacy services in local education authorities in Wales

**1. Decision Sought**

For Cabinet to agree the proposed response to the Commissioner's report

**2. Reason for seeking decision**

- 2.1 The appointment of a Children's Commissioner for Wales was the first recommendation of the Waterhouse Report "Lost in Care " (2000) which reported on the inquiry into abuse in children's homes in North Wales. Sir Ronald Waterhouse recommended that the Commissioner's duties should include ensuring that children's rights and welfare were safeguarded through monitoring the operation of children's complaints and local authority social services whistleblowing procedures, and the arrangements for children's advocacy. These recommendations were incorporated into the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001. The legislation extended the principle of review and monitoring of these provisions to all the regulated services to children and young people in Wales.
- 2.2 The Commissioner's first review in this topic area focused on local authority Social Services, and was published as "Telling Concerns". Social Services were chosen as the first area given that they have a statutory duty, under the Children Act 1989, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need and to operate complaints and representations procedures. However, while other local authority departments do not have the same statutory duties in relation to handling complaints, or providing advocacy services, as corporate parents, all local authority departments have the potential to affect children's lives in the services they provide.
- 2.3 In terms of a second Review, the Commissioner considered that education and learning comprised an obvious choice. While a review of arrangements made by schools would have been more of a priority, the Clywch examination was undertaken by the Commissioner in this time period. This considered complaints and whistleblowing procedures in a school setting. One of the recommendations of the Clywch report subsequently was to undertake a review of schools'



complaints procedures in 2005. The current report “Children Don’t Complain” therefore focuses on complaints, whistleblowing and advocacy services relating to services provided by local education authorities- not schools (though plainly there are connections).

- 2.4 The “fieldwork” which was the basis for the report was undertaken broadly between September 2003 and April 2004. Each local education authority was asked to complete a detailed questionnaire by February 2004, with a follow-up visit in April 2004. Workshops were also held with children and young people throughout Wales. Analysis of the responses forms the detailed substance of the report published in May 2005 and the background to the recommendations made. The authority has been required to provide a formal response to the Commissioner’s recommendations by October 21st, 2005, and has submitted the attached response, making clear this is pending Cabinet’s view.
- 2.5 There are three fundamental recommendations made in the Commissioner’s response, all addressed to Chief Executives:
- Local authorities should establish a unit/one stop shop to provide a single point of contact for children/young people wishing to raise concerns/make complaints. This unit/one stop shop should undertake a range of functions including, for example, the production of child friendly information
  - Local authorities should review their current whistleblowing procedures as a matter of urgency
  - Local authorities should consider commissioning advocacy services for children/young people as a corporate matter
- 2.6 The attached template details Denbighshire’s suggested response. For information, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales Regulations 2001 empower the Commissioner to require information and progress reports relating to recommendations made, within defined timescales. In this case, the authority is required to state if the recommendations have been accepted and if not, why not, to provide details of the implementation action plan, the timeframe for implementation and contact details.

### **3. Power to make the decision**

- 3.1 The Children’s Commissioner for Wales Regulations 2001 empower the Commissioner to require information and progress reports relating to recommendations made, within defined timescales

### **4. Cost implications**

It is estimated that the cost of employing a Children’s Complaints/Representations Officer, with associated budget for child friendly information etc would be in the region of £40k per annum. A bid for Cymorth funding is currently being prepared and the bid will be reflected in the current budget round. It is envisaged that the Commissioner’s recommendations relating to Whistleblowing would be met within existing budgets. The implications of corporate commissioning of advocacy services for children/young

people have not yet been costed, but will be costed as part of the review to be carried out in 2006 and referred to in the Denbighshire response.

The Chief Executive's covering letter to the Commissioner makes clear that the Council's view is that additional resources need to be made available to Councils to enable the recommendations in "Children Don't Complain" to be fulfilled. Without these, our response can only be limited, and this is made clear in the detailed response.

## **5. Financial controller statement**

External grant funding is being sought to fund the new post referred to in the report and alternatives have been proposed should the funding bid be unsuccessful. Any additional costs of implementing the recommendations made by the Children's Commissioner for Wales must be met from within available resources.

## **6. Consultation Carried Out**

The suggested response has been drafted across Social Services and Lifelong Learning Departments, with input also from health agencies. The response was considered by Personal Services Scrutiny Committee on 6th October and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee on 19th October. Personal Services Scrutiny Committee were particularly keen that the financial implications of the Commissioner's recommendations be flagged up as a budgetary pressure to which WAG should respond. They also felt a different name should be found for the suggested "Children's Complaints Officer" so as to cover young people and also to address representations, praise and concerns, as well as complaints.

## **7. Implications for other policy areas including corporate**

The response has implications for all Directorates of the Council, though the initial focus is on the local education authority eg were a one stop shop for children's complaints to be established, it would also cover complaints arising in relation, for example, to transport, leisure or environment services.

## **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1 For Cabinet to agree the proposed response to the Commissioner's report

Ref	Review Area	Recommendation	Accepted?	Implementation Action Plan, further comment or explanation.	Timescale for completion	Person Responsible for implementation	Contact details
1	Complaints and Representations	Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should establish a unit (a "one-stop-shop") which will provide a single point of contact for a child or young person to discuss an issue of concern about any one or more local authority services and, if necessary, provide these children and young people with assistance from suitably trained and experienced officers of the local authority to record a complaint or make a representation and to inform them of the progress of the complaint and its outcome.	accepted	<p>Denbighshire accepts this recommendation in principle subject to resource availability. We do consider this function needs external funding to be deliverable. If available the plan would be initial appointment of a Children's Complaints Officer from June 2006, with a brief to develop a staged approach to implementation of Recommendations 1-4 and 6-7 over a 3 year period. A multi-agency Working Group including health services, with links to the Framework Partnership Participation Sub-Group, as well as existing complaints systems, is to be convened to steer these developments. The role of the Children's Complaints Officer would be, in Year 1, to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Map existing complaints systems and issues and develop a 3 year implementation plan</li> <li>* Be a single front door within the County Council for complaints from and on behalf of children and young people, signposting and supporting as necessary</li> <li>*Developing accessible information on services and complaints processes</li> <li>*Providing training and awareness raising for those working with children and young people</li> <li>*Assess current complaints procedures and recording systems and propose improvements</li> </ul> <p>Funding for this development will be sought as part of the budget round for 2006/07 and an application will be made for Cymorth grant. Should funding not be available, the Working Group will still be</p>	1 Year	Corporate Directors for Personal Services and Lifelong Learning, Framework Manager	<a href="mailto:sally.ellis@denbighshire.gov.uk">sally.ellis@denbighshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:huw.griffiths@denbighshire.gov.uk">huw.griffiths@denbighshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:gloria.burgess@denbighshire.gov.uk">gloria.burgess@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>

				established to enable information sharing and networking pending resources becoming available. In the absence of a dedicated officer, this Group would prioritise improving the access of children and young people to existing complaints processes, developing awareness raising and possibly a training programme for those dealing with concerns and complaints from children/young people			
2	Complaints and Representations	a) Further duties of the officers of this unit should be to ensure that the public are provided with information on the services the local authority provides - with information about local education authorities as a priority. This information should be provided in such a way that it is accessible to children and young people.	accepted	See Rec. 1 above. The provision of information would be part of the role of the Children's Complaints Officer referred to above. The officer would work with existing information providers, including departments of the County Council, especially Lifelong Learning initially. The postholder would use the resources of the Council's Public Relations Team, and services such as the Children's Information Service and voluntary organisations providing information services for young people to fulfil this recommendation.	2 Years	Children's Complaints Officer Public Relations Manager	<a href="mailto:suzanne.appleton@denbighshire.gov.uk">suzanne.appleton@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>
3	Complaints and Representations	b) Further duties of the officers of this unit should be to ensure that there is "child friendly" public information available on the complaints process and to consult with a fully representative sample of children and young people in their local authority area when producing any new information. This information should specifically state that representations or complaints from children and young people are welcomed and that children, or groups of children and young people	accepted	See Rec. 1 above. The development of "child friendly" information about complaints processes, in consultation with children/young people, would be part of the role of the Children's Complaints Officer. If funding for a dedicated officer is not available, this area of work will be a priority for the multi-agency Working Group.	1 Year	Children's Complaints Officer Complaints Officers in County Council Departments	clare.o'gorman@Denbighshire.gov.uk

		such as school councils, may make complaints on behalf of another child.					
4	Complaints and Representations	c) Further duties of the officers of this unit should be to make particular effort to ensure their public information and complaints procedures are promoted to children and young people from marginalised groups and to children and young people in educational placements out-of-county, both residential and non-residential.	accepted	See Rec. 1 above. The further development of information on services and complaints procedures would be part of the role of the Children's Complaints Officer. Education staff such as SEN staff, Behaviour Support Services, ESWs and those providing alternative curriculum initiatives would be expected to collaborate with the Children's Complaints Officer to ensure information was promoted to marginalised groups. This would complement the information on Social Services and complaints procedures currently provided to looked after children by Social Services staff and the advocacy provider, NYAS	1 Year	Children's Complaints Officer Complaints Officer, Lifelong Learning	<a href="mailto:tony.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk">tony.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>
5	Complaints and Representations	d) Further duties of the officers of this unit should be to take the lead, working jointly with social services within their local authority, in developing and commissioning common advocacy services to support children and young people in residential specialist teaching facilities outside the local education authority area who may wish to make a complaint. They should also consider extending these advocacy services to pupils who wish to exercise their right of appeal against exclusion from school.	not accepted	While Denbighshire is committed to the idea of commissioning advocacy services on a multi-agency basis in the longer-term, it is not convinced that the lead in achieving this should be taken by the Children's Complaints Officer. Some advocacy services are already provided for pupils exercising their right of appeal against exclusion from school	Not Accepted	N/A	

6	Complaints and Representations	e) Further duties of the officers of this unit should be to ensure that any representation or complaint, both at the formal and informal stages, made by a child or young person is recorded in such a way that statistics can be produced to inform strategic planning; provide reports to a senior officer of the local education authority who is responsible for the monitoring and analysis of all complaints that involve education matters; ensure that a summary of the issues and concerns raised through the complaints procedure and their resolution is made publicly available.	partially accepted	See Rec.1. It is envisaged that one of the early roles of the Children's Complaints Officer would be to assess current recording systems for children's complaints across the County Council and propose improvements. Detailed records would be maintained of all matters, informal and formal, raised directly with the Children's Complaints Officer. The recording of complaints that involve education matters would be a priority area for development though it is currently unclear how meaningful this would be for strategic planning without concerns/issues raised in schools also being included in any analysis. This would be beyond the remit and capacity of the Children's Complaints Officer currently proposed.	2 Years	Children's Complaints Officer	N/A
7	Complaints and Representations	f) Further duties of the officers of this unit should be to take the lead on amending complaints procedures as necessary to ensure that the consideration of formal complaints within all departments has an independent element and there are clear timescales for dealing with a complaint.	partially accepted	See Rec.1 The proposed Children's Complaints Officer would have a remit to review existing complaints procedures. Social Services and Education already provide independent help to children/young people making formal complaints. The implications of extending this to all departments has not yet been scoped.	2 Years	Children's Complaints Officer	N/A

9	Whistle blowing	a) Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should ensure that their whistleblowing policies are reviewed as a matter of urgency. The main aims of the review should be to ensure that concerns that are raised through whistleblowing procedures about the welfare of children can be swiftly addressed. Local authorities should involve those with experience of child protection in their review.	accepted	The current corporate whistleblowing policy was established in 2002. There are acknowledged weaknesses, for example, in terms of developing more detailed guidelines, signposting clearly to child protection procedures, setting clear timescales and supporting implementation through awareness raising and training. A review of current whistleblowing policies is therefore to be carried out, to be completed by April 2006. This will be undertaken in consultation with the Child Protection Co-ordinator and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Co-ordinator	1 Year	Personnel Officer	<a href="mailto:catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk">catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>
10	Whistle blowing	b) Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should ensure that their whistleblowing policies are reviewed as a matter of urgency. The main aims of the review should be to increase employees' awareness of the whistleblowing policies and publicise their whistleblowing policies so that children and young people and the public are aware of them.	accepted	See Rec. 9. Once reviewed, the revised policy and guidelines will be publicised, including to children and young people, and awareness raising and training provided for staff	1 Year	Personnel Officer	<a href="mailto:catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk">catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>

11	Whistle blowing	c) Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should ensure that their whistleblowing policies are reviewed as a matter of urgency. The main aims of the review should be to ensure that any contract or service level agreement with external providers specifies that the provider should have a whistleblowing policy in place which states that any employee may raise concerns of malpractice either directly with the employer, with a named officer of the local education authority, or, where appropriate, with the head teacher or governors of a school.	partially accepted	We will ensure that a standard term is drafted for inclusion in all contracts/SLAs with external providers where significant contact with children/young people/vulnerable adults is predictable. This term will ensure access to the authority's whistleblowing policy and require agreement that contractors will not victimise any of their staff using it. We do not consider that ensuring contractors themselves have whistleblowing policies necessarily confers additional protection	2 years	To be agreed	To be agreed
12	Whistle blowing	d) Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should ensure that their whistleblowing policies are reviewed as a matter of urgency. The main aims of the review should be to make it clear that employees have a duty to report malpractice. This duty should be specified in the disciplinary policy, employee's code of conduct and contract of employment. Disciplinary policies should be amended as necessary to specifically state that harassment of a whistleblower is a serious	accepted	See Rec 9. The detailed points within this recommendation will be actioned as part of the Review of the Denbighshire Whistleblowing Policy	1 Year	Personnel Officer	<a href="mailto:catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk">catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>



		disciplinary offence.					
13	Whistle blowing	e) Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should ensure that their whistleblowing policies are reviewed as a matter of urgency. The main aims of the review should be to ensure that all relevant employees receive appropriate training in whistleblowing and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Designated officers should receive thorough training and support. Line managers should also receive training to enable them to identify and act on disclosures of malpractice.	Accepted	See Recs 9 and 10. Once reviewed, the revised policy and guidelines will be the subject of awareness raising and training for staff and managers	2 years	Personnel Officer	catrin.roberts@denbighshire.gov.uk

14	Advocacy	Chief Executive Officers of local authorities should consider the commissioning of an advocacy service for children as a corporate matter. Joint commissioning is an option that is worth consideration and this might best be achieved through the local Framework Partnerships with participation from the Welsh Assembly Government Children's Advocacy Unit who should then monitor the arrangements for the service.	Accepted	Advocacy services for children and young people in Denbighshire are currently provided via a number of organisations. Social Services contracts with NYAS, in a partnership arrangement also involving Flintshire and Wrexham Councils. The LHB spot purchases from NYAS. The Conwy/Denbighshire Trust uses advocates linked to the Community Health Council. Education uses independent advocates and is considering spot purchase from NYAS. The NYAS contract expires in March 2007. Detailed consideration of future arrangements will therefore be required during 2006 and the opportunity to consider whether to pursue joint commissioning, including across health agencies, is welcomed by all involved. Consideration of future advocacy arrangements will be linked to the Complaints Working Group (see Rec 1) and to the Framework Partnership's Participation Sub-Group.	2 Years	Planning Officer (Social Services), Senior Education Officer (Education), Framework Manager (Framework s Partnership) , Public and Patient Involvement Officer (LHB) plus Trust colleague	<a href="mailto:janet.owen@denbighshie.gov.uk">janet.owen@denbighshie.gov.uk</a> , <a href="mailto:sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk">sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:gloria.burgess@denbighshire.gov.uk">gloria.burgess@denbighshire.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:hilary.nicholas@denbighshirelhb.wales.nhs.uk">hilary.nicholas@denbighshirelhb.wales.nhs.uk</a>
15	Advocacy	The development and commissioning of advocacy within education should be a priority and the aims conveyed clearly in the local authority's Education Strategic Plan.	accepted	Advocacy services are already commissioned for individual children/young people in particular circumstances e.g. those appealing against exclusion from school, those making formal complaints. The further development and commissioning of advocacy will be considered as part of the wider review of advocacy services to be undertaken in 2006 - see Rec 14. A specific statement relating to advocacy will be included in the ESP.	2 Years	Senior Education Officer	<a href="mailto:sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk">sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>

16	Advocacy	a) Local authorities, in partnership with the advocacy provider, should ensure that the service level agreement for advocacy provision defines the service to be provided and makes clear arrangements for the monitoring and review of that service. Any review should involve the children and young people served by the advocacy provision.	under review	The Social Services contract with NYAS already defines the advocacy service and provides for monitoring, review and access to personnel and information. These matters will be further considered if the authority, with partners, decides to take a joint commissioning approach from 2007	2 Years	Planning Officer (Social Services), Senior Education Officer (Education), Framework Manager (Framework Partnership), PPIN Officer (LHB) plus Trust colleague	janet.owen@denbigshire.gov.uk sylvia.jones@denbigshire.gov.uk gloria.burgess@denbigshire.gov.uk hilary.nicholas@denbigshire lhb.wales.nhs.uk
17	Advocacy	b) Local authorities, in partnership with the advocacy provider, should ensure that the service level agreement for advocacy provision contains an agreed clause on access by the advocacy provider to information and personnel.	under review	The Social Services contract with NYAS already defines the advocacy service and provides for monitoring, review and access to personnel and information. These matters will be further considered if the authority, with partners, decides to take a joint commissioning approach from 2007	2 Years	Planning Officer (Social Services), Senior Education Officer (Education), Framework Manager (Framework Partnership), PPIN Officer (LHB) plus Trust colleague	janet.owen@denbigshire.gov.uk sylvia.jones@denbigshire.gov.uk gloria.burgess@denbigshire.gov.uk hilary.nicholas@denbigshire.gov.uk lhb.wales.nhs.uk

18	Advocacy	c) Local authorities, in partnership with the advocacy provider, should ensure that the service level agreement for advocacy provision specifies a mechanism through which advocacy service providers can be involved in the local Children and Young People's Framework for Partnership and in providing input to departmental planning and development of services.	accepted	The Frameworks Manager will ensure that NYAS is invited to join the Partnership, pending potential joint commissioning of advocacy services, and to provide appropriate feedback on issues raised through advocacy in Denbighshire	1 Year	Framework Manager	<a href="mailto:Gloria.burgess@denbighshire.gov.uk">Gloria.burgess@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>
19	Advocacy	d) Local authorities, in partnership with the advocacy provider, should ensure that the service level agreement for advocacy provision includes arrangements for identifying and providing advocacy services to educationally marginalized groups of children and young people - such as those in residential educational facilities and those who wish to exercise their right to appeal against exclusion from school.	under review	Advocacy services are already commissioned for individual children/young people in particular circumstances e.g. those appealing against exclusion from school, those making formal complaints. Extension to other groups will be considered as part of the wider review of Advocacy Services - see Rec 14	2 Years	Senior Education Officer	<a href="mailto:sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk">sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>
20	Advocacy	e) Local authorities, in partnership with the advocacy provider, should ensure that the service level agreement for advocacy provision includes a requirement for the advocacy provider, in partnership with the local education authority, to	under review	Information relating to the role of advocacy in education services has been drafted for staff of the education authority and schools. This will be finalised for use in the context of current advocacy provision. Should the authority decide to pursue a joint commissioning approach, the involvement of the advocacy provider, together with the education authority, in awareness raising for all relevant staff,	2 Years	Senior Education Officer	<a href="mailto:sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk">sylvia.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk</a>

		ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the nature and role of the advocacy provision available.		will be included in the Service Level Agreement.			

## AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

### REPORT TO CABINET

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor P J Marfleet - Lead Cabinet Member for Finance and Personnel

**DATE:** 25 October 2005

**SUBJECT:** Revenue Budget 2005/06

#### 1. DECISION SOUGHT

1.1 That members note the budget performance figures for the current financial year as detailed in the attached appendices and consider remedial actions necessary to bring Directorates' projected spending in line with available budgets.

#### 2. REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

2.1 The need to deliver the Council's agreed budget strategy for the current financial year and avoid reducing already inadequate reserves.

#### 3. POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

3.1 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

4.1 This report details the latest projections of Service budget year end positions as reported by Directorates, together with information on pressures and savings within the Corporate budgets. The service pressure projections are as at the end of September 2005. Corporate details are as at mid October.

4.2 The appendix details potential overspends totalling £301k (£351k last report). The main areas of change from the last report are:

- i) The budgets for a number of functions previously carried out corporately have now been disaggregated to Directorates. Although this has a neutral effect overall, the Corporate budget has reduced by £805k with corresponding rises elsewhere.
- ii) Within the Lifelong Learning Directorate, further savings have been identified reducing the projected overspend by £29k
- iii) The forecast for Personal Services has moved from a £1k underspend to £20k overspend. This is mainly due to increased demand in Adult Services.

- iv) The main movement in the corporate position is due to the decision to fund the £100k deficit in Land Charges from the Corporate Budget.

Other reported pressure areas remain at a similar level to the last report.

- 4.3 Other potential but thus far unquantifiable pressures are the impact of the Single Status Pay Review and the appeals against the recent Council Tax revaluations, both of which may exceed the assumptions within the budget.
- 4.4 There are further potential pressures that have not yet been fully quantified and therefore the following issues may still need to be addressed:
  - a. For Personal Services there is an underlying budget deficit of £540k based on current spending patterns. This is currently masked by the use of the budget underspend brought forward from last financial year.
  - b. Within the Lifelong Learning Directorate work is being undertaken to identify and understand the reasons for the continuing pressure on School & College transport. It is currently difficult to assess the level of funding needed for the future.
  - c. Work is in hand to identify the budget implications resulting from the provision of the new facilities at Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn.
  - d. Within the Environment Directorate further pressure from Health and Safety requirements

## **5. FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

- 5.1 Work needs to continue to take place to review service budgets and identify savings that will enable total Directorate spending to be contained within budget.

## **6. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 6.1 Lead Cabinet members need to continue to consult with Heads of Service to agree necessary remedial action to prevent overspends in 2005/06
- 6.2 Implications on other policy areas including corporate. The level of funding available to services together with budgetary performance impacts upon all services of the Council.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 That members note the figures in the appendices and
- 7.2 That members consider remedial actions necessary to bring service projected spend in line with budgets.



**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06  
POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

Directorate	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance Previous report £000s
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	
Lifelong Learning (excluding schools delegated)	29,157	-10,345	18,812	30,007	-10,701	19,306	850	-356	494	523
Environment	30,944	-10,714	20,230	30,964	-10,734	20,230	20	-20	0	100
Personal Services	47,604	-16,039	31,565	48,706	-17,121	31,585	1,102	-1,082	20	-1
County Clerk	1,969	-543	1,426	2,110	-697	1,413	141	-154	-13	29
Resources	8,142	-2,500	5,642	8,303	-2,661	5,642	161	-161	0	0
Corporate, Miscellaneous & Benefits	26,098	-21,953	4,145	26,298	-21,953	4,345	200	0	200	100
Clawback of Revenue Support Grant				200	0	200	200	0	200	200
<b>Total All Services</b>	<b>143,914</b>	<b>-62,094</b>	<b>81,820</b>	<b>146,588</b>	<b>-63,867</b>	<b>82,721</b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>-1,773</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>951</b>
Capital Financing Charges/Investment Income			10,891			10,291			-600	-600
Precepts & Levies			3,975			3,975			0	0
			<b>96,686</b>			<b>96,987</b>			<b>301</b>	<b>351</b>

**Note:**

The Management Accounting rules of the Council require debtor account entries to be reversed in respect of amounts outstanding for more 30 days after the due date. In the event that debts cannot be collected, services will be required to meet the cost of the debt write-off. This may impact on the actual outturn achieved by services at the year end.

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06**  
**LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Previous report £000s
Individual School Budgets	50,263	-4,596	45,667	50,263	-4,596	45,667	0	0	0	0
School Funds Held Centrally	15,568	-4,417	11,151	16,315	-4,812	11,503	747	-395	352	352
Non school Funding	1,335	-864	471	1,373	-842	531	38	22	60	60
Corporate Services	445	-5	440	445	-5	440	0	0	0	0
Leisure Services	7,114	-4,049	3,065	7,167	-4,042	3,125	53	7	60	76
Culture	3,026	-373	2,653	3,038	-373	2,665	12	0	12	23
Countryside	1,057	-596	461	1,057	-586	471	0	10	10	12
Youth	612	-41	571	612	-41	571	0	0	0	0
	29,157	-10,345	18,812	30,007	-10,701	19,306	850	-356	494	523
<b>Total Lifelong Learning</b>	<b>79,420</b>	<b>-14,941</b>	<b>64,479</b>	<b>80,270</b>	<b>-15,297</b>	<b>64,973</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>-356</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>523</b>

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06**  
**LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

<u>Comments</u>	<u>Current Month</u>	<u>Previous Month</u>
	<u>£000s</u>	<u>£000s</u>
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
<b>Individual School Budgets:</b>		
Individual expenditure on the schools delegated budgets cannot be forecast with any certainty until the latter half of the financial year as the expenditure, although monitored centrally, is under the control of each individual school governing body.	0	0
<b>School Funds Held Centrally:</b>		
<b>School Transport</b>		
The full impact of any changes from the start of the new academic year are still being costed and will be included in the October monitoring report. Pressures of £50k have been met within year from internal savings.	187	187
<b>SEN</b>		
The delegation of SEN Pupil Support Workers in the Primary sector was finalised in September based on actual cost. The completion of the delegation process has identified a shortfall of £630k (£629k 2004/5) which will be partially offset by increased income from out County placements £395k leaving a net shortfall of £235k.	235	235
Management actions, vacancy savings and reduced free school meals	-122	-122
Speech & Language Therapy - increased demand on service	52	52
Service delivery will continue to be reviewed during the remainder of the year with a view to reducing expenditure and maximising grant income in order to dampen down existing pressures		
<b>Student awards</b>		
Savings on administration/software licences	-13	-13
<b>College Transport</b>		
No increase in pressure from that reported last month	73	73
<b>Corporate Services</b>		
A number of corporate service budgets and related service expenditure have recently been transferred to the Directorate (Equalities, Access, Translation, Press & PR, County Voice). Meetings will take place with the budget holders during October and identified savings/pressures will be reported next month		
<b>TOTAL EDUCATION</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>412</b>
<b>CULTURE &amp; LEISURE</b>		
<b>Leisure</b>		
Vandalism / other premises costs to maintain Frith Beach	40	40
Energy Costs increase & income shortfall	36	36
Delayed appointment of Assistant Director	-16	0
<b>Culture</b>		
Increase in Libraries' NNDR	23	23
Delayed appointments	-11	0
Countryside - reduced CCW grant - net	12	12
Additional project management fees secured	-2	0
<b>TOTAL CULTURE &amp; LEISURE</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>111</b>
<b>TOTAL LIFELONG LEARNING</b>		
Total	<b>494</b>	<b>523</b>



**CULTURE & LEISURE EFFICIENCY SAVINGS PROGRESS REPORT**

<b>Proposed Efficiency Saving</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Reduce funding to grant aided bodies	26,873	Achieved
Reduction of Library Service & Records M:	8,928	Achievable
Cut Pavilion Theatre Secretary post by 50%	9,534	Achieved
Reduction of furniture/equipment purchase	6,800	Achievable
Increase fees & charges	37,865	Unlikely due to extended Leisure Centre closures
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,000</b>	

**Summary**

36,407	Achieved
<u>46,593</u>	Achievable
<u>83,000</u>	
<u>7,000</u>	Shortfall

**Education Efficiency savings**

	<b>£</b>	
SCHOOLS DELEGATED BUDGET	353,000	Achieved
FREE SCHOOL MEALS REDUCTION	50,000	Achieved
REDUCED MEALS SUBSIDY	38,500	Achieved
SCHOOLS INSURANCE EXCESS	31,500	On target to be achieved
MANAGEMENT & SECRETARIAT	5,120	Achieved
CLIENT SERVICES	7,000	Achieved
ADVISORY	11,700	Achieved
PRIM. ED. - NON DELEGATED	28,780	Achieved
SECONDARY - NON DELEGATED	28,240	Achieved
SPECIAL SCHOOLS - NON DELEG.	9,040	Achieved
STATEMENTING	7,500	Achieved
EDUCATION MISCELLANEOUS	22,620	60% Achieved; 40% On target to be achieved
	593,000	

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06**  
**ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE**  
**POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance Previous report £000s
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	
Development Services (Note 3b)	8,535	-5,130	3,405	8,570	-5,130	3,440	35	0	35	0
Transport & Infrastructure	8,163	-3,090	5,073	8,163	-3,090	5,073	0	0	0	0
Planning & Public Protection - (Note 1&2)	4,122	-1,863	2,259	4,112	-1,873	2,239	-10	-10	-20	100
Director & Support (Note 2)	1,173	-103	1,070	1,158	-103	1,055	-15	0	-15	0
Environmental Services	8,951	-528	8,423	8,961	-538	8,423	10	-10	0	0
<b>Total Environment</b>	<b>30,944</b>	<b>-10,714</b>	<b>20,230</b>	<b>30,964</b>	<b>-10,734</b>	<b>20,230</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

**Notes:**

1. Anticipated increase in Building/Development Control income for year.

2. Savings arising from delays in filling vacant posts.

3. Projected additional costs arising from Health & Safety issues (Cabinet Report 21/06/05):

	<b>Total req'd</b>	<b>Likely spend 2005/6</b>
(a) Legionellosis control	£235k	£200k
Fire Risk Assessments	<u>100k</u>	<u>£50k</u>
	<b>£335k</b>	<b>£250k</b>

We are in the process of committing and viring revenue and capital resources as agreed.  
There will be an ongoing revenue pressure in future years in respect of the items listed above.

(b) No extra budget has been provided to fund the additional revenue pressure of £70k in respect of extra administrative Health & Safety processes.  
It is anticipated that these costs will be absorbed in the Directorate's overall revenue budget.

4. Progress with Efficiency Savings put forward as part of the Budget Setting exercise

<b>Details</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>Progress</b>
(i) Projected Directorate Underspend 2004/05	100	Achieved
(ii) Income generation - Decriminalisation	50	On target
(iii) Income generation - Car Parking	100	On target
(iv) Development/Building Control - smarter working	30	On target
(v) Savings from Recruitment/Agency Process	30	On target
(vi) Income generation target - Other Fees & Charges	20	On target
(vii) Trading Activity Surplus	50	On target
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>380</u></b>	

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06**  
**PERSONAL SERVICES**  
**POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Previous report £000s
Children Services	8,675	-1,540	7,135	9,239	-1,676	7,563	564	-136	428	428
Adult Services	31,724	-9,258	22,466	32,532	-9,571	22,961	808	-313	495	460
Business Support & Development	1,732	0	1,732	1,997	-26	1,971	265	-26	239	239
Supporting People Grant	4,115	-4,129	-14	3,544	-4,136	-592	-571	-7	-578	-564
Underspend Brought Forward 2004/5	0	0	0	0	-540	-540	0	-540	-540	-540
	<b>46,246</b>	<b>-14,927</b>	<b>31,319</b>	<b>47,312</b>	<b>-15,949</b>	<b>31,363</b>	<b>1,066</b>	<b>-1,022</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23</b>
Non HRA Housing	1,358	-1,112	246	1,394	-1,134	260	36	-22	14	14
Underspend Brought Forward 2004/5	0	0	0	0	-38	-38	0	-38	-38	-38
<b>Total Personal Services</b>	<b>47,604</b>	<b>-16,039</b>	<b>31,565</b>	<b>48,706</b>	<b>-17,121</b>	<b>31,585</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>-1,082</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>-1</b>

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06**  
**PERSONAL SERVICES**  
**POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

<u>Comments</u>	<b>Current Month</b>	<b>Previous report</b>
	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
<b>PERSONAL SERVICES</b>		
<b>CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>		
Specialist Placement commitments remain the major pressure area with a predicted overspend of just over £1m. A new scheme of financial delegation has improved budgetary control in the department. Measures to contain expenditure in the long term are being developed, including consortium contracting and schemes to recruit and retain foster carers.	428	428
<b>ADULT SERVICES</b>		
<b>Learning Disabilities</b>		
The increased overspend is attributable to increased demand within family support, residential care and short term respite care.	359	307
<b>Mental Illness</b>		
The Mental Health Partnership with NHS and Conwy Council commenced on 4 July. Residential placements continue to be a key pressure. Consultants are currently reviewing care packages aiming to reduce the cost to the Council.	165	149
<b>Older People</b>		
The increased overspend can be attributed to increased costs within the Community Care budgets during the month of September. The projection has been based on an average of fluctuating expenditure patterns and client numbers. Long term strategies involving extra care housing are in place though this will not affect outturn in the short/medium term.	142	109
<b>PDSI</b>		
The main overspend continues to be in Community Care provision.	256	223
<b>Performance Management &amp; Commissioning</b>		
This underspend is due to staff vacancies within the administration budgets.	-79	-82
<b>Other Adult Services</b>		
The majority of the underspend reported is budget that is as yet unallocated. This will be reallocated within the service to meet pressures during the course of the year. Additional funds have been allocated since last month and will be reallocated to meet pressures.	-337	-235
<b>Cefndy Enterprises</b>		
The variation is due to an increased sales forecast for the year.	-11	-11
<b>TOTAL ADULT SERVICES</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>460</b>
<b>Business Support &amp; Development</b>		
This budget has now been restructured and a budget created for the Paris Information System. The procurement savings and increasing costs of telephone recharges account for the overspend in BSD.	239	239
	<b>239</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Supporting People</b>		
£256k of the underspend could potentially be clawed back by the Assembly. This would leave £332k to meet budget pressures within Social Services. In-year SPG savings are due to the remodelling of projects and new projects which will not begin until 2006. Further savings made this month relate to ongoing reviews of projects.	-578	-564
	<b>-578</b>	<b>-564</b>
2004/05 Underspend brought forward	<b>-540</b>	<b>-540</b>
<b>Total Personal Services</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23</b>



**Personal Services Efficiency Savings 2005/06 - Progress Report**

<b>Children Services</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Transport	£15,000	Delegation of transport budgets to Team Managers with strict ceiling on spend.	Achievable	Scheme of delegation of budgets to Team Managers being introduced including restricted budget for Transport
Staff	£15,000	Slippage and savings on posts	Achievable	
Contract savings	£8,000	Work on reducing costs of external placements	Progressing	There is more hope that this saving will be realised as a new North Wales contract is in operation
<b>Adult Services</b>				
Charging Policy	£100,000	Primarily full year impact of charging policy to People with Learning Disabilities	£92k achievable	There is still some concern about the number of people who appealed against the charges and whether all the invoices will be paid in full.
Contract Reviews - invest to save	£30,000	Impact of Care Brokers, Contracts Officers reducing high costs of some placements	Achievable	Care Brokers now in post proving a much more efficient way of identifying care providers. In October, a fixed rate for Domiciliary Care is due to be introduced.
Fee increases reduced by .5%	£80,000	Not increasing fees by 1% over inflation. Likely to cause problems in an unstable market.	Achieved	Budgets have been cut. All neighbouring authorities now pay rates higher than Denbighshire.
Work Opps Income	£10,000	Promoting businesses/dividing Llewelyn Room at Henllan	Achievable	Increased income is unlikely by dividing the Llewellyn Rm at Henllan, but promotion of Work Opps should generate more income
Cancer Recharge	£5,000	Contribution from neighbouring Authorities	Achieved	LHB re free nursing care admin. £5k received
Staff	£39,000	Reduction in posts	Achieved	Straight budget cut.
<b>Business Support &amp; Development</b>				
House Keeping	£10,000	Working with Procurement to improve efficiencies of purchases and reduce waste.	Uncertain	This is very hard to prove. Previously the stationery budgets were within operational budgets but with many miscodings. By now having identified budgets within BSD for core stationery purchases, this is much improved. Work is underway to identify telephone costs.
Staff	£5,000		Achievable	Slippage on appointments to posts/staff not at top of scale.
<b>Housing</b>				
Piper Lifeline charges	£10,000	Increase in charges	Achieved	Increases applied to 2005/06 charges
Accommodation Support Officer	£75,000	Savings generated by Support Officer in temporary costs of homelessness.	Achievable	If demand on accommodation remains as at present
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£402,000</b>			

The £13k savings not achieved above will hopefully be achieved by increased transport savings in Childrens' Services, further contract savings in Adult Services and additional slippage on administration posts.

**MONTHLY REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06**  
**RESOURCES, COUNTY CLERK, CORPORATE & MISCELLANEOUS**  
**POSITION AS AT END SEP 2005**

	Budget			Projected Outturn			Variance			Variance
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Previous report
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
County Clerks	1,969	-543	1,426	2,110	-697	1,413	141	-154	-13	29
<b>Resources Directorate</b>										
Finance	4,064	-1,840	2,224	4,064	-1,840	2,224	0	0	0	0
Policy Unit	339	0	339	339	0	339	0	0	0	0
Audit	415	-60	355	415	-60	355	0	0	0	0
I.T	2,236	-431	1,805	2,236	-431	1,805	0	0	0	0
Personnel	1,088	-169	919	1,088	-169	919	0	0	0	0
Project Management	0	0	0	161	-161	0	161	-161	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,142</b>	<b>-2,500</b>	<b>5,642</b>	<b>8,303</b>	<b>-2,661</b>	<b>5,642</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>-161</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Corporate and Miscellaneous</b>	4,808	-683	4,125	5,008	-683	4,325	200	0	200	0
<b>Benefits</b>	21,290	-21,270	20	21,290	-21,270	20	0	0	0	0
<b>Capital Finance Charges/Investment Income</b>	10,891	0	10,891	10,891	-600	10,291	0	-600	-600	
<b>Revenue Support Grant</b>	0	-90,790	(90,790)	0	-90,590	(90,590)	0	200	200	

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**CABINET MEMBER:** Councillor P A Dobb – Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing

**DATE:** 25 October 2005

**SUBJECT:** Housing Revenue Account Budget 2005/06

**1 DECISION SOUGHT**

To note the latest financial forecast position (revenue and capital) of the Housing Revenue Account (H.R.A.) for the current financial year.

**2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION**

The need to deliver the Council's agreed budget strategies for the current financial year.

**3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION**

Housing Act 1985, Part II.

**4 COST IMPLICATIONS**

The projections undertaken at the end of September 2005 show a potential net under-spend at year end of £239k (Appendix 1) against the revised budget – this was reported at £332k at the end of August.

Vacancy savings within the Rents (£35k) and Supervision and Management [Special] (£9k) are partially offset by additional agency staff costs (for maternity leave cover) (£37k) within Supervision and Management [General].

Expenditure on Repairs and Maintenance, last month was forecast to be £173k lower than revised estimate. This is due to a general reduction in repairs reporting, reduced work on void properties and minor impact from the major capital works being undertaken this year. This has now been revised to a net under-spend of £63k, as an additional £110k is forecast to be spent on central heating systems that have failed gas servicing inspections.

The increase in Debt Charges (£20k) is due to lower than estimated capital receipts for the year ~ which means that less debt will be written off in the year.

The increase in HRA Subsidy payment to WAG (£10k) is due to higher dwelling numbers (as a result of lower RTB sales). Most components of subsidy are calculated on a 'per dwelling' basis.

The budgeted contribution (£50k) towards the Provision for Bad Debts will not be required this year as rent arrears have continued to fall.

Rental income is forecast to be £144k (1.7%) higher than revised estimate. This is due to reduced voids and higher dwelling numbers (RTB sales lower than forecast).

Progress on HRA capital schemes is included as Appendix 2. Work has now begun on all schemes and expenditure, to date, is nearly £3 million. The £600k slippage on major improvements is due to the work starting a few weeks later than originally scheduled – this slippage, however, will be spent within a few weeks in the next financial year. Some final account payments (on works pre 2005/06) are higher than originally estimated and the forecast is now £278k higher than revised estimate. The central heating contract is, however, £160k lower than budgeted. The latest forecasts reported in Appendix 2 are expected to be achieved.

## **5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT**

The improvement in the overall budgetary position is welcomed, but it will be necessary to remain vigilant in the management of budgets to ensure that the anticipated surplus is delivered at the end of the financial year.

## **6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

Lead Cabinet members will be required to consult with Heads of Service to monitor the H.R.A. in 2005/06.

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

The level of funding available to services together with budgetary performance impacts upon all services of the Council.

## **8 ACTION PLAN**

The Head of Housing Services and Senior Management Accountant should monitor the Housing Revenue Account on a monthly basis and report to Cabinet to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and budget.

## **9 RECOMMENDATION**

To note the latest financial forecast position (revenue and capital) of the Housing Revenue Account (H.R.A.) for the current financial year.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

<u>2004/05</u>		<u>2005/06</u>		
<u>Actual</u>		<u>Revised</u>	<u>Forecast</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<u>£</u>		<u>Budget</u>	<u>Out-turn</u>	<u>to Budget</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
1,092,024	Supervision & Management - General	1,142,595	1,179,348	36,753
205,881	Supervision & Management - Special	213,009	204,322	-8,687
131,271	Welfare Services	127,445	128,179	734
384,881	Rents	437,328	402,456	-34,872
2,174,227	Repairs and Maintenance	2,662,610	2,600,000	-62,610
3,988,284	Total - Management and Maintenance	4,582,987	4,514,305	-68,682
57,489	Rent Rebates	28,745	28,745	0
1,076,385	Debt Charges	902,596	922,300	19,704
0	C.E.R.A.	326,216	326,216	0
2,584,435	Subsidy	2,681,622	2,691,933	10,311
-169,217	Provision for Bad Debts	50,000	0	-50,000
<b>7,537,376</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>8,572,166</b>	<b>8,483,500</b>	<b>-88,666</b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>				
8,319,302	Rents (net of voids)	8,378,032	8,522,400	144,368
88,733	Garages	91,088	93,680	2,592
120,921	Interest	141,547	145,408	3,861
<b>8,528,956</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>8,610,667</b>	<b>8,761,488</b>	<b>150,821</b>
<b>Surplus / Deficit (-) for the Year:</b>				
<b>665,364</b>	<b>General Balances</b>	<b>364,717</b>	<b>604,204</b>	<b>239,487</b>
<b>326,216</b>	<b>Earmarked Balances</b>	<b>-326,216</b>	<b>-326,216</b>	<b>0</b>
662,070	Balance as at start of year ~ General	1,327,434	1,327,434	0
0	Balance as at start of year ~ Earmarked	326,216	326,216	0
1,327,434	Balance as at end of year ~ General	1,692,151	1,931,638	239,487
326,216	Balance as at end of year ~ Earmarked	0	0	0

## Appendix 2

### Housing Revenue Account Capital ~ 2005/06

Project Description	Revised Estimate £	Actual and Committed £	Latest Forecast £	Variance to Estimate £
Housing Repair Work (Pre 2005/06 works)	522,000	738,120	800,000	278,000
Environmental Improvements	347,000	139,128	400,000	53,000
Major Improvements ~ All groups	3,600,000	891,946	3,000,000	-600,000
DFG ~ Council Properties	100,000	94,017	100,000	0
Window Replacements	2,976,000	719,419	2,976,000	0
Central Heating Contract	980,000	414,451	820,000	-160,000
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>8,525,000</u></b>	<b><u>2,997,081</u></b>	<b><u>8,096,000</u></b>	<b><u>-429,000</u></b>
<b>Funding:</b>				
Major Repairs Allowance	2,400,000	1,219,105	2,400,000	0
Usable Capital Receipts	2,431,000		2,476,000	45,000
Prudential Borrowing	3,368,000		2,894,000	-474,000
Financed from Revenue (CERA)	326,000	326,000	326,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>8,525,000</u></b>	<b><u>1,545,105</u></b>	<b><u>8,096,000</u></b>	<b><u>-429,000</u></b>

**CABINET  
FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>REPORT LEAD MEMBER / AUTHOR</b>
<b>NOVEMBER 2005</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2005-2006 [including Procurement] <i>Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Denbighshire International Strategy	Councillor R W Hughes G Evans
Customer Service Centre Update	Councillor S A Davies P Wickes
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Corporate Quarterly Performance Report	Councillor P J Marfleet J Ogden
Managing School Places: Proposals for Consultation	Councillor D Owens G E Brooks
Tir Morfa Phase II	Councillor D Owens I Lloyd Roberts
<b>DECEMBER 2005</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2005-2006 [including Procurement] <i>Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb P Quirk
Urdd Eisteddfod	Councillor S Roberts
Fees and Charges <i>Domiciliary Care / Nursing Homes</i>	Councillor P A Dobb N Ayling
<b>JANUARY 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2005-2006 [including Procurement] <i>Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Revenue Budget 2006-2007 to 2008-2009	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan	Councillor P J Marfleet

<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>REPORT LEAD MEMBER / AUTHOR</b>
<i>Capital 2005-2006</i>	R Parry
Three Year Capital Plan 2006-07 Onwards	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk
Corporate Quarterly Performance Report	Councillor P J Marfleet J Ogden
<b>FEBRUARY 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2005-2006 [including Procurement] Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2005-2006	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk
<b>MARCH 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2005-2006 [including Procurement] Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2005-2006	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2005-2006</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk
<b>APRIL 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2006-2007 [including Procurement] Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2006-2007	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2006-2007</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk
<b>MAY 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2006-2007 [including Procurement] Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2006-2007	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2006-2007</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk



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<i>Housing Revenue Account</i>	
<b>JUNE 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2006-2007 [including Procurement] Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2006-2007	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2006-2007</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Final Revenue Accounts 2005-2006	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk
<b>JULY 2006</b>	
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2006-2007 [including Procurement] Provides an update of the Revenue Budget position for 2006-2007	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Capital Plan <i>Capital 2006-2007</i>	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
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<b>AUGUST 2006 ~ NO MEETINGS</b>	
<b>SEPTEMBER 2006 ~ 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING</b>	
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<b>SEPTEMBER 2006 ~ 2<sup>ND</sup> MEETING</b>	

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Annual Treasury Report	Councillor P J Marfleet R Parry
Housing Revenue Account Budget <i>Sets out the latest financial forecast position of the Housing Revenue Account</i>	Councillor P A Dobb / P Quirk