



To: Members of the County Council

Date: 29 October 2012

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COUNTY COUNCIL** to be held at **10.00 am** on **TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2012** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN LL15 1YN.**

Yours sincerely

G Williams
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

AGENDA

PART 1 - THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THIS PART OF THE MEETING

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at the meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 CHAIRMAN'S DIARY (Pages 5 - 6)

To note the civic engagements undertaken by the Chairman of the Council (copy attached).

5 MINUTES (Pages 7 - 20)

To receive the minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 9 October 2012 (copy enclosed).

6 APPOINTMENT OF LAY MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (Pages 21 - 22)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer (copy enclosed) recommending the appointment of two independent lay members to the Standards Committee.

7 ROLE OF CHAMPIONS (Pages 23 - 34)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (copy enclosed) regarding the appointment of members to act as Champions for particular areas.

8 WELFARE REFORM UPDATE (Pages 35 - 42)

To consider a report by the Head of Revenues and Benefits (copy enclosed) detailing the current and likely future impact of Welfare Reform on Denbighshire.

9 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 43 - 46)

To consider the Council's forward work programme (copy enclosed).

PART 2 - CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It is recommended in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business because it is likely that exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed.

10 CAPITAL PLAN 2012/13 - 2015/16 (Pages 47 - 82)

To consider a confidential report by the Head of Finance and Assets (copy enclosed) updating members on the 2012/13 element of the capital plan including an update on major projects.

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Ian Armstrong
Raymond Bartley
Brian Blakeley
Joan Butterfield
Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones
Bill Cowie
Ann Davies
James Davies
Meirick Davies
Richard Davies
Stuart Davies
Peter Duffy
Hugh Evans
Peter Evans
Bobby Feeley
Carys Guy-Davies
Huw Hilditch-Roberts
Martyn Holland
Colin Hughes
Rhys Hughes
Hugh Irving
Alice Jones
Huw Jones
Pat Jones

Gwyneth Kensler
Geraint Lloyd-Williams
Margaret McCarroll
Jason McLellan
Barry Mellor
Win Mullen-James
Bob Murray
Peter Owen
Dewi Owens
Merfyn Parry
Allan Pennington
Arwel Roberts
Gareth Sandilands
David Simmons
Barbara Smith
David Smith
Bill Tasker
Julian Thompson-Hill
Joe Welch
Cefyn Williams
Cheryl Williams
Eryl Williams
Huw Williams

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Agenda Item 4

Digwyddiadau wedi eu mynychu gan y Cadeirydd / Events attended by Chairman 27.09.12 – 22.10.12

Dyddiad / Date	Digwyddiad / Event	Lleoliad / Location
27.09.12	Penblwydd Priodas 60 mlynedd Mr & Mrs Grube 60 th Wedding Anniversary Mr & Mrs Grube (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Llanelwy St Asaph
27.09.12	Gŵyl Gerdd Ryngwladol Gogledd Cymru North Wales International Music Festival (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Llanelwy St Asaph
30.09.12	Sioe 'Superkids' Gogledd Cymru North Wales Superkids Show (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Yr Wyddgrug Mold
01.10.12	Seremoni Dinasyddiaeth Citizenship Ceremony (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Rhuthun Ruthin
07.10.12	Dathliad Ordeiniad 40 mlynedd Canon John Glover Celebration Service – 40 th Anniversary Ordination Canon John Glover (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Rhyl
12.10.12	Gwobrau Eich Pencampwyr Your Champions Awards	Llandudno
19.10.12	Swper Elusennol Maer Wrexham Mayor of Wrexham Charity Dinner	Wrexham Wrexham
19.10.12	Diolchgarwch - Sioe Sir Ddinbych a Fflint Denbighshire & Flintshire Show - Harvest Festival (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Llanelwy St Asaph
19.10.12	Gŵyl Fwyd 2012 Food Festival 2012 (Is Gadeirydd wedi mynychu / Vice Chairman attended)	Llangollen
22.10.12	Lansiad Cronfa Waddol Gymunedol Launch of the Community Endowment Fund	Rhuthun Ruthin

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COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin LL15 1YN on Tuesday, 9 October 2012 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ian Armstrong, Raymond Bartley, Brian Blakeley, Joan Butterfield, Bill Cowie, Ann Davies, Meirick Davies, Richard Davies, Stuart Davies, Peter Duffy, Hugh Evans, Bobby Feeley, Carys Guy-Davies, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Holland, Colin Hughes, Rhys Hughes, Hugh Irving, Huw Jones, Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler, Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Margaret McCarroll, Jason McLellan, Bob Murray, Peter Owen, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Sandilands, Barbara Smith, Bill Tasker, Julian Thompson-Hill, Joe Welch, Cefyn Williams, Cheryl Williams, Eryl Williams and Huw Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (MM), Corporate Directors: Economic and Community Ambition (RM); Customers (HW); Modernisation and Well-being (SE), Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer (RGW), Head of Business, Planning and Performance (AS), Head of Finance and Assets (PM), Senior Solicitor (LJ), Corporate Improvement Manager (TW), Planning Policy Manager (AL), Planning Policy Officer (BB) and Committee Administrator (CIW).

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor J. Chamberlain-Jones, the Vice Chair, Councillor J.R. Bartley took the Chair for the meeting.

The Chair referred to the recent disappearance of April Jones from Machynlleth and Members and officers stood in silent tribute.

PRAYERS

Prayers were offered by Councillor M.LI. Davies prior to the commencement of the meeting. Councillor M.LI. Davies paid tribute to Reverend Morris Jones Morris who died following a tragic road accident near Dolgelleu on Sunday evening.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors J. Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), J.M. Davies, P.A. Evans, E.A. Jones, W.M. Mullen-James, B. Mellor, D. Owens, T.M. Parry, A.G. Pennington, D. Simmons and D.I. Smith.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were identified in business items to be considered at the meeting.

Councillors Raymond Bartley, Brian Blakeley, Janet Ann Davies, T. Rhys Hughes, Bill Tasker and Geraint Lloyd-Williams all declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 – Council Response to Betsi Cadwaladr UHB Service Reviews.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items were raised which in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

4 CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

A list of civic engagements undertaken for the Council by the Chair and Vice Chair, for the period 3rd August, 2012 to 20th September, 2012, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

RESOLVED – *that the list civic engagements undertaken for the Council by the Chair and Vice Chair be received and noted.*

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 11th September, 2012 were submitted.

Accuracy:-

6. NHS Service Reviews – Councillor H. Hilditch-Roberts explained that he had submitted a question requesting details, from BCUHB, of the evidence provided in respect of the decision to choose Denbigh Infirmary as a hub rather than Ruthin Hospital.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to the above, the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 11th September, 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.*

6 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2011/2012

A copy of a report by the Corporate Improvement Team Manager, which sought approval of the Council's draft Annual Performance Report for 2011-12, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Council was required to publish an annual report of its performance by the 31st October each year and a decision was required to approve the draft Annual Performance Review 2011-12, which had been included as Appendix I to the report.

The Lead Member for Modernisation and Performance, Councillor B.A. Smith, introduced the report and explained that the Corporate Plan 2009-12 set the strategic direction for the Authority and the publication of the annual Corporate Plan Delivery Document for 2011-12 outlined how it intended to contribute to the delivery of its Corporate Plan during that financial year. Each Council service produced a service plan for 2011-12 to describe how it intended to contribute to the delivery of agreed outcomes for the communities of Denbighshire. The Annual Performance report provided a retrospective evaluation of the Council's success in delivering against the plans during 2011-12, and provided an indication as to whether the

Council had successfully fulfilled its obligation to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement.

The Annual Performance Review included a specific evaluation of the Council's success in delivering its corporate priorities. It evaluated its performance in relation to the key indicators and performance measures, and indicated how the corporate priorities had impacted locally within the six areas of Denbighshire. The Council had delivered its pledge to become a High Performing Council, Close to its Communities and Councillor Smith explained that the aim of providing an honest and balanced view of the Council's performance had been achieved. A number of challenges remained and these had formed the basis for the development of the new Corporate Plan.

Details of the consultations undertaken had been included in the report. However, it was confirmed that an Equality Impact Assessment had not been undertaken in respect of this report.

The following responses were provided to questions and issues raised by Members:-

- Page 22 - officers agreed to ensure the language sign post in the Annual Report was amended and Welsh version positioned ahead of English in accordance with the Council's policy.
- Page 24, Road and Flood Defences – officers agreed to seek clarification and provide details in relation to Welsh Government funding for the flood relief schemes in Rhyl and Corwen.
- Page 25, Priority Area, Highways – The Chief Executive informed Members that a recommendation would be submitted to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet not to proceed with the merger of the Denbighshire and Conwy Highways Departments. He confirmed that this would not affect the investment made by Denbighshire and assured Members that the project in question would be secure. The Chief Executive responded to concerns expressed by Members and explained that the situation should not be presented as a failure of collaboration but viewed as Denbighshire having been proactive in assessing and responding to the options available.
- Page 63, Denbigh Area – it was agreed that officers seek clarification and provide details in relation to Tai Clwyd funding for the development relating to the relocation of Youth Services. Councillor C.L. Hughes confirmed that funding had not yet been secured.
- Page 25, Priority Area, Highways – The Chief Executive explained that the Government stance in respect of the introduction of Collaboration had not changed, and if not progressed voluntarily other alternatives could be imposed. The purpose of collaboration had been to deliver major savings. However, there would be initial financial implications involved in merging which, in the case of Highways, had been considered unsustainable. There would also be a need for political and executive will, which would be imperative from all parties involved, if success was to be realised.
- Councillor J. Butterfield referred to Performance Indicators which reveal that priorities had not been met and pupils had left school without the appropriate qualifications. Councillor E.W. Williams supported the views expressed by

Councillor J. Butterfield regarding the need to fast track improvements at Rhyl High School and suggested that representations be made to the Welsh Government to release funding for the improvement work at the school.

- Page 30, High Performing Council, Close to its Communities – The Corporate Improvement Manager endorsed the view expressed by Councillor J. Butterfield of the importance of improving working relationships between elected Members and officers of the Council and the Community.
- Page 15, Regeneration – The Corporate Improvement Manager explained that Performance Measures in respect of HMO taken through licensing had been included as green as the target set had been surpassed. However, he explained that under the new Corporate Plan all the indicators and measures would be reviewed in an attempt to achieve the threshold for excellence.
- Page 19, Demographic Change - It was explained that Performance Indicator relating to People Supported Below 60% Poverty Lines, indicated as red, was misleading as it only measured the activity of the Welfare Rights Unit and did not include the partnership work being undertaken. The Head of Business, Planning and Performance referred to work being undertaken in Communities First areas which had been designated as a priority, together with, the European Social Fund Project being promoted by the Local Service Board.
- Performance Measures, People supported below 60% Welfare Rights Team works well with the Citizen's Advice Bureau, Rhyl Benefits Advice Shop should provide more assistance recognise and address changes to benefits.
- Page 66, Ruthin, Cae Ddol Project – the Corporate Improvement Manager agreed to review the situation pertaining to Cae Ddol to ensure accuracy.
- Page 35, Demographic Change – In response to a question from Councillor Feeley regarding the discrepancy between the data and the target for the NWC: Number of People Supported out of NEET and report back to Councillor Feeley. The Corporate Director; Modernisation and Well-being outlined the problems experienced in securing European funding, particularly in terms of the economic situation, and made reference to the specific targets outlined in the report.
- Page 61, Oaktree Centre, Rhyl - the Corporate Improvement Manager agreed to review the situation pertaining to the Oaktree Centre, Rhyl and ensure the inclusion of the latest information in report.
- In response to points raised by Councillor C. Guy-Davies regarding the amount of detailed information contained in the Annual Performance Report, the Head of Business, Planning and Performance explained that Denbighshire were required by the Wales Audit Office to publish information and there were difficulties in maintaining a balance. However, consideration could be afforded to providing a summary to accompany future Annual Performance Report.

The Chair thanked the officers for the hard work undertaken in producing a comprehensive report.

RESOLVED – *that, subject to above changes, Council approves the draft Annual Performance Report 2011-12 to enable translation and publication before 31st October, 2012.*

7 CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2017

A copy of a report by the Corporate Improvement Team Manager, which sought approval of the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2012-17, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. Members were informed that a decision would be required to approve the final draft version of the Corporate Plan 2012-17, attached as Appendix I to the report.

The Leader, Councillor H.H. Evans introduced the report and explained that although the work of improving Denbighshire was not yet complete, the foundations were now in place and ambitions should now be realised. Achievements from the Corporate Plan 2008/12 were outlined and reference made to the Authority's attainment as High Performing Council, however, opportunities for improvement were recognised. The Leader referred to the two practical challenges encompassed in the Plan which were the need to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the priorities, and ensure the Corporate Plan was responding to the needs of the residents. The four values for which Denbighshire stood, Unity, Respect, Integrity and Pride were highlighted for Members.

The Chief Executive explained that the Corporate Plan was a high level strategic document developed to guide the direction of the Council for the next 5 years, with the £134m investment in the delivery of key priorities including a major investment of £97 million in education. The Corporate Plan had been prepared within the policy and financial context for Welsh Local Authorities and defined the Council's top strategic priorities and clearly set out its ambitions for the future. The Council had been transformed over the last 5 years and was now viewed as being proactive rather than reactive, and the Chief Executive explained that he was confident that the Senior Management Team would maintain the high standards now being achieved, with political and officer leadership being an important ingredient for success.

Members were informed that the draft Corporate Plan would look at the following key areas:-

- Improving performance in education and the quality of school buildings
- Developing the local economy
- Improving roads
- Vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible
- Clean and tidy streets
- Ensuring access to good quality housing
- Modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for customers.

Key proposals for investment for the five year period would include:-

- £97 million in improving school buildings, implementing area reviews, refurbishment and other improvements to schools.
- £10.4 million investment in roads
- £21 million in three extra care facilities across the county
- £2 million investment in the economy.

- £4 million in information communication technology (ICT) and office building assets.

It was anticipated that Welsh Government grants would assist the funding of planned work to improve schools and roads, with other partners being likely to contribute to planned extra care housing projects. A total of £78 million would be found from a range of sources including funding generated through prudential borrowing.

The Chief Executive explained that the Corporate Plan had a clear focus on improving services for customers with the Council being committed to becoming more responsive to the needs of customers. The delivery of the Corporate Plan would transform the lives of people in Denbighshire and create a legacy for the future. He confirmed that each of the priorities would be approached in a different way with differing timescales and financial investment requirements. Priorities focussing on the economy and education would have timescales beyond the five years of the Plan. Although real progress would be expected in these priority areas, with the full benefits being realised beyond 2017.

The need to become more cost-effective would be essential with the introduction flexible working methods. Delivering the modernisation agenda would be key to protecting frontline services and protecting jobs, and this priority would also be important in underpinning the Council's other priorities.

Councillor B.A. Smith invited Members attention to the monitoring process, which had been incorporated in the report, which was a working document.

The potential impact of the scale of funding within the Corporate Plan which represented a huge step change for the Authority was outlined by Councillor J. Thompson-Hill. He assured Members that although the Plan was ambitious it was deliverable and would assist in driving the economy forward. He also confirmed that the Plan could in future be modified, if necessary, to adapt to any external factors.

The Corporate Plan had not contain details of everything the Council would be doing during the period to support the corporate priorities. As the Corporate Plan was intended to be an accessible document and details of all the indicators and performance measures used to evaluate the Council's success had not been included. A separate document defining the tools used to monitor the Plan would be published and a Corporate Plan Delivery Document would be produced annually to provide specific details of what the Council were expected to deliver in that particular financial year to support the priorities.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Business, Planning and Performance explained that a summary of the consultations carried out had been provided and a draft set of corporate priorities had been published for public consultation, all comments received had been included in Appendix 2. The consultation period for Town and Community Councils had been extended and a complete list from the feedback, together with one further consultation response, was circulated to Members. The Corporate Improvement Team were currently

following-up on the other priorities identified by individual Members during the Corporate Plan event and a document demonstrating how services were currently responding to those priorities would be circulated to Members. Appendix 3 included the conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment on the draft Corporate Plan 2012-17, undertaken by the Corporate Improvement Team in consultation with the respective services.

The following responses were provided to questions and issues raised by Members in relation to the Corporate Plan:-

- Page 87 - In reply to concerns raised by Councillor M.LI. Davies, the Corporate Improvement Manager agreed to review the wording relating to costs.
- Page 94, Vulnerable People living independently – Members were informed that there was uncertainty regarding the number of additional Extra Care Housing schemes to be provided across the County and this was the reason for the current wording.
- Page 105, Cemeteries – Councillors J. Butterfield and A. Roberts expressed concern regarding the lack of availability of burial blots in both Rhyl and Rhuddlan Cemeteries, and the safety aspect of grave stones in terms of meeting Health and Safety requirements. The Head of Business, Planning and Performance explained that a consultation exercise had been undertaken in relation to this issue and Members comments would be noted and referred to the Head of Environment.
- In response to questions from Councillors W.L. Cowie and R.L. Feeley regarding the need for positive enforcement action in respect of dog fouling, illegal parking offences and the inclusion of schools in the Clean and Tidy initiative, the Head of Business, Planning and Performance explained that these issues would best be addressed corporately through enforcement, education of the public and changing attitudes and culture.
- Page 115, Developing the Local Economy – In reply to concerns raised by Councillor C.L. Hughes regarding the need to emphasise the word “local” and secure the services of local businesses, the Head of Finance and Assets explained that procurement was governed by legislation. However, work was currently being undertaken in respect of the procurement strategy.
- Page 82 - Councillor S.A. Davies requested details of the costs relating to the provision of translations. The Corporate Improvement Manager explained that two requests had been received during the past two years for translations into languages other than English or Welsh, and only information pertaining to the specific questions had been translated.
- The Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being responded to a question from Councillor S.A. Davies and confirmed that the Extra Care Housing facilities provided by Denbighshire were fully occupied. She confirmed that she did not anticipate encountering any problems in securing occupants for the new developments proposed in the Corporate Plan.
- In response to issues raised by Councillor H. Hilditch-Roberts regarding clarity in respect of the delivery of the proposals, the Chief Executive explained that Denbighshire had provided a clear indication of their intentions. However, given certain circumstances any changes imposed by Government, such as those relating to grant funding, could influence the delivery of the proposals contained in the Corporate Plan. He also explained that due to publication requirements agendas for meetings were published prior to the consideration of issues at meetings,

particular reference being made to the Forward Plan, and this provided the Media with the opportunity to publish stories prior to discussion of an issue by Members.

- In response to concerns raised by Councillor E.W. Williams, the Head of Business, Planning and Performance explained that the number of priorities identified would be monitored by the Wales Audit Office. He also confirmed that priorities were now more structured and focused.
- Councillor T.R. Hughes stressed the importance of ensuring that update and progress reports in respect of the Corporate Plan were submitted to Full Council for monitoring purposes. Councillor J. Thompson-Hill confirmed that reports in respect of the Capital Plan would be submitted to Council on a quarterly basis. The Head of Business, Planning and Performance explained that a Quarterly Performance Report would be submitted to Cabinet and Scrutiny, together with, the publication of an Annual Delivery document outlining support provision for the Corporate Plan during the coming year.
- The Head of Business, Planning and Performance confirmed that the issue of public relations and the conveying and communication of messages in relation to the Capital Plan, and the work of the Council in general, would be crucial.

During the ensuing discussion Members expressed their unanimous support for the recommendation contained in the report, and it was:-

RESOLVED – that, subject to the agreed changes, Council approves the final draft of the Corporate Plan 2012-17 to enable the document to be translated and published.

8 REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION OF THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

A copy of a report by the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services, on the consultation of the World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Guidance (WHS SPG) document, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

The Lead Member for Tourism, Leisure and Youth, Councillor H.L. Jones, provided a detailed summary of the report and explained that Denbighshire had published a series of SPG Notes, with the aim of further explaining policies in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal WHS SPG Note also aimed to amplify Local Development Plan (LDP) policies, should the plan be considered 'sound' by the Planning Inspectorate and formally adopted to replace the UDP.

A decision had been sought on whether to formally adopt the WHS SPG to enable its use as a material consideration when determining planning applications. The WHS SPG would assist the public, developers, Town and Community Councils, Councillors, and officers understand the implications pertaining to development undertaken in the WHS and its surrounding 'Buffer Zone'.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the WHS and Buffer Zone had been decided, and subsequently designated, in 2009 and could not be changed. Since 2009, the impact development would have on the WHS with the Buffer Zone having been a material consideration when determining planning applications. It had not

affected which developments could be undertaken without planning permission, or introduce the need for Design and Access Statements which had been a national requirement introduced in 2009.

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal had achieved World Heritage Site status from the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in June 2009, following recognition of its 'Outstanding Universal Value' significant to the whole of humanity. The 'Buffer Zone' had been established to define the surrounding areas which contributed to the 'Outstanding Universal Value' of the World Heritage Site.

In response to observations by Councillor T.R. Hughes regarding the significance of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct to the WHS SPG, it was emphasised that the bid had been extended to include the Canal and the Horseshoe Falls to embrace their attributes towards the Aqueduct.

It was confirmed that the WHS SPG had been jointly prepared by Wrexham County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Shropshire Council. The objective of the Local Planning Authorities responsible for protecting the World Heritage Site had been to manage development in a positive way which supported the vision outlined in the Management Plan.

The content of the draft SPG and the scope and intention to undertake public consultation had been agreed at Planning Committee in August 2011. Issues arising from the 10 responses received from the consultation process, which extended from the 26th September to 16th December 2011, had been summarised in the report. Detailed consultation responses had been summarised and included in Appendix 1, and these also contained reference of any subsequent amendments to the WHS SPG. In response to a suggestion from Llangollen Town Council, an informal WHS application checklist had been drafted for applicants and this had been included as Appendix 2. A summary of the key changes to the document had been incorporated in the report and a final copy of the WHS SPG had been included as Appendix 3.

Llangollen Ward Members expressed concerns that the WHS and the associated buffer zone would introduce and impose development and planning restrictions not applicable in other areas of the County. It was also felt it would impede economic development for the local area and community, which could discourage investment and in turn reduce employment prospects in the Dee Valley. The Planning Policy Officer explained that the WHS SPG would not introduce any new requirements, seek to prevent or rule out the principle of development in the area, but would seek to increase the quality of development and enhance the area. Councillor S.A. Davies expressed concern regarding the criteria for Membership to the Joint Advisory Committee of the AONB.

In the absence of an adopted WHS SPG there would be potential for developers and applicants to misunderstand the requirements for planning applications in the qualifying area. This would result in the Council failing in its responsibility to deliver the UNESCO required document, and in its commitments already signed up to in the WHS Management Plan.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the officer Steering Group currently responsible for overseeing the World Heritage Site Management Plan would be reviewed and confirmed that Member involvement in the Group would be crucial. Members supported this view and agreed that the Steering Group include elected Member representation from each of the relevant Authorities.

In reply to a question from Councillor M.Ll. Davies, confirmation was provided that the Local Access Forums of Denbighshire and Wrexham had been consulted as part of policy development.

Councillor M.L. Holland highlighted the need to improve timescales in respect of the planning process with a view to improving employment prospects. The Planning Policy Officer explained that the Welsh Government were currently reviewing the planning process by encouraging pre-application discussions, and reviewing Chapter 7 of Planning Policy Wales in order to ensure that the economic benefits of planning applications were fully considered.

Following further discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED – *that*

- (a) Council formally adopts the World Heritage Site Supplementary Planning Guidance to be used to inform the determination of planning applications, and*
- (b) the Steering Group to oversee the World Heritage Site Management Plan should include elected Member representation from each of the relevant Authorities.*

9 COUNCIL RESPONSE TO BETSI CADWALADR UHB SERVICE REVIEWS

A copy of a report by the Corporate Director: Modernising and Wellbeing, which recommended a final Council response to the public consultation “Healthcare in North Wales is Changing”, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. A copy of an update of amendments to the Council’s response was circulated at the meeting.

The Lead Member for Social Care and Children Services, Councillor R.L. Feeley introduced the report and thanked various individuals and bodies for the assistance provided in producing the response. Councillor Feeley explained that “Healthcare in North Wales is Changing” and other Service Reviews considered by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) in July, 2012, contained proposals for significant changes to health services across North Wales. A formal consultation process on the proposals extended from 20th August to 28th October and Council had been requested to agree formally the proposed response at Appendix I to the report.

Details of the seven key areas of which BCUHB had undertaken reviews in the last 2 years had been incorporated in the report. The result of the reviews “Healthcare

in North Wales is Changing: report on service change proposals” had been reported to the BCUHB on 19th July, 2012.

Council had previously received background information, a summary of the proposals, a copy of the consultation document and a draft response to the proposals prepared by a Working Group of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. Members had also received a presentation by representatives of the Health Board and had been afforded the opportunity to ask questions on key issues. Following discussions in MAGs, Town and Community Council Cluster meetings, formal consultation meetings organised by BCU and through consultation activities organised by the Community Health Council, the draft consultation response had been amended following a further meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee Working Group. The Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being provided a summary of the following key amendments which had been highlighted in the report:-

- the need to have a Strategic Group in place for Denbighshire to enable ongoing discussion about the detailed implementation of the proposals (paragraph 1.4)
- stronger wording about the need to have alternative services in place before existing services are closed (paragraphs 1.5, 1.6.4, 1.8.2, 2.3) and for the development of services for carers (Paragraph 1.9.2)
- a proposal that the Health Board consider developing Denbigh Infirmary and Ruthin Hospital as a “joint hospital hub” with complementary functions (paragraph 1.7)
- specific support for the delivery of a Minor Injuries Service in Llangollen (paragraph 1.8.3)

It was confirmed that close and integrated working with health services, especially in localities, formed a key part of the Council’s work to respond to demographic change, and the BIG Plan had set out objectives for effective joint working to support families.

Details of the potential costs to BCUHB had been included in paragraph 4.7 of the report to Council on 11th September. It was explained that in the process of change, especially as services transferred to communities, increased costs could transfer to local authorities, particular reference being made to adult social care and possible implications for transport provision. BCUHB had carried out Equality Impact Assessment screening on their proposals and would undertake further work prior to submitting final proposals to the Board.

It was explained that as the proposed changes had not been fully costed the implication on Council services was currently unclear. Issues such as transport provision would require consideration, and there would be a risk that the additional cost of the provision of more services in the community would inevitably fall on the Council’s social care teams. Key actions to mitigate the risks identified would include the production of detailed costed implementation plans for the proposed changes which would be discussed by a designated Strategic Group. This would enable the impact to be transparent and permit full discussion and negotiation with the Local Authority about areas which interface with Council responsibilities, and how the new pattern of services could be organised and funded.

Concerns were raised by Councillor S.A. Davies regarding the validity of the consultation process, particular reference being made to the uncertainty of the future of the minor injuries unit in Llangollen.

Councillor J. Thompson-Hill stressed the importance of ensuring services were not withdrawn until replacement services were provided and operational. He expressed concern regarding BCUHB financial circumstances and questioned their ability to deliver their proposals within the given timescales. Councillor Thompson-Hill highlighted the potential ramifications the proposals could have for Denbighshire, particular reference being made to the possible impact on the Council's revenue support grants and other external funding sources. He referred to the detrimental impact of cost shunting on Denbighshire and the need for the Council to adopt a robust stance with regard to this matter.

The Chief Executive explained that the BCUHB Executive Director of Planning had provided a guarantee that a service would not be closed prior to the opening of a new one, in the event of this happening it would be for a period of days rather than weeks. An assurance had also been received that there would be no cost shunting and that the Local Authority would not be expected to pick up any additional costs as a result of the changes. The Chief Executive stressed that it would be important for Denbighshire to adopt a robust stance when ensuring that BCUHB delivered its proposals as stated.

The Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being confirmed that connections had been made between BCUHB Property and the Council's Planning Department in relation to the re-development timescales pertaining to BCUHB buildings in the Rhyl and Prestatyn area.

During the ensuing discussion the following responses were provided by the Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being to questions and issues raised by Members:-

- the view was expressed that an evidence based reply to questions submitted would be forthcoming from BCUHB.
- it was explained that the Home Enhanced Care Service was an enhanced health care service delivered at the service users home, and differed from the Home Care Service.
- in response to a request from Councillor J.A. Davies, it was confirmed that Denbighshire could emphasise the importance of the provision of a new Hospital in Rhyl when submitting the formal business case to the Welsh Government. Councillor R.M. Murray highlighted the importance of ensuring that any new infrastructure introduced was successful prior to removing current service provisions.

Councillor Feeley explained that BCUBH had emphasised that the proposed changes had not been driven, or governed, exclusively by financial implications, but by rapidly increasing demographics, buildings being unfit for purpose and the problems encountered in attracting the top clinicians required in certain areas of

medicine. Confirmation was provided that the majority of local physicians were supportive of the proposed changes within the service.

Members requested that the Corporate Director: Modernisation and Well-being convey their appreciation to the staff for the hard work undertaken.

RESOLVED – that Council agree the consultation response, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, for submission to BCUHB.

10 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Solicitor introduced the Council's Forward Work Programme, previously circulated, and Members agreed the following new items be included in the Forward Work Programme:-

6th November, 2012:-

- Welfare Reform.
- The Role of Champions.

11th December, 2012:-

- Budget Workshop.

RESOLVED - that, subject to the above, the Council forward work programme be approved and noted.

Meeting ended at 1.45 p.m.

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Report To: Full Council

Date of Meeting: 6th November 2012

Lead Officer: Gary Williams, Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Lisa Jones – Deputy Monitoring Officer

Title: Appointment of Lay Members to the Standards Committee

1. What is the report about?

To appoint during this term of office two independent lay members to the Standards Committee.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The governing regulations regarding the composition of the Council's Standards Committee requires a committee of between five and nine members comprising persons who are independent of the Council, County Councillors and Town and Community Council Councillors. Due to the passage of time, and the legal time limits in which Independent (Lay) Members may serve, it is now necessary for two retiring Lay Members to be replaced.

3. What are the Recommendations?

The recommendation of the Special Appointments Panel regarding the two individuals they consider most appropriate to sit as Lay Members on the Standards Committee are: -

- 1) Judge Ian Trigger (Circuit Judge)
- 2) Steven Wayne Roberts (Minister of Religion)

4. Report details

Full Council will recall delegating the selection process to a Special Appointments Panel at its meeting on 11 September 2012, this panel consists of three county councillors, one community council member and one lay member, which has interviewed candidates and now makes a formal recommendation to the Full Council.

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

A fully functioning and representative Standards Committee which upholds the high standards expected of members helps underpin the Council's exercise of its democratic functions.

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

The Independent Remuneration Panel sets the daily rate for independent members. It is a legal requirement that this rate is offered to independent members.

7. What consultations have been carried out?

It is a requirement that any vacancy for an independent member is advertised in at least two newspapers circulating in the area. This was done, in addition, employment websites were also included in order to reach out to a wider audience as possible.

As regards the community member sitting on the Special Appointments Panel all town and community councils were consulted in order to consider putting forward a community member.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no additional costs directly associated with the appointments.

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

There are no identified risks in proceeding with the appointments.

10. Power to make the Decision

The Local Government Act 2000 requires all local authorities to have in place a Standards Committee.

Report To: County Council

Date of Meeting: 6th November 2012

Lead Member / Officer: Councillor Barbara Smith / Gary Williams, Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Report Author: Lisa Jones – Deputy Monitoring Officer

Title: Role of Champions

1. What is the report about?

Full Council is asked to consider the appointment during this term of office, of Members who are to act as Champions in the following areas:

- Older People's Champion
- Homelessness Champion
- Carer's Champion
- Learning Disabilities Champion

2. What is the reason for making this report?

The report is to consider the draft role descriptions for, and appointment of, the Champions identified in the Council's Constitution and to discuss the process by which other Champion roles may be identified as suitable for adoption by the Council.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That Council considers making the following appointments: -

- (1) Older People's Champion
- (2) Homelessness Champion
- (3) Carer's Champion
- (4) Learning Disabilities Champion

3.2 That Council adopts the role descriptions set out in the Appendices to this report in respect of the Champions that are appointed.

3.3 That the Corporate Governance Committee be asked to consider whether there is merit in appointing Champions for other interests.

4. Report details

The role of Champions in this authority has evolved from the one appointment of an 'Older People's Champion' which emanated from the guidance in the Strategy for Older People issued by the Welsh Assembly, that every local authority in Wales should have such a Champion.

Denbighshire County Council has since increased the range of Champions into other areas, sometimes as a result of the direction of Members, or from external initiatives. In any event, the Council in its recent review of its Constitution, at paragraph 2.6 of Article 2, now formally recognises the importance of the role of Champions in specific areas, hence embedding this role within the Constitution.

The method of appointing any Champion has not been laid down in law, and it will be up to each local authority to consider how best this is achieved locally. The WLGA and the Welsh Assembly Government Guide on appointing the Older Peoples' Champion states that 'many consider it important that the Champion be based at cabinet level, where local authorities consider it to be so, to ensure that older people's issues are identified at the highest levels. However, this is not always the case and several local authorities have adopted different approaches where this is better tailored to local need.'

Historically, Denbighshire County Council's approach has been to ensure the most appropriate member is appointed to the respective champion role. In previous discussions about Champions, Members have been keen to see a clear role description for Champions which is agreed and adopted and sets out how the role can be undertaken in this particular authority. Draft role descriptions for the roles identified in the Constitution are set out in the Appendices to this report and seek to provide clarity and consistency as to the role of Champion in Denbighshire.

During Full Council's debate on the issue of Champions at its meeting in April 2012 adopting the new Constitution, some Members supported the suggestion of expanding the range of these roles to a Young Persons Champion, given the current economic climate and challenges facing the youth of today. In addition when considering the Armed Forces Covenant there was discussion as to the desirability of having an Armed Forces Champion. It is suggested that Corporate Governance Committee look in detail at the desirability of appointing Champions in respect of other interests and makes recommendations to Council.

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

The roles contribute to the Council's Big Plan and the Council's Vision for Denbighshire 2025.

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

There are no implications for other services as a result of this report.

7. What consultations have been carried out?

Group Leaders have been consulted and were in favour of appointing the four Champions identified in the recommendations contained in this report and of Corporate Governance Committee looking in detail at whether it is appropriate for Champions to be appointed in respect of other interests.

SLT have been consulted and have expressed concern that there is the possibility for confusion and or duplication between the roles of Champions and Lead Members where the issue to be championed falls within the remit of an individual Lead Member.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement.

There are no additional costs directly associated with the appointments.

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

There are no identified risks in proceeding with the appointments.

10. Power to make the decision

Article 2.6 Council Constitution

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Denbighshire County Council

Role Description – Homelessness Champion

Accountability

To the Full Council

Role, purpose and activities

1. To act as a strong strategic leader on homelessness and raising and promoting homelessness issues.
2. To gain an understanding of homelessness, its' causes and the Council's statutory obligations and where required to explain the duties.
3. To advocate the importance of prevention and responding proactively to homelessness; including advocating realistic funding regimes to provide efficient and effective services for vulnerable families and individuals at risk of homelessness.
4. To gain an understanding of the work of the teams in Housing services including the Homelessness unit and the Supporting People team, promoting these internally and externally. To reflect back to the teams, via appropriate channels, how the service is perceived in the community.
5. To consider and highlight the role of public, private and third sectors in bringing forward solutions.
6. To attend training and regular briefings from the Homelessness team.
7. To visit projects run by the voluntary sector.
8. To keep abreast of the evolving impact of national and legislative changes.
9. As a spokesperson to keep issues at the forefront of debate; raising awareness amongst fellow elected members of homelessness issues and the implications of these for the Council.
10. Where required, in conjunction with the Lead Member and the Councils' Communications team, to engage with the media.

Person Specification

Within the Council

Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group

Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the area of interest and listening to requirements

Ability to advocate on behalf of the area of interest within the council

In the Community

Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the interest
Ability to engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest.

Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest.

Ability to represent the position of the council to the community in relation to the interest.

September 2012

DRAFT

Denbighshire County Council

Role Description – Older People’s Champion

Accountability

To the Full Council

Role, purpose and activities

1. To act as a strong strategic leader on raising and promoting older people’s issues.
2. To argue, support and defend the concerns, issues and needs of older people in the Councils’ area.
3. To establish good working relationships with officers and others driving forward the strategies, policies and plans.
4. To gain an understanding of older people’s issues and the Council’s statutory obligations to them and where required to explain the duties.
5. To commit to attending nationally facilitated events (such as provided by the WLGA) and to consider making your own regional, cross border and national links as are necessary such as health and equalities champions in local health structures.
6. In addition to health and social care, to contribute to the shift in focus towards the economic contribution of older people, the opportunities to encourage an active life and the benefits of maintaining independence; promoting a positive image for older people.
7. To ensure that older people are and remain a priority in the Councils’ work. As a spokesperson to keep issues at the forefront of debate; raising awareness amongst fellow elected members on older people’s issues and the implications of these for the Council.
8. To promote the wider local democracy in the involvement, participation and engagement of older people in the planning and reviewing of all aspects of a local authority’s work, including service delivery and policy development.
9. To consider and highlight the role of public, private and third sectors in bringing forward solutions.
10. To attend training and regular briefings.
11. To visit projects run by the voluntary and third sector and to learn from the experience and knowledge of older people’s organizations.
12. To keep abreast of the evolving impact of national and legislative changes.
13. Where required, in conjunction with the Lead Member (if relevant) and the Councils’ Communications team, to engage with the media.
14. To consider the role of Carer’s Champion and its impact on this role and whether to work together where appropriate.

Person Specification

Within the Council

Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group

Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the area of interest and listening to requirements

Ability to advocate on behalf of the area of interest within the council

In the Community

Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the interest

Ability to engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest.

Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest.

Ability to represent the position of the council to the community in relation to the interest.

September 2012

Denbighshire County Council

Role Description - Carers Champion

Accountability

To the Full Council

Role, purpose and activities

1. To act as a strong strategic leader on raising and promoting issues affecting Carers.
2. To argue, support and defend the concerns, issues and needs of Carers in the Councils' area.
3. To gain an understanding of the needs of Carers across all service user groups, and to share this with Member colleagues. This may necessitate regular contact with Carers.
4. To raise awareness (amongst fellow Elected Members) of the issues facing Carers, and the implications of these for Social Services.
5. Wherever possible, in conjunction with the relevant Lead Member, highlight the needs of Carers, and to act as a Champion within the Council with a view to ensuring that the Council responds to these needs appropriately.
6. To familiarise him/herself with the range of services and organisations available to support Carers locally.
7. To ensure the needs of Carers are and remain a priority in the Councils' work. As a spokesperson to keep issues at the forefront of debate; raising awareness amongst fellow elected members on such issues and the implications of these for the Council.
8. To promote the wider local democracy in the involvement, participation and engagement of Carers in the planning and reviewing of all aspects of a local authority's work, including service delivery and policy development.
9. To keep up to date with developments in local, regional and national strategies, and any legislative changes in regard to Carers, as they occur.
10. To keep up to date with any changes to policy or procedures relating to Carers and to attend relevant training.
11. To become a standing member of the multi-agency Denbighshire Carers Strategy Group.
12. To attend local key events for Carers, eg Carers Rights Day Carers week events and conferences.
13. To attend regional and national events in relation to Carers, where possible, eg conferences, meetings and forums.
14. Where required, in conjunction with the Lead Member (if relevant) and the Councils' Communications team, to engage with the media.

15. To consider the roles of Older People's Champion and Learning Disability Champion and its impact on this role and whether to work together where appropriate.

Person Specification

Within the Council

Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group

Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the area of interest and listening to requirements

Ability to advocate on behalf of the area of interest within the council

In the Community

Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the interest
Ability to engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest.

Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest.

Ability to represent the position of the council to the community in relation to the interest.

October 2012

Denbighshire County Council

Role Description – Learning Disabilities Champion

Accountabilities

To Full Council

Role Purpose and Activities

1. To act as a strong strategic leader on raising and promoting issues affecting persons with a learning disability.
2. To argue, support and defend the concerns, issues and needs of the Learning Disabled in the Councils' area.
3. To establish good working relationships with officers and others driving forward the strategies, policies and plans.
4. To gain an understanding of the issues and the Council's statutory obligations to them and where required to explain the duties.
5. To commit to attending nationally facilitated events (such as provided by the WLGA) and to consider making your own regional, cross border and national links as are necessary such as health and equalities champions in local health structures.
6. In addition to health and social care, to contribute to the shift in focus towards the economic contribution of the Learning Disabled community, the opportunities for an active and social life, and the benefits of maintaining independence with or without support.
7. To ensure that persons with a learning disability are and remain a priority in the Councils' work. As a spokesperson to keep issues at the forefront of debate; raising awareness amongst fellow elected members on such issues and the implications of these for the Council.
8. To promote the wider local democracy in the involvement, participation and engagement of persons with a learning disability and carers in the planning and reviewing of all aspects of a local authority's work, including service delivery and policy development.
9. To consider and highlight the role of public, private and third sectors in bringing forward solutions.
10. To attend training and regular briefings.
11. To visit projects run by the voluntary and third sector and to learn from the experience and knowledge of learning disabled organizations.
12. To keep abreast of the evolving impact of national and legislative changes.
13. Where required, in conjunction with the Lead Member (if relevant) and the Councils' Communications team, to engage with the media.
14. To consider the role of Carer's Champion and its impact on this role and whether to work together where appropriate.

Person Specification

Within the Council

Understanding of the area of interest being championed in terms of council strategies and policy, good practice, improvement and national agendas and the needs of the client group

Ability to engage with a range of members and officers around the area of interest and listening to requirements

Ability to advocate on behalf of the area of interest within the council

In the Community

Understanding of the needs of the community in relation to the interest

Ability to engage with citizens and community groups in matters related to the interest.

Ability to lead and support local initiatives related to the interest.

Ability to represent the position of the council to the community in relation to the interest.

October 2012

DRAFT

Report To: Full Council

Date of Meeting: 6th November 2012

Lead Member / Officer: Hugh Irving / Paul McGrady

Report Author: Ken A Jones

Title: Welfare Reform update

1. What is the report about?

The current and likely future impact of Welfare Reform on Denbighshire.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide an update on information already presented to Member Area Groups regarding the ongoing impact of changes to Housing and Council Tax Benefits as part of the overall implementation of Universal Credit.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That members note this report

4. Report details.

4.1 Universal Credit

The introduction of the Universal Credit (UC) is aimed at simplifying the benefits system by consolidating 6 main benefits including Housing Benefit into one single working age benefit, with the intention of “making work pay” and reducing the overall payment and administration costs of the benefits system.

The Welfare Reform Bill outlines the timetable for implementation of the UC with a pilot starting in April 2013 and all new claims starting from October 2013, or April 2014 at the latest. This will be followed by the gradual closure of existing benefits and Tax Credits claims and their transfer to the new system with full transfer intended to be completed by October 2017.

It is the intention that Universal credit will be a single payment to one claimant for the household which will be paid monthly in arrears, with the housing addition as part of the overall UC payment, this will mean the tenant will receive the housing benefit element and it will not be paid direct to the landlord, this will include Social Housing Tenants

Prior to the commencement of Universal Credit, significant reforms are being made with a view to cutting costs and making preparations for merger into Universal Credit.

Many of these reforms affect Housing Benefit, with major changes and reductions have already taken place and are shown in Appendix A. Appendix B shows further changes that will take place during 2013.

The impacts of reduction of Housing Benefit payable are dependent on the reaction of Landlords to a reduction in rental income and to date it appears that Landlords have, in the main, accepted the reductions for new claimants.

The Prime Minister recently announced that in addition to these changes a further £10 billion of cuts to benefits will take place in future years.

4.2 Council Tax Support

From 1 April next year, Council Tax Benefit will be replaced with a new system called Council Tax Support. Responsibility for paying this will move from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to Local Government.

At the same time responsibility is transferred the funds available for the scheme will be cut. The government has announced that the budget will be cut by 10%. This, however, is based on an assumption that claims would fall from the 2010/11 figures used as a base.

The table below shows the reduction based on current proposed funding and forecast caseload for Denbighshire.

	11/12 Actual £m	12/13 Forecast £m	13/14 Forecast £m
Claims	8.98	9.3	9.6
Proposed Budget	7.94	7.94	7.94
Shortfall	1.04	1.36	1.66
Shortfall %	11.5%	14.6%	17.3%

Appendix C shows how the Council Tax Benefit caseload has changed over recent years.

In England the Department of Communities and Local Government has announced an extra £100m to reduce the impact of the change. Wales’ proportion of this should be around £6m. WG has not announced whether this will be passed on to Councils. If it were, we would receive around £220k.

The reduction of benefit paid will result in the need to collect the difference from Tax payers who are currently in receipt of a means tested benefit, although there will be no increase in their income to match this loss in benefit. Therefore it is likely that there will be a drop in collection performance with reduced cash flow and an increase in bad debt for the Authority.

Denbighshire currently has the highest Council Tax collection rate in Wales. Last year that was 98%. This is likely to drop as a result of these changes. Initially it is assumed that the collection rate will drop to 97% which is the equivalent of a loss of

income of around £400k. A drop in collection rate will also affect the police and town and community councils as they also charge council tax payers.

In addition to the loss of income there will be additional administrative costs as there will be more recovery action. The Council has already had to pay £55k to have its IT system amended. The Welsh Government has already advised that there will be no additional funding for implementation of the scheme or ongoing pressures.

It is still difficult to forecast the financial impact as there are as yet, no clear proposals from the Welsh Government on what the new scheme will actually be. Draft regulations have been issued for consultation but they did not contain the proposed level at which claimants have to pay.

Legislation to implement these changes does not yet exist. It is currently being discussed in the House of Lords, with likely approval by Parliament in December with WG regulations following in January. The Chancellor's autumn statement in December should tell us the final amount of funding that will be allocated to the scheme.

4.3 Other Significant Changes to Benefits

Introduction of size criteria rules for claims in the social rented sector will result in social landlord properties being classified as under occupied with reductions in Housing Benefit paid. Appendix B shows the details of these. Previously there has been no need to record the number of bedrooms within a property and this is now underway. It will likely lead to problems for the Council as a landlord as some tenants' rents will effectively increase due to this change.

In addition to Housing costs there is a major implication of changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) which will require current DLA recipients to apply for and be assessed for Personal Independence Payments. This will be piloted from April 2013 and rolled out from October. At this stage the impact is not clear and will depend on the results of the pilot.

4.4 Welfare Reform Group

The risk of Welfare Reform has been recognised and a DCC Welfare Reform Group has been meeting since April 2012, this group is cross service to ensure that information is shared and pressures identified to support our customers.

A joint bid with Flintshire for WG funding for a HB / Housing options co-ordinator officer for 2 years has been successful.

Regular contact with Landlords (Private & Social) is being maintained

Letters are being sent to all affected customers advising of changes, with benefit visiting officers available for home visits. Work is ongoing to advise residents of the benefits they are entitled to claim.

At this stage it is difficult to update claimants on what the actual effect will be on them due to the significant uncertainties, numerous changes and the interdependencies and complexities of the benefits system.

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

Not Applicable

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

There is an obvious loss of income through the changes to the Council Tax Benefits system. While the Council will attempt to collect all tax due it is unlikely to be able to collect a high rate. Assumptions around this loss of income have been built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

It is difficult to assess financial cost on service delivery until changes are in place however pressure points must be recognised. As a minimum - increased demands on enquiries to Benefit Department, Debt and Welfare advice centres.

There will be an increase in recovery action, which will require a review of current Revenues staff resource, there will also be a requirement to review Benefit department staff resources.

There will be an impact on the Housing Department on rent collection and potential homelessness.

There will be an impact on Social Services due to Disability Living Allowance changes which means that staff will have to take all relevant clients through the new process to see if they are eligible for the new Personal Independence Payments.

7. What consultations have been carried out and has an Equality Impact Assessment Screening been undertaken?

No consultation has been undertaken as this is a statutory requirement for compliance. The Welsh Government is undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment at a national level on its proposed changes to the Council Tax Benefit system. An internal working group has been set up to ensure departments are aware of proposals as they come forward and that appropriate action is taken.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are clearly significant financial risks attached to the change in the benefits system which is compounded by current uncertainties about the impact of changes and the short timescale for implementation.

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

9.1 There are a number of risks and these are being managed through the Welfare Reform Group and individual service business plans / risk registers.

Appendix A

Reform change 1/4/2011	DCC impact			
Provision of an extra bedroom in the size criteria rules where a disabled person requires a live in carer	Positive impact to enable extra room			
Removal of the £15 excess element to the LHA	666 claimants (28%) that received an excess, which meant their Local Housing Allowance was more than their Rent liability. The excess ranged from £1 - £15 per week.			
Capping of Local Housing Allowance rates	No impact on Denbighshire as rates based on London rents			
Restricting the maximum size of dwelling on which HB is payable to 4 bedrooms	31 households affected, only five of the 31 had a shortfall between the 4 bedroom rate and their rent liability, three of which have a shortfall already			
Limiting the LHA rate of payments	Accommodation	March 2011	April 2011	Feb 2012
	Shared rate	£65.00	£55.00	£55.00
	1 Bed	£80.00	£75.00	£80.00
	2 Bed	£103.85	£94.62	£100.00
	3 Bed	£126.92	£114.23	£115.38
4 Bed	£160.38	£150.00	£150.00	
Increase in deductions from LHA for non-dependents	1,509 customers claiming benefits with Non dependants in their household. Deductions from HB payment increased by 27% with reductions of £2 to £12.85 per week according to non-dependant's salary, these figures to increase again for 2012/13 at similar increased levels.			
Increasing Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) grant to allow LAs provide additional help in cases of housing hardship	£54k 2011/12. £102k for 2012/13			
Jan 2012	Extending the shared room rate to those single people under 35 Reduction of £25 per week in housing benefit payable. 188 tenancies affected			

Appendix B

	Changes to be introduced from 2013	DCC impact
April 2013	Updating LHA rates by the Consumer Price Increase rather than annual review of the LHA	Rates up-rated in-line with the consumer price index (which excludes housing costs) rather than average market rents
April 2013	Introduction of size criteria rules for claims in the social rented sector	Rent restricted to the number of rooms 'needed' in social housing, pensioners exempt. Under occupying by 1 room – 14% reduction Under occupying by 2 rooms – 25% reduction
April 2013	Capping total benefit payments at average earnings levels	Housing Benefit to be the mechanism for household benefit cap limiting the total benefits paid, current figure is £26k per year. HB staff will assess total benefits received and reduce Housing Benefit if over level.
April 2013	Localisation of Council Tax Benefit (CTB)	
April 2013	Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS)	Delivery options still unclear
Sept 2013	Disability Living Allowance replaced by Personal Independence Payments	Implications still unclear
Oct 2013	Introduction of Universal Credit	Potential start April 2014, delivery options still unclear

Appendix C

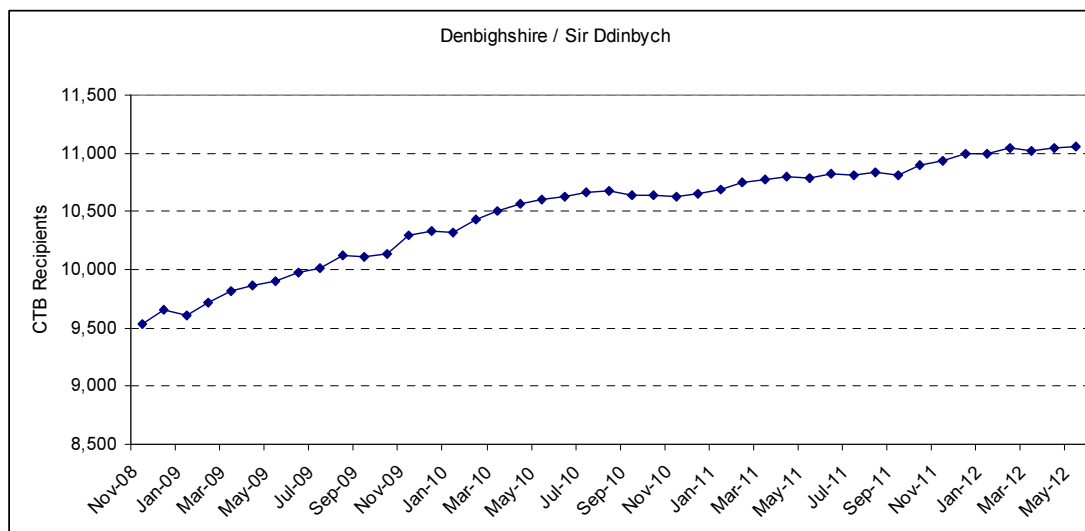
11/12 Caseload

Benefit type	Sector	Customers	Value
Housing Benefit	Private rented Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	3,086	£11.5 Million
Housing Benefit	Private rented Non LHA	805	£4.017 Million
Housing Benefit	Housing Association	1,604	£6.134 Million
Housing Benefit	Denbighshire CC Rents	2,325	£6.693 Million
Council Tax Benefit	Council Tax Benefit	10,820	£8.98 Million
	Total	18,640	£37.2 Million

Break Down of Claimants

Claimant type	%
Pensioners	48%
Working Age & Unemployed	35%
Working Age & in Employment	17%

Council Tax Benefit Claims



Appendix D

Estimated Total Benefit Reductions on pre April 2011 claimants in Denbighshire

Benefit change	Estimated Loss
Removal of the £15 excess element to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	£312k
Restricting the maximum size of dwelling on which HB is payable to 4 bedrooms	£457k
Limiting the LHA rate of payments	Initial impact was £884k however due to 9 months protection and increase in rental levels this has reduced to potential £400k at current LHA rates
Increase in deductions from LHA for non dependants	Actual statistics not available due to variances within scheme, however approx. £200k
Extending the shared room rate to those single people under 35	£244k
Total Housing Benefit deductions	£1.61m
Localisation of Council Tax Benefit (CTB)	£1.66m

Potential Loss of Council Tax Benefit by Claimant Type

Claimant Type (can be included in more than 1 group)	Number	Benefit paid	Average Annual loss per household
Children all ages in household	2,800	£2,440,000	£148.14
Children under 5 in household	1,192	£1,038,000	£148.04
Lone parents (All)	1,746	£1,380,000	£134.36
Working Lone Parents	554	£353,000	£108.32
Over 60's	5,405	£4,736,000	£148.96
Attendance Allowance / DLA	4,124	£3,732,000	£153.84

County Council Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Council Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
4 December	1	HR Policies and Procedures - Recruitment			Linda Atkin
	2	LDP Decision on Response to the Inspector	Decision on response to Inspector	Yes	Graham Boase
	3	Revised Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005		Yes	Graham Boase
Budget Workshop 11 December at 2 p.m.		A budget workshop for all councillors to develop the 2013 / 14 budget		No	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill / Paul McGrady
8 January	1	HR Policies and Procedures			
Council Briefing 21 January	1	Taith Presentation	A general briefing on Taith's work	N/A	Cllr David Smith / Stuart Davies / Iwan Prys-Jones (Taith)
5 February	1	SPG West Rhyl			Angela Loftus
26 February	1	Wind Farms Interim Planning Guidance			Graham Boase

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Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Council Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
Council Briefing 11 March				
9 April				
Council Briefing 22 April				
7 May				

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Future Meeting

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Council decision required (yes / no)?	Author – Lead member and contact officer
Council Briefing – Date tbc	Presentation by the Empty Homes Officer	Proposed by the Performance Scrutiny Committee on 1 December 2011 to inform of the post's roles and objectives	No	Tbc

County Council Forward Work Plan

Note for officers – Full Council Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
<i>November</i>	<i>23 October</i>	<i>December</i>	<i>20 November</i>	<i>January</i>	<i>20 December</i>

Updated 24/10/2012 - KEJ

Council Work Programme.doc

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