

To: Members of the County Council

Date: 1 September 2015

Direct Dial: 01824712589

e-mail: dcc\_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COUNTY COUNCIL** to be held at **10.00 am** on **TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2015** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN LL15 1YN**.

Yours sincerely

G Williams  
Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services

## **AGENDA**

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

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Pages 5 - 6)**

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

#### **3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

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 7 - 8)**

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

#### **5 MINUTES (Pages 9 - 14)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting of County Council held on 7 July 2015 (copy attached).

## **6 WALES AUDIT OFFICE (WAO) ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT**

(Pages 15 - 64)

To consider a report by the Strategic Planning & Performance Officer (copy attached) to inform Council of the WAO's conclusion and improvement proposals, and to secure Council endorsement of a response to the Report.

## **7 AGEING WELL IN DENBIGHSHIRE (Pages 65 - 106)**

To consider a report by the Older People Strategy Development Officer (copy attached) to inform Council of Denbighshire's Ageing Well Plan and to secure Council endorsement of the Plan.

## **8 NOTICE OF MOTION**

Councillor Paul Penlington put forward the following Notice of Motion for consideration by full Council:

"This Council believes that Fracking (hydraulic fracturing to access shale gas) and UCG (underground coal gasification) are unacceptably invasive industries that irreparably damage the natural environment at both local and regional levels.

We believe there are significant adverse impacts from both Fracking and UCG which include water table contamination, air pollution and the large scale production of contaminated waste.

Therefore, we are opposed to any exploration or developments of these industries within our county and are highly concerned by the impact upon us of developments across the region".

## **9 NOTICE OF MOTION**

Councillor Bobby Feeley put forward the following Notice of Motion for consideration by full Council:

1. "Acknowledges and supports the good work undertaken by Denbighshire in providing a range of accommodation and or support services to vulnerable people to help them maintain or regain their place in the community in Denbighshire.
2. Supports the continuance of the Supporting People preventative programme funded by Welsh Government to assist and support potentially vulnerable and marginalised people to live independently and with dignity in their community through housing related support and advice services.

3. Calls on the Welsh Government to safeguard and not to impose any further reduction to the Supporting People grant.
4. Supports the joint campaign of Cymorth Cymru charity and Community Housing Cymru 'Let's Keep on Supporting People" to safeguard the supporting people programme grant budget.
5. To invite all Members of the North Wales Regional Collaborative Committee (NWRCC) in their own areas and organisations to support this motion.
6. To invite Constituency and Regional Members of the Welsh Assembly to support this motion."

## **10 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 107 - 110)**

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

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Councillors**

Councillor Gwyneth Kensler (Chair)

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

Councillor Ann Davies (Vice-Chair)

Jason McLellan  
 Barry Mellor  
 Win Mullen-James  
 Bob Murray  
 Peter Owen  
 Dewi Owens  
 Merfyn Parry  
 Paul Penlington  
 Pete Prendergast  
 Arwel Roberts  
 Anton Sampson  
 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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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

### Code of Conduct for Members

### DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

a \*member/co-opted member of

*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

**Denbighshire County Council**

**CONFIRM** that I have declared a **\*personal / personal and prejudicial** interest not previously declared in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, in respect of the following:-

*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)\**

Signed

Date

\*Note: Please provide sufficient detail e.g. 'I am the owner of land adjacent to the application for planning permission made by Mr Jones', or 'My husband / wife is an employee of the company which has made an application for financial assistance'.

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# Agenda Item 4

## Digwyddiadau wedi eu mynychu gan y Cadeirydd / Events attended by Chairman

<u>Dyddiad/Date</u>	<u>Digwyddiad/Event</u>	<u>Lleoliad/Location</u>
01.07.15	Lansiad Sgrinio Iechyd, Canolfan Bowlio Llanellwy Health Screening Launch, St. Asaph Bowling Centre	Llanellwy St. Asaph
01.07.15	Ymweliad i safle Swyddfa newydd Grŵp Cynefin Site visit to Grwp Cynefin's new Offices	Dinbych/Denbigh
05.07.15	Gwasanaeth Dinesig Maer Dinbych Mayor of Denbigh's Civic Service, Capel Mawr	Dinbych/Denbigh
06.07.15	Eisteddfod Llangollen Eisteddfod	Llangollen
07.07.15	Eisteddfod Llangollen Eisteddfod – Cyngerdd Noddedig C S Dd/DCC Sponsored Concert	Llangollen
07.07.15	Ymweliad Brenhinol Royal Visit, Raven Inn (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Llanarmon yn Ial
08.07.15	Cyngerdd/Concert - Denbighshire Music Cooperative (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Y Rhyl/Rhyl
08.07.15	Eisteddfod Llangollen Eisteddfod	Llangollen pic
09.07.15	Ymweliad Cyngor Ysgolion/School Council Visits	Rhuthun/Ruthin
09.07.15	Eisteddfod Llangollen Eisteddfod (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Llangollen
10.07.15	Eisteddfod Llangollen Eisteddfod (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Llangollen
11.07.15	Digwyddiad 'Young Dragons' Community Cadet Challenge' Event	Llandudno
12.07.15	Gwasanaeth Dinesig y Cadeirydd Chairman's Civic Service	Y Capel Mawr Dinbych/Denbigh
14.07.15	Perfformiad/Performance - Stepping Forward Theatr y Pafiliwn/Pavilion Theatre	Y Rhyl/Rhyl
16.07.15	Seremoni Dinasyddiaeth/Citizenship Ceremony (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Rhuthun/Ruthin
16.07.15	Perfformiad/Performance - Cwlwm Cariad - NEW Dance Parc Wledig Loggerheads Country Park	Loggerheads
17.07.15	Lansiad prosiect AHNE/Bryniau Clwyd Clwydian Range/AONB Project Launch	Horseshoe Falls, Llangollen

19.07.15	Gwasanaeth Dinesig Maer Rhuthun Ruthin Town Mayor's Civic Service,	Rhuthun/Ruthin
22.07.15	Croesawu Lesley Griffiths AC i Sir Ddinbych Welcoming Lesley Griffiths AM to Rhyl (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Y Rhyl/Rhyl
22.07.15	Ymweliad Lesley Griffiths AC i Ysbyty Royal Alex Visit of Lesley Griffith AM to Royal Alex Hospital (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Y Rhyl/Rhyl
22.07.15	Croesawu Carwyn Jones AS – Lansiad Gwasanaeth Bws Traws Cymru Welcoming Carwyn Jones AM - Launch of Traws Cymru Service	Corwen
22.07.15	Croesawu Carwyn Jones AS i Ysgol newydd Y Rhyl Welcoming Carwyn Jones AM to Rhyl New School (Is-Gadeirydd wedi mynychu/Vice Chairman attended)	Y Rhyl/Rhyl
27.07.15	Sioe Gerdd/Musical – Calvary Church Rainbow Theatre	Prestatyn



## COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the County Council held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin LL15 1YN on Tuesday, 7 July 2015 at 10.00 am.

### PRESENT

Councillors Raymond Bartley, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Ann Davies (Vice-Chair), Richard Davies, Stuart Davies, Hugh Evans, Peter Evans, Bobby Feeley, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Holland, Colin Hughes, Rhys Hughes, Alice Jones, Huw Jones, Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler (Chair), Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Jason McLellan, Barry Mellor, Bob Murray, Peter Owen, Merfyn Parry, Paul Penlington, Pete Prendergast, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Sandilands, David Simmons, Barbara Smith, David Smith, Bill Tasker, Julian Thompson-Hill, Joe Welch, Cefyn Williams, Cheryl Williams, Eryl Williams and Huw Williams

### ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (MM), Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services (GW), Chief Finance Officer, Head of Highways and Environmental Services (SP) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

### 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brian Blakeley, Joan Butterfield, Bill Cowie, Meirick Lloyd Davies, Carys Guy, Hugh Irving, Win Mullen-James and Dewi Owens.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest.

At this juncture, the Chair informed members that following the Council meeting, an informal meeting would take place regarding School Transport.

The Chair offers congratulations to Plas Brondyffryn on their award and also thanked the Urdd in Denbighshire on their success in Caerphilly.

### 3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters.

At this juncture, Councillor Jason McLellan expressed his disappointment at the fact BCUHB had not been included on the Agenda as previously shown in the Forward Work Programme. Neither had the Local Government reform been included for discussion. Councillor McLellan also expressed his displeasure at the fact the

Budget item was to be discussed the day before the Government Budget announcement.

The Chair explained to Councillor McLellan that he could have raised the issues prior to the meeting with either the Chief Executive or the Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services.

Councillors Stuart Davies and Arwel Roberts expressed their agreement with Councillor McLellan's statement.

The situation regarding BCUHB was clarified by both the Lead Member for Social Care, Adult and Children's Services and the Chief Executive. It was explained that the Chief Executive of BCUHB, Trevor Purt, had approached Denbighshire to attend a Council meeting but due to his recent suspension, the Acting Responsible Officer (ARO) had been unaware of this commitment. The CHC Board meeting had taken place this morning to which the ARO would be required to attend. A future date of 8 September 2015 had been suggested to the ARO but a response was yet to be received. Members agreed if the ARO was unable to attend on the 8 September then a Special meeting should be arranged on a date convenient for the ARO.

The Chief Executive confirmed the Green Paper published the day prior to Council would be discussed at the Group Leaders meeting taking place next week and the response would be brought back to full Council.

The discussion regarding the Local Government re-organisation would be discussed following the election in 2016 due to the fact it was speculation at the present time.

#### **4 CHAIRMAN'S DIARY**

A list of civic engagements undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair for the period 14.05.2015 to 28.06.2015 had been circulated prior to the meeting.

***RESOLVED*** that the list of civic engagements undertaken by the Chair and Vice Chair be received.

#### **5 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 May 2015 were submitted.

Item 5, Page 11 Councillor Huw Jones' name was spelt incorrectly. Apologies were extended to Councillor Jones.

Councillor Alice Jones commented that regarding item 7, Page 13 – Town Plans, within the minutes it had stated "it was clarified that there was a draft Bodelwyddan Town Plan which was receiving attention". The question had been asked "why was Bodelwyddan Town left out" and the answer given during the meeting, by the Chief Executive had been "the Town Plan had not been dealt with at the same time as the others in the county. It had felt it would be better to leave Bodelwyddan out until the

issue of the LDP had been sorted out". Councillor Jones requested that the minutes be amended.

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill confirmed that the sentence within the minutes had been said at the meeting by the Chief Executive, The Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation and himself but the statement read out by Councillor Jones had also been said during the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the minutes of the meeting held on 12 May, 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **6 BUDGET 2016/17**

The Lead Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Budget Report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the process to deliver the revenue budget for 2016/17 and set out the next phase of the budget proposals.

Members were aware of the ongoing budget process. 3 additional budget workshops had taken place. The first two workshops had dealt with items which had been deferred or held over for additional information. At the workshop which took place on 5 June 2015, members were informed of the key assumptions within the council's medium term plans – in particular, outlining the uncertainty around the level of future Revenue Support Grant settlements.

Further budget workshops had been arranged for 26 October and 14 December 2015. As the process for 2016/17 developed, it would likely be necessary to schedule more workshops in the autumn.

There had been a significant level of uncertainty around the likely Local Government Settlement for 2016/17 and this was likely to remain the case for the coming months. Until May 2013, Settlement values had been broadly consistent with the forward planning indications published nationally in 2011. Since then, there had been no multi-year settlements and indications had changed consistently between and within financial years. In the absence of more reliable Settlement information, budget plans needed to continue to develop proposals to cover a range of different scenarios. The Draft Settlement for local government in Wales would be published in early October.

Members had been asked to submit their own proposals as part of the process and a prescribed form had been issued for that purpose. A proposal put forward by members at the workshop on 5 June would be to cease payment of travelling expenses to members attending meetings as observers. It had been estimated that this proposal may save up to £900 per year.

The aim of the budget process was to ensure the council delivered a balanced budget. It remained a difficult process with some tough decisions to make along the way. The engagement and support of elected members in the decision making and scrutiny of the process was crucial.

In depth debate took place with the following points discussed:

- Councillor Colin Hughes expressed concern regarding prospective cuts. He raised the closure of Aberwheeler as an example. The Chief Executive explained he had not been aware of any individual service user who had not been placed following the closure of Aberwheeler. All the vulnerable people had been placed within new work environments. Councillor Richard Davies clarified that an in depth discussion lasting over 2 ½ hours had taken place at the Special Performance Scrutiny meeting which had taken place on 22 June 2015.
- The Chief Executive confirmed balanced budgets were set. 72% of cuts agreed for this year had already been put in place.
- Members requested a representative from the CHC (Community Health Council) attend the meeting together with the Acting Responsible Officer of BCUHB to enable questions raised by members to be responded to in detail, by the Health representatives present.

At this juncture (11.00 a.m.) there was a minutes silence held to remember the victims of the London bombings 10 years ago.

Debate continued with the following points discussed:

- Councillor Colin Hughes confirmed to members he did not intend to claim expenses for any meetings he attended in the future.
- Members requested minutes of the budget workshops to record results of discussions be made available. It was confirmed that Going Forward Action Points would be circulated to members following the Budget Workshops.
- A Scrutiny Task & Finish Group had recently been established to assess the impact of the budget cuts already agreed. A number of members requested residents contact them showing evidence of the impact of the budget cuts. Members, on receipt of the evidence, would submit the information to the Task & Finish Group for assessment.
- Waste management, changes to the work practice were asked to be clarified. The Head of Highways and Environmental Services explained there were operational changes which were due to the consequence of the green waste. It could mean a small percentage of households could have the days of their green waste collection changed. Compulsory redundancies had been avoided and waste operatives were being recruited. This would be a good news story.
- The Leader, Councillor Hugh Evans explained if a balanced budget had not been delivered by the Council, then it would have been delivered by the Welsh Audit Office on behalf of the Council. Residents needed to be assured that the council were taking a serious view of the budget situation and would take their concerns into consideration. Despite all the cuts and negativity, the council were on track to deliver the Corporate Plan. It has been agreed to invest £800million in the communities and to show support to the communities.

Councillor Stuart Davies moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Martyn Holland.

Members voted on the report recommendations – to note the Phase 4 savings proposals listed in Table 1 and approve the proposals listed in Table 2:

23 votes for, 9 against, 2 abstentions

Members also voted on the report recommendations – to approve the proposal put forward by members not to pay expenses to members attending meetings as observers:

26 votes for, 4 against, 1 absention.

**RESOLVED** that Council agreed to:

- *Note the Phase 4 savings proposals listed in Table 1 and approve the proposals listed in Table 2;*
- *To approve the proposal put forward by members not to pay expenses to members attending meetings as observers.*

## **7 COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services introduced the Council's Forward Work Programme (previously circulated).

The Chief Executive explained an invitation would be sent to the BCU Board to attend the Council meeting taking place on 8 September 2015. If BCU were unable to attend, the Chief Executive asked members if they would want the BCU item to be added to the Forward Work Programme for 8 September to enable discussion.

Members agreed it would be important for a member of BCU to attend on 8 September and if that date was inconvenient for them, then a special council meeting should be arranged on a date convenient for the Acting Responsible Officer.

**RESOLVED** that subject to the above, the Council Forward Work Programme be approved and noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 a.m.

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# Agenda Item 6

Report To: Denbighshire County Council

Date of Meeting: 8 September, 2015

Lead Member/Officer: Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Performance / Alan Smith, Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation

Report Author: Nicola Kneale, Strategic Planning & Performance Officer

Title: WAO's Annual Improvement Report on DCC

1. What is the report about?  
To summarise the key findings from the WAO's Annual Improvement Report (Appendix 3) regarding Denbighshire's planning and reporting arrangements in order to meet statutory continuous improvement duties, and to agree a Council-endorsed response to the Report.
2. What is the reason for making this report?  
To inform Council of the WAO's Conclusion and Improvement Proposals, and to secure Council endorsement of a response to the Report.
3. What are the Recommendations?  
Council to note the Conclusions, Improvement Proposals, and Key Findings from the WAO's report, and approve responses to the Improvement Proposals (as expected by the WAO).  
The whole Council response has been co-ordinated by the Strategic Planning & Performance Team, which has asked services to state their position in relation to each recommendation, and also taken this report to Corporate Governance. All responses have been included (attached) in order to present this report to Council.
4. Report details
  - 4.1 The overall conclusion is that:  
"The Council continued to make progress in delivering improvements in all of its priority objectives and its track record in delivering its financial objectives mean it is well placed to secure continuous improvement in 2015-16."
  - 4.2 No formal recommendations have been made, only two Improvement Proposals. The WAO expects the Council to do something about them and will follow up what happens. The Improvement Proposals are:
    - a. Ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear for the achievement of the new affordable housing objective. Denbighshire County Council's response to this Improvement Proposal is in Appendix 1 of this report;
    - b. Review its working practices against the recommendations in the Auditor General's 2014-15 Local Government National Reports, and implement improvements as necessary. Denbighshire County Council's response to this Improvement Proposal is also in Appendix 1 of this report.

Local Government National Reports cover areas such as Scrutiny, young people classed as NEET, and Environmental Health Services. Denbighshire County Council's response to these national recommendations can be seen in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 4.3 A list of key conclusions from various auditing bodies (e.g. WAO, CSSIW) are listed from p8 of the attached report, and cover the areas of Performance, Use of Resources, Governance, Improvement Planning & Reporting Audits, and Audit of Accounts. Some key messages include:
- a. Performance standards, risk management, performance evaluations, and financial arrangements are of a good, robust standard.
  - b. Progress has been made in terms of the HR service, Welsh Language, and commitment of DHP. Improvements in monitoring DHP (underway since April 2015) will help to clarify their impact.
  - c. It is hoped that new arrangements in place will support the Council's ambitions in terms of the economy.
  - d. Challenges exist in the form of a planned merger of the Children & Family service and the Education service, and underperformance in the provision of affordable housing.
5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?  
Many of these recommendations contribute directly to Corporate Priorities (e.g. Affordable Housing), and effective planning and evaluation arrangements are essential elements that underpin good performance.
6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?  
There are no costs associated with the recommendations of this report.
7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report  
This report does not refer to policy or project development, so there are no Equality issues. However, any plans that are developed in response to this report should be subject to an EqIA.
8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?  
This report presents the findings of the WAO report, so no consultation has been necessary. However, a formal Council response will be provided, for which we are seeking approval today.
9. Chief Finance Officer Statement  
Not required.
10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?  
There are no risks associated with implementing the recommendations of this report.
11. Power to make the Decision



11.1 Performance management and monitoring is a key element of the Wales Programme for Improvement, which is underpinned by the statutory requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 and the Local Government "Wales" Measure 2009.

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Appendix 1:  
WAO Annual Improvement Report - Response to Proposals for Improvement

Date of Report	Title of Review	Lead Service	Link to WAO website	Proposal	Recommendations
Jun-15	DCC Annual Improvement Report	BIM	<a href="http://www.audit.wales/publication/denbighshire-county-council-annual-improvement-report-2015">http://www.audit.wales/publication/denbighshire-county-council-annual-improvement-report-2015</a>	P1	Ensure that the roles and responsibilities are clear for the achievement of the new affordable housing objective

DCC Response

Following recommendations from Wales Audit Office in the Council's Annual Improvement Report May 2014, that the Council clarify its approach to affordable housing delivery, the Council has taken a number of actions to address the issue:

**Restructure** – the Council's approach to housing strategy and policy has been strengthened by combining strategy and policy development in one service area – Planning and Public Protection. Previously responsibility for housing strategy and policy development was split between Housing & Community Development and Planning & Public Protection. The Planning policy and housing strategy teams have been merged to form the Strategic Housing & Planning Team. This is enabling the development of a clearer approach to affordable housing policy.

Officers in the new combined team are working closely with Officers in Property (including those responsible for the Council's housing stock) and finance to ensure affordable/social housing issues are being dealt with together, while maximising the opportunities presented by the HRA to provide more affordable/social housing.

Cabinet members' portfolios have been amended, with one Cabinet member having responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the overarching Housing Strategy, of which Affordable Housing is a key theme.

**Establishment of an Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group** - The Task and Finish Group was chaired by the Cabinet Lead Members with responsibility for planning and housing and comprised councillors from Scrutiny and Planning Committee, supported by the Corporate Director: Economy and Public Realm and relevant Heads of Service (Housing, Planning and Public Protection and Finance and Assets). The Task and Finish Group considered a range of affordable housing issues in depth and agreed a series of clear recommendations for actions aiming to improve the delivery of affordable housing and simplify policies. The recommendations for action from the Task and Finish Group were endorsed by the Council's Community Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in June this year. These actions will form part of Denbighshire's Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, which will sit alongside the emerging Housing Strategy. The Delivery Plan will identify clear priorities, resource requirements and the relevant Lead Member and Head of Service with responsibility for ensuring delivery of each action.

**Progress on key actions identified by the Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group –**

- \* Currently investigating innovative housing funding and delivery mechanisms for affordable housing and good practice at other local authorities, such as joint venture schemes, private investment, establishing a housing delivery company, innovative actions to bring empty homes back into use and address eyesore sites. This also includes identifying a wider range of development partners to assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- \* Asset review underway to establish best use and potential to develop/ redevelop Council-owned land. A cross-departmental group has been established to promote and facilitate the redevelopment of several Council-owned sites.
- \* Work has also commenced on promoting other potential development sites and formalising pre-planning application discussions with developers. Consultation is currently underway on draft development briefs for 3 major sites allocated for housing.
- \* Work has commenced on drafting a revised Commuted Sums policy which would allow for a wider range of options for spending commuted sums gathered in lieu of affordable housing units, and this will be completed following agreement of the Draft Local Housing Strategy.
- \* Work is underway in conjunction with Grwp Cynffin to review and simplify the affordable housing application process and register, alongside developing a marketing strategy. Re-launch and promotion of the register will be carried out following this process.
- \* Work has commenced on a standard approach to S106 agreements, with the aim of simplifying and speeding up the planning process, whilst ensuring that it meets mortgage providers' requirements.

**Development of Denbighshire's Housing Strategy** - The emerging Denbighshire Housing Strategy has identified creating a supply of affordable homes as a key theme. One of the priority actions highlighted for the Council will be to develop and implement a clear programme for the delivery of affordable housing with partners which:

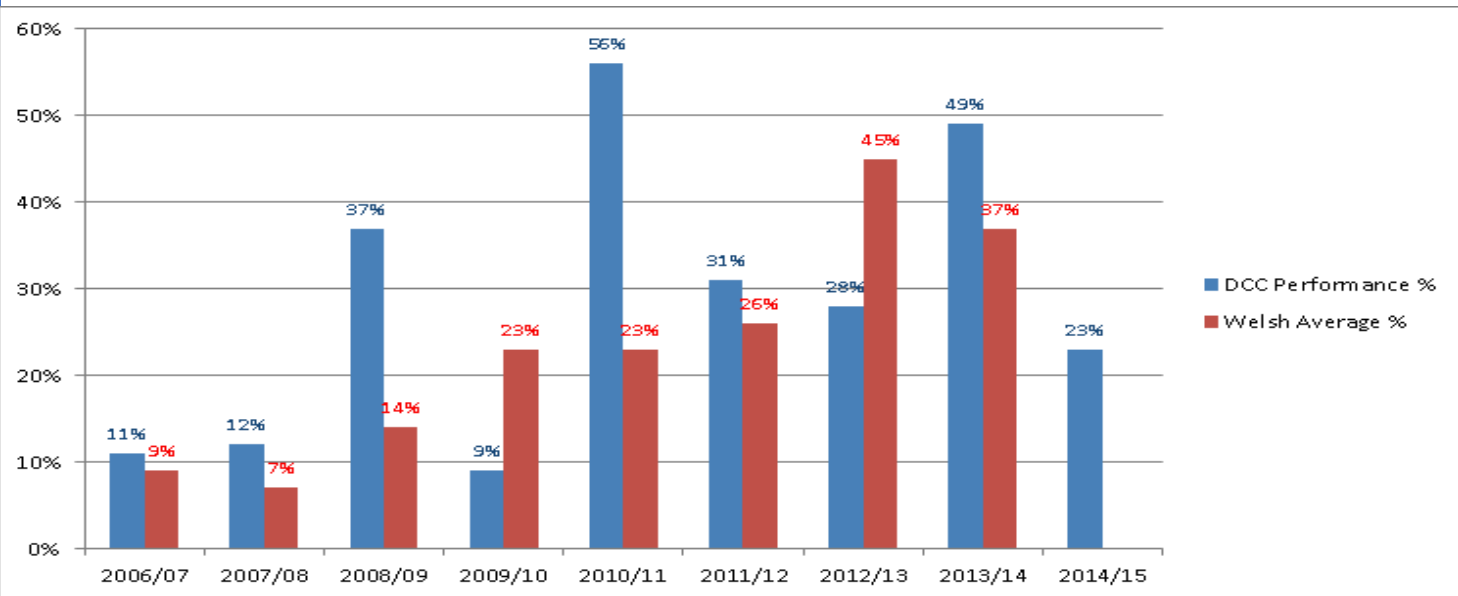
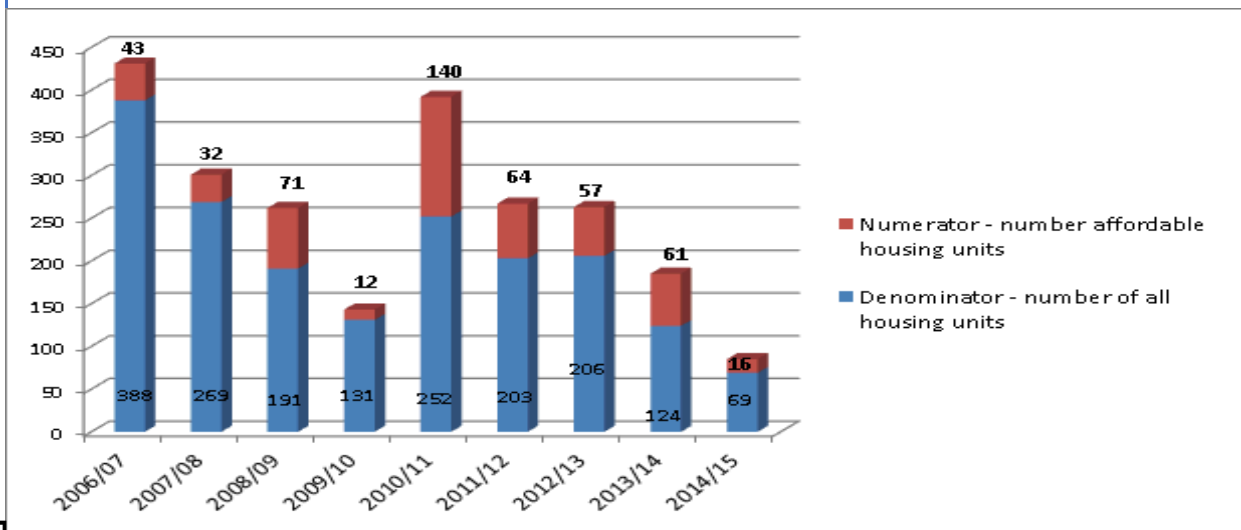
- \* Establishes a targeted programme for spending Section 106 and HRA funds
- \* Maximises use of external funding, including Social Housing Grant
- \* Identifies suitable sites already in Council ownership and establishes a programme for delivery
- \* Identifies investment opportunities for using capital funding
- \* Identifies opportunities for collaboration on development on other public sector land

**Performance Indicators**

\* According to the NSI (PLA/006) Denbighshire delivered 16 affordable homes in 2014/15 (based on 2013/14 data), giving a performance figure of 23%. However, the all Wales data has not yet been made available to the Council (normally released in September of each year) it is not clear how the Council's performance in terms of percentage of affordable housing delivered compares with others Welsh authorities.

\* In the past 8 years (excluding 2014/15) Denbighshire has been above the Welsh average, in performance terms, on 6 occasions. Please see graphs below:

Appendix 1:  
WAO Annual Improvement Report - Response to Proposals for Improvement



Appendix 1:  
WAO Annual Improvement Report - Response to Proposals for Improvement

Date of Report	Title of Review	Lead Service	Link to WAO website	Proposal	Recommendations
				P2	Review its working practices against the recommendations in the Auditor General's 2014-15 Local Government National Reports, and implement improvements as necessary
DCC Response					
In future the lead Head of Service will produce a report for committee (whichever is appropriate) on DCC's response to it. The Service Challenge process will also pick up on relevant national studies and highlight relevant recommendations					

Date of Report	Title of Review	Lead Service	Link to WAO website	R e c o m m e n d a t i o n	Recommendations	DCC Response
May-14	Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	Legal, Democratic & HR	<a href="http://www.audit.wales/publication/good-scrutiny-good-question-auditor-general-wales-improvement-study-scrutiny-local">http://www.audit.wales/publication/good-scrutiny-good-question-auditor-general-wales-improvement-study-scrutiny-local</a>	R1	Clarify the role of executive members and senior officers in contributing to scrutiny	A meeting was held between Cabinet and Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) to discuss this aspect (this was prior to the WAO report's publication. It was agreed that relevant lead members would be invited to attend scrutiny meetings when appropriate to present reports within their portfolio and answer questions on them. It was emphasised that they would not be expected to attend unless formally invited to attend. Heads of Service and relevant officers would be expected to attend in a technical/advisory role. The Leade Members' attendance is required for the purpose of holding to account and answering questions, they do not attend to influence the scrutiny process.
				R2	Ensure that scrutiny members, and specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and support to fully equip them with the skills required to undertake effective scrutiny	Sessions on chairing, questioning and work planning skills were arranged locally with external trainers provided by the the WLGA. First few sessions were well attended, but later ones had to be cancelled due to low numbers indicating their intention to attend.
				R3	Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to	
					a)provide a clear rationale for topic selection	Denbighshire has utilised a 'proposal form' for officers to complete for a number of years. This proved an useful method to cut down on unnecessary items appearing on scrutiny work programmes. Consequently, recently the SCVCG has developed a member proposal form which individual members have to complete stating why they think a topic merits scrutiny's attention. This form asks members (and committees at a later stage) the PAPER test for each subject: P - public interest; A - scrutiny's ability to influence and change things; P - performance, is it an underperforming area/service; E- extent, does it affect a large number of residents or a large geographical area; R - replication, is anyone else examining it
					b) be more outcome focussed	the application of the PAPER test for all topics helps members and officers focus on the benefits of the scrutiny process and scrutiny's Ability to influence and change eventual outcomes
					c) ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; and	A copy of the Member Proposal Form is attached - on its reverse side is a flow chart which both scrutiny committees and SCVCG are asked to follow when determining whether a topic is suitable for scrutiny. This flowchart emphasises the the need to determine the desired outcome and consider the scope and extent of the scrutiny work required and the most appropriate method to undertake it
					d) align scrutiny programmes with the Council's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements	Performance Scrutiny Committee regularly considers reports on the Corporate Plan and Complaints, and identifies any shortcomings or areas of concern for more detailed scrutiny. It also consider the Director of Social Services' Draft Annual Report and identifies areas within that for more detailed scrutiny if appropriate. Scrutiny members also serve on individual service challenge groups and have the opportunity to challenge on a regular basis any areas of concern and escalate them up to consideration by the whole committee if they deem its appropriate.
				R4	Ensure that scrutiny draws effectively on the work of audit, inspection and regulation and that its activities are complementary with the work of external review bodies	Corporate Governance Committee initially receive all regulators and auditors' reports. If they identify areas of concern which they think would merit scrutiny they can refer them to the SCVCG who will decide on the most appropriate action to be taken - the Chair and Vice-chair of the Corporate Governance Committee serve on the SCVCG therefore there is a good link into scrutiny's work and vice-versa
				R5	N/A	

				R6	Ensure that the impact of scrutiny is properly evaluated and acted upon to improve the function's effectiveness; including following up on proposed actions and examining outcomes	This is an area which has been identified for development. At present we undertake an annual self-evaluation exercise for the purpose of the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Report. However, it could be beneficial to undertake specific evaluation exercises following the completion of certain T&F Group reviews to learn lessons for future review exercises.
				R7	Undertake regular self-evaluation of scrutiny utilising the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government overview and scrutiny' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network	As per above, we have undertaken an annual self-evaluation exercise for the purpose of the Annual Report. This year we developed a questionnaire based on the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government scrutiny'. However, despite the questionnaire being issued to all councillors and senior managers, a very low number were returned - even though a number of reminders were sent. For future exercises we may need to refine our process for undertaking our self-evaluation.
				R8	Implement scrutiny improvement action plans developed from the Wales Audit Office improvement study	We have had the action plan in place for approximately 12 months and we are constantly updating it. This document is fluid and can be amended to reflect the everchanging scrutiny environment and include areas of improvement identified through process such as the self-evaluation exercises.
				R9	Adopt Participation Cymru's 10 Principles for Public Engagement in improving the way scrutiny engages with the public and stakeholders	These 10 principles were adopted by the SCVCG on scrutiny's behalf as guides to future scrutiny activities in Denbighshire on 23 September 2014
Jul-14	Young people not in education, employment or training - Findings from a review of councils in Wales	Education	<a href="http://www.audit.wales/publication/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-findings-review-councils-wales">http://www.audit.wales/publication/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-findings-review-councils-wales</a>	R1	Together with partners, map and review expenditure on NEETs services to better understand the resources required to deliver the Framework	We were successful with Conwy BC in obtaining funding for the Progressive Engagement project between 2012 and 2014. Hosted by Coleg Llandrillo, Rhos, PEP mapped provision funded by ESF, lottery and other sources that targeted the 19-24 age group. This also involved a dialogue with young people themselves. We have also mapped provision for 16-18 year olds as part of Denbighshire's Youth Engagement Implementation Plan. See attachments.
				R2	Clarify their strategic approach to reducing the proportion of 19-24 year olds who are NEET as well as their approach for 16 to 18 year olds	DCC is lead for the N W Region's ESF 11-24 TRAC Project, endorsed by the N W Economic Ambition Board and targeting the prevention and reduction in young people vulnerable to becoming NEET. The full Business Case has been submitted to WEFO for the 11-18 element of the Project (June 2015), and the 16 - 24 element will be submitted in September 2015. The Conwy & Denbighshire Youth Engagement Strategic Group was established in 2013 to achieve the object of reducing the number of young people becoming NEET aged 16 - 24
				R3	Focus on young people with significant or multiple barriers to engaging with education, employment or training rather than those who are more likely to re-engage without significant additional support	The Conwy & Denbighshire Youth Engagement Strategic Group has partners from Education, Youth Service, wider youth services in the third sector, FE, health, DWP, to look at strategic issues and receives reports from the Additional Learning Needs group that focuses on the progression of leavers from the special school's in Conwy & Denbighshire. Individual care leavers and those who have had involvement with the social services are reviewed and followed up in Denbighshire Transition Meetings, convened by Social Services, and for school aged pupils through the Multi Agency Panels in each of our high schools.
				R4	Develop their objectives and targets for reducing the number of young people NEET so that they can be held to account and their work aligns with the Welsh Government's targets and objectives	Monthly 5 Tier Report from Careers Wales are reported to the Denbighshire 14-19 network, the Secondary Schools Senior Leadership teams (every 6 weeks) and the Children Young People and Families Group, with progress noted against the WG Targets and Objectives. DCC produces a yearly update to Youth Engagement and Progression Implementation Plan for WG that is followed up by a monitoring visit by WG.
				R5	Ensure that elected members and partners fully understand that councils have a clear responsibility for leading and coordinating youth services for 16 to 24 year olds	This refers to the broader range of youth support that the council and partners engage in and offers to young people in that age group. Recent service challenge and budget cutting processes - involving a number of stakeholders, including young people and county council members - have considered the context that services working with young people up to 24 yrs. WEFO bids are being progressed to implement new additional activity with partners through the Learning Pathways network. The Youth Service is one of those partners and other 'youth services' are engaged in this process. In addition we meet to review progress of post 16s through a Youth Panel following updates from Careers Wales.
				R6	Improve the evaluation and relative value for money of the services and interventions in their area that are intended to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET	The ESF Potensial Project targeted reducing NEETs at 16 - a full evaluation has been published. The new Regional TRAC project will be reporting regularly on outcomes and WEFO outputs in line with WEFO guidelines



Oct-14	Delivering with less - the impact on environmental health services and citizens	Planning & Public Protection	<a href="http://www.audit.wales/publication/delivering-less-%E2%80%93-impact-environmental-health-services-and-citizens">http://www.audit.wales/publication/delivering-less-%E2%80%93-impact-environmental-health-services-and-citizens</a>	R1	Revise the best practice standards to:	The Wales Heads of Environmental Health Group and Technical Panels will be leading on reviewing and updating the Best Practice Standards on behalf of all Welsh Local Authorities. Some Denbighshire officers will be attending the technical panels and will contribute to the review.			
					a) align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities				
					b) identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering strategic priorities of the Welsh Government, and				
					c) identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens				
				R2	Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget restrictions		In addition to work being undertaken by the WLGA in response to this report, please see response to Good Scrutiny? Good Question! Report, above		
				R3	Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by:		In Denbighshire the Local Authority continues to engage with local residents on planned budget cuts through the Freedoms & Flexibilities and Cutting Our Cloth processes		
					a) consulting with residents on planned changes in services and using the findings to shape decisions				
					b) outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and				
								c) setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service	
				R4	Improve efficiency and value for money by:		The Wales Heads of Environmental Health Group will be leading on a review of Environmental Health Strategic Priorities for Wales. We will be contributing to that review.		
					a) identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services				
					b) Agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these				
	c) Determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens								
	d) Improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through:								
	i) collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality								
	ii) outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost effectively to agreed standards								
	iii) introducing and/or increasing charges and focusing on income-generation activity								
	iv) using grants strategically to maximise impact and return; and								
	v) reducing activities to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities								
R5	Improve strategic planning by:	We have used the approach of analysing costs, benefit and income when deciding on future environmental health services. We are considering an improved environmental health and wider Public Protection database system, following the all wales procurement exercise.							
	a) Identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services								
	b) analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost:benefit:impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and								
	c) agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in future								
Jan-15	Managing the Impact of Welfare Reform Changes on Social Housing Tenants in Wales	Finance & Assets/Customers & Education Support	<a href="http://www.audit.wales/publication/managing-impact-welfare-reform-changes-social-housing-tenants-wales">http://www.audit.wales/publication/managing-impact-welfare-reform-changes-social-housing-tenants-wales</a>	R1	Improve strategic planning and better coordinate activity to tackle the impact of welfare reform on social-housing tenants by ensuring comprehensive action plans are in place that cover the work of all relevant council departments, housing associations and the work of external stakeholders	An Anti-Poverty Group is being established in the Council. Its goal is to bring strategic oversight across all four national anti-poverty programmes, as well as keeping abreast of latest issues and research in order to reduce poverty and its associated problems in the county. This is likely to cover welfare reform and social housing.			
				R2	Improve governance and accountability for welfare reform by:				

			a) appointing member and officer leads to take responsibility for strategic leadership on welfare reform and be accountable for performance, and	A dedicated Officer at Director level (Nicola Stubbins) and and Elected Members at Cabinet level (Hugh Irving) are in place
			b) ensuring members receive adequate training and regular briefings on welfare reform to be able to challenge and scrutinise performance and decisions	There are groups and boards in place for welfare reform , including the Welfare reform group, Citizens Advice Bureau meetings, and an Operations Board .
		R3	Ensure effective management of performance on welfare reform by:	
			a) setting appropriate measures to enable members, officers and the public to judge progress in delivering actions	Outcomes and measures are being monitored with the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and KPI's are being monitored in relation to the Revs & Bens Contract
			b) ensuring performance information covers the work of all relevant agencies and especially housing associations, and	We have a range of Performance Reports in place and monthly operations meeting for managing the work of our associated agencies.
			c) establishing measures to judge the wider impact of welfare reform	Denbighshire area network, LSB
		R4	Strengthen how welfare-reform risks are managed by creating a single corporate-level approach that coordinates activity across the Council and the work of others to provide adequate assurance that all the necessary and appropriate actions to mitigate risk are taking place	The officer/Member Welfare Reform group is in existence (and has been for a few years) with this purpose.
		R5	Improve engagement with tenants affected by the removal of the spare-room subsidy through:	
			a) the provision of regular advice and information in the options open to them to address the financial impact of the change in their circumstances	See response to R4 above. Also, a number of key actions are being developed to provide a more strategic direction to the management of DCC's housing stock and improve our engagement with tenants.
			b) the promotion of the 'Your benefits are changing' helpline, and	
			c) the provision of support to tenants specifically affected by the removal of the spare-room subsidy to participate in regional/national employment schemes	
		R7	Improve management, access to and use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) by:	
			a) establishing a clear policy or guide that is available in hard copy and online to the public that sets out the Council's policy and arrangements for administering DHP	An All Wales DHP policy was approved by Cabinet March 2015
			b) clearly defining eligible and non-eligible housing costs covered by DHP in application forms, policy documentation and applicant guidance leaflets	Included in All Wales DHP Policy
			c) clearly setting out the maximum/minimum length of time that such payments will be provided	This forms part of the application letters following a decision by DCC
			d) setting an publishing the timescale for the Council making a decision on DHP applications	The publishing time scale is 10 days
			e) including information within public literature on the Council's policy for right to review of appeal of a decision and the timescales an process to be followed in deciding on these; and	Within All Wales DHP policy
			f) clearly define the priority groups for DHP in public literature to ensure that those seeking assistance, and those agencies supporting them, can assess whether such payments are a viable option to address their housing and financial needs	Within All Wales DHP policy and with the Third Sector and partners



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

# Annual Improvement Report 2014-15

## Denbighshire County Council

Issued: July 2015

Document reference: 358A2015



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The Auditor General is independent of government, and is appointed by Her Majesty the Queen. The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office Board, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General. The Wales Audit Office is held to account by the National Assembly.

The Auditor General audits local government bodies in Wales, including unitary authorities, police, probation, fire and rescue authorities, national parks and community councils. He also conducts local government value for money studies and assesses compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

Beyond local government, the Auditor General is the external auditor of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, the Assembly Commission and National Health Service bodies in Wales.

The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.

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# Summary report

## Purpose of this report

- 1 Each year the Auditor General is required to audit the improvement planning and reporting arrangements of Welsh councils, fire and rescue authorities and national park authorities, and to assess whether each authority will meet statutory continuous improvement duties<sup>1</sup>. This work has been undertaken on behalf of the Auditor General by staff of the Wales Audit Office. **Appendix 1** provides more information about the Auditor General's powers and duties in local government.
- 2 In addition, the Auditor General undertakes an in-depth corporate assessment at each authority on a cyclical basis (currently at least once every four years). In the intervening years, in addition to audits of improvement planning and reporting, the Wales Audit Office, on behalf of the Auditor General, will keep track of developments and focus further improvement assessment work on a number of key themes, developed in discussion with each authority.
- 3 This Annual Improvement Report summarises the audit work undertaken at Denbighshire County Council (the Council) since the last such report was published in April 2014. The Annual Improvement Report also includes a summary of the key findings from reports and letters issued by 'relevant regulators', namely; the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW); Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (Estyn); and the Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC). Nonetheless, this report does not represent a comprehensive review of all the Council's arrangements or services. The conclusions in this report are based on the work carried out at the Council by the relevant regulators and, unless stated otherwise, reflect the situation at the point in time that such work was concluded.
- 4 Taking into consideration the work carried out during 2014-15, the Auditor General has provided an 'Overall Conclusion' in this report (see **page 6**) as to whether he believes that the Council is likely to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement for 2015-16.
- 5 This conclusion should not be seen as a definitive statement of organisational health or as a prediction of future success. Rather, it should be viewed as providing an opinion on the extent to which the arrangements currently in place are reasonably sound insofar as can be ascertained from the work carried out.
- 6 We want to find out if this report gives you the information you need and whether it is easy to understand. You can let us know your views by e-mailing us at [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales) or writing to us at 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ.

<sup>1</sup> Duties and requirements contained within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure).

**The Council continued to make progress in delivering improvements in all of its priority objectives and its track record in delivering its financial objectives mean it is well placed to secure continuous improvement in 2015-16**

7 The Auditor General has based this conclusion on the performance audit work carried out during the year by the Wales Audit Office and the inspection work of other regulators. The projects undertaken, together with the resultant findings, recommendations and/or proposals for improvement, are summarised below.

**2014-15 performance audit work**

8 In determining the breadth of work to be undertaken we considered the extent of accumulated audit and inspection knowledge as well as other available sources of information including the Council’s own mechanisms for review and evaluation. For 2014-15, the Wales Audit Office undertook improvement assessment work under three themes: Performance, Use of Resources, and Governance. Individual projects undertaken by the Wales Audit Office and the other regulators during the year included:

Project name	Brief description	Dates when the work was undertaken
<b>Wales Audit Office – Financial planning review</b>	Assessment of the Council’s financial position and how it is budgeting and delivering on required savings.	July to November 2014
<b>Wales Audit Office – Audit of the Council’s Improvement Plan</b>	Assessment of the Council’s adherence to Welsh Government guidelines for the publication of its Improvement Plan.	April to June 2014
<b>Wales Audit Office – Audit of the Council’s Performance Report</b>	Assessment of the Council’s adherence to Welsh Government requirements for the publication of its Performance Report.	October to November 2014
<b>Wales Audit Office –Follow up review of arrangements for affordable housing</b>	Assessment of progress on arrangements for provision of affordable housing.	October to December 2014

Project name	Brief description	Dates when the work was undertaken
<b>Wales Audit Office – Follow up review of arrangements for Human resource service</b>	Assessment of progress on arrangements for provision of the Council's Human Resource service.	October to December 2014
<b>Wales Audit Office – Follow up review of arrangements for Council's Economy Improvement Objective</b>	Assessment of progress on arrangements for delivering the Council's Economy Improvement Objective.	October to December 2014
<b>Wales Audit Office – Review of the Council's arrangements for distributing Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)</b>	Assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's services for the allocation, distribution, administration and use of DHP.	January to March 2015
<b>Wales Audit Office –Review of the Council's governance arrangements for risk management</b>	Assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's risk management arrangements.	October 2014
<b>CSSIW – Inspection of the Council's adoption service</b>	Assessment of the effectiveness of the provision of adoption services.	November 2013
<b>CSSIW – Inspection of safeguarding and care planning of looked-after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour</b>	Assessment of the effectiveness of the Council's services for looked-after children over 11 years of age and care leavers who were identified as being vulnerable and/or involved in risky behaviours.	April to May 2014
<b>CSSIW – Inspection of the Council's Fostering Service</b>	Assessment of the Service provided by the Council and the quality of life experienced by those in foster care.	January 2014
<b>CSSIW – Review of the Social Services Department's performance in 2013-14</b>	Assessment of the performance of the Council's Social Services Department.	April to October 2014
<b>WLC – Review of the Council's Welsh Language Scheme</b>	Assessment of the effectiveness of the Scheme in providing Council services to the public in Welsh.	July to August 2014



## Headlines – a summary of key findings

- 9 The table below summarises the key findings of work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office, and the other regulators, in 2014-15.

<b>Performance</b>	<p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The use of performance standards continues to promote a consistent culture of ambition across the Council’s services (<a href="#">paragraphs 13 to 16</a>).</p> <p><b>CSSIW</b> – Overall, the performance of the social care department is strong but the introduction of new models of working for both children’s and adult services will need rigorous evaluation throughout the forthcoming year. (<a href="#">paragraphs 17 to 30</a>).</p> <p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – Limited progress has been made in addressing the underperformance in the provision of affordable housing but the Council has helped prevent many people from becoming homeless (<a href="#">paragraphs 31 to 33</a>).</p> <p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The Council has improved the performance of its Human Resource service (<a href="#">paragraphs 34 to 35</a>).</p> <p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The progress of initiatives to support the Denbighshire economy has been inconsistent, but improved arrangements are likely to support the Council’s ambitions (<a href="#">paragraphs 36 to 43</a>).</p> <p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The Council is making good progress in committing its Discretionary Housing Payments and improvements in monitoring since April 2015 will help to clarify their impact (<a href="#">paragraphs 44 to 48</a>).</p> <p><b>Welsh Language Commissioner</b> – Further progress was made to improve the Welsh language capability of Council staff (<a href="#">paragraphs 49 to 51</a>).</p>
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<b>Use of Resources</b>	<b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The Council has good financial management arrangements with no immediate shortcomings ( <a href="#">paragraphs 52 to 63</a> ).
<b>Governance</b>	<p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The Council’s risk management arrangements are robust and fit for purpose (<a href="#">paragraphs 64 to 68</a>).</p> <p><b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The Council produces well informed balanced evaluations of its performance (<a href="#">paragraphs 69 to 70</a>).</p>
<b>Improvement planning and reporting audits</b>	<b>Wales Audit Office</b> – The Auditor General issued audit certificates stating that the Council had discharged its duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 ( <a href="#">Appendices 2 and 3</a> ).
<b>Audit of accounts</b>	<b>Wales Audit Office</b> – On 28 November 2014, the Appointed Auditor issued an Annual Audit Letter to the Council. The Letter summarises the key messages arising from his statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 as the Appointed Auditor and his reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice. It confirmed that, on 30 September 2014, he issued an unqualified opinion on the Council’s financial statements ( <a href="#">Appendix 4</a> ).

## Recommendations and proposals for improvement

- 10 Given the wide range of services provided by the Council and the challenges it is facing, it would be unusual if we did not find things that can be improved. The Auditor General is able to:
- a make formal recommendations for improvement – if a formal recommendation is made the Council must prepare a response to that recommendation within 30 working days;
  - b make proposals for improvement – if proposals are made to the Council, we would expect it to do something about them and we will follow up what happens;
  - c conduct a special inspection and publish a report and make recommendations; and
  - d recommend to Ministers of the Welsh Government that they intervene in some way.
- 11 The Auditor General makes no formal recommendations to the Council in this Annual Improvement Report. He does, however, make recommendations that may be relevant to the Council in his Local Government National Reports. A list of recommendations contained in reports issued in 2014-15 can be found in [Appendix 5](#). We also make two proposals for improvement arising from the work undertaken by the Wales Audit Office during the year:

Proposals for improvement	
The Council should:	
P1	Ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear for the achievement of the new affordable housing objective.
P2	Review its working practices against the recommendations in the Auditor General's 2014-15 Local Government National Reports, as set out in <a href="#">Appendix 5</a> , and implement improvements as necessary.

- 12 In addition, the CSSIW, Estyn and the WLC included areas for improvement in their inspection reports and letters issued to the Council during the year. These are available at [www.cssiw.org.uk](http://www.cssiw.org.uk), [www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk) and [www.comisiynyddygygymraeg.org](http://www.comisiynyddygygymraeg.org).

# Detailed report



# Performance

## The use of performance standards continues to promote a consistent culture of ambition across the Council's services

- 13 The Council has continued its approach of rejecting target-setting based on incremental improvement on the previous year's performance in favour of an approach based on achievement of the 'excellence threshold'. Excellence thresholds are usually based on the Council's performance being amongst one of the top six performing councils in Wales. If over half the other councils in Wales are achieving better performance than in Denbighshire, the Council will consider the issue concerned a high priority for improvement. The concept of the 'excellence threshold' is clearly understood by senior management and helps to instil a consistent level of ambition across the Council.
- 14 The Council's performance in 2013-14 improved, with 16 of the 25 statutory performance indicators in the top quartile. Only four were in the bottom quartile and the Council continued to achieve improvements across many of its service areas.
- 15 Our last two Annual Improvement Reports concluded that the Council's performance management arrangements were soundly based and developing satisfactorily, with clear and effective leadership by senior officers and councillors. This continues to be the case. The performance scrutiny committee and the well-established service challenges receive performance information of consistent quality and in an easily understood format. In addition to the service challenges, the Council's Cabinet reviews performance on a six monthly basis.
- 16 Despite overall staffing numbers having fallen for the last two years, we found that the Council's central policy team continues to oversee, co ordinate, and actively manage performance. This has enabled the Council to continue to deliver a well-understood and consistent system for performance management.

## Overall, the performance of the social care department is strong but the introduction of new models of working for both children's and adult services will need rigorous evaluation throughout the forthcoming year

- 17 CSSIW found that the Council has set out a five year plan to modernise its social services that will involve a transformation, not just of the pattern of social care services, but also in the shape of the workforce employed to provide care and support. The Council believes that this cultural change will help it to prepare for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the delivery of sustainable social services. However, the introduction in 2013-14 of new models of working for both children's and adult services will need rigorous evaluation throughout the forthcoming year.

- 18 The Council continues to engage actively with people who use its services and CSSIW notes that there is evidence that users' views have been incorporated into service developments and improvements. For example, CSSIW found that the Council demonstrates commitment, creativity and pragmatism in its response to 'More Than Just Words/ Mwy Na Geiriau'<sup>2</sup>, with clear evidence of forward planning designed to heighten awareness and take-up of the Welsh language, and to increase the accessibility of social services in the language of need. Innovative approaches have been introduced to support the emotional well-being of younger and older adults, integrated project work with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, (BCUHB) and early intervention for children and families.
- 19 In 2013-14, significant, planned, staffing changes within the department took place. These included changes at leadership level through the appointment of a new Director of Social Services and the re-structuring of staffing teams for many services delivered to children and adults. The Council faces substantial demographic changes within an uncertain financial climate. CSSIW found powerful evidence that the Council has adopted a strategic approach to meeting these challenges. The Council's approach includes a review of existing services; the introduction of innovative models of practice; integrated partnership development; and the exploration of the potential for regional commissioning for some services.
- 20 CSSIW concluded that there had been improvement in the provision of adult social care in the County with new initiatives promoting independence. During 2013-14, the emphasis of the Council was to enable a greater number of people aged 65 years and over to remain independent. Networks have been developed to help people with complex needs to remain in their local communities. Some examples include the delivery of targeted programmes designed to help meet the emotional well-being of older adults such as the 'Men's Sheds' and University of the Third Age, both designed to prevent social isolation, encourage the sharing of skills and interests, and to identify specific areas of help and support.
- 21 CSSIW found there was an improvement in performance in relation to the numbers of reviews of care plans carried out, although demand for reviews also increased. In 2013-14, the Council introduced a rota of visits by elected members to eight council services. Councillors spoke to service users and the staff supporting them before submitting a report which was shared with the service and an action plan developed to address any action deemed appropriate.
- 22 The Council also performed well in avoiding delays in the discharge of patients from hospital. In 2013-14, the Council began limited weekend working with BCUHB, including the provision of a social worker and health and social care support workers to deliver initial packages of care to people leaving hospital, so that discharge can be achieved in a smooth and timely manner. The rate of delayed transfer of care for social care reasons aged 75 or over was only 0.5 per 1,000 population, significantly better than the Welsh average of 4.7.

<sup>2</sup> Mwy na geiriau/More than just words: A Strategic Framework for Promoting the Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care' was published in 2012 by the Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Social Services. The aim of the framework is to ensure that organisations recognise that language is an intrinsic part of care and that people who need services in Welsh get offered them.

- 23 The Council remained committed to promoting independence for older people and the Council's intake and reablement service worked with 379 people during 2013-14, 296 of whom were supported to return to their own homes from hospital. The Integrated Community Equipment Service is delivered in partnership with BCUHB and provides a range of equipment, helping 1,923 people to live safely at home. This represents a 10 per cent increase compared to last year. However, there was little improvement during 2013-14 in the number of people using direct payments - an option that would enable people to make their own decisions about their packages of care and the purchasing aids and adaptations.
- 24 Partnership working has enabled the development and delivery of restructured services and this has led to improved quality of care in the county. The CSSIW notes that relationships with partner agencies are good at both individual and organisational levels, despite some challenges in engaging effectively at a strategic level with the new structures within the local health board.
- 25 CSSIW noted continued progress in the delivery of children's services and strong outcomes for looked-after children. Through the implementation of evidence-based tools and in partnership with health visitors amongst others, there have been performance improvements in safeguarding processes for looked-after children, with 94 per cent of reviews and 89 per cent of statutory visits conducted on time. The Council is meeting timescales in relation to children on the child protection register, with all child protection reviews held on time.
- 26 However, CSSIW reported that the Council's approach to looked after-children requires strategic focus to ensure that the experiences and outcomes for the children and young people concerned can be improved. The numbers of looked-after children who had a health care plan in place continues to place the Council's performance amongst the lowest in Wales (38 per cent compared to a national average of 81 per cent). In 2014, the Council introduced a new post of full-time designated nurse for looked-after children and has reported significant improvement and progress on this key indicator during 2014-15.
- 27 Outcomes for care leavers interviewed in Denbighshire were considered as part of CSSIW's looked after children inspection. It was reported that care leavers identified frustration with the lack of information available to them about their rights and entitlements - particularly in relation to housing and financial support - and also that the Council was not providing occupational opportunities for care leavers to attain economic independence.

- 28 There has been a significant decrease in the average external qualifications/ points score (163.9) achieved by 16 year old looked-after children. Whilst this may reflect the characteristics of the specific cohort for 2013-14, this is the lowest rating achieved by the Council over the past three years, and falls well behind the national average (261.5). The percentage of looked-after children experiencing one or more changes of school, not simply through age-related changes, increased in 2013-14. Performance also declined in relation to placement stability for looked after children. CSSIW found that the Council should seek to understand and respond to the background to this decline in performance. It should listen to the experiences of the young people, and establish a clear interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary plan for improvement.
- 29 During 2014-15, CSSIW undertook an inspection of safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour. The inspection was carried out as part of CSSIW's national thematic inspection programme. The aim of the national inspection was to assess the quality of care planning across Wales and whether it effectively:
- a supports and protects looked-after children and care leavers;
  - b identifies and manages the vulnerabilities and risky behaviour of looked-after children and care leavers;
  - c promotes rights-based practice and the voice of the child;
  - d promotes improved outcomes for looked-after children and care leavers; and
  - e promotes compliance with policy and guidance.
- 30 Findings from the individual local authority inspections and the CSSIW national overview report can be found on the CSSIW website <http://cssiw.org.uk/our-reports/national-thematic-report/2014/safeguarding-and-care-planning-of-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers/?lang=en>

Limited progress has been made in addressing the underperformance in the provision of affordable housing but the Council has helped prevent many people from becoming homeless

- 31 The Council is taking action to try to ensure a sufficient supply of affordable homes but has consistently failed to meet its targets since 2011 and its performance was the worst in Wales in 2013-14. In 2013-14, of the 2,416 affordable homes built in Wales, only 16 were completed in Denbighshire. Only 61 affordable homes were completed in Denbighshire in each of the two preceding years. The Council is taking action to try to ensure a sufficient supply of affordable homes and has set a target of 570 new homes to be completed between 2012 and 2017. However, although there was progress during 2014-15, the outcome was still below the Council's target for affordable homes with an estimated 50 homes completed.



- 32 The Council recognises that it needs to improve its performance and the housing service has been recently reorganised with the Head of Planning and Public Protection taking on full responsibility for all aspects of delivering affordable housing in Denbighshire. The Council recognises that the current Housing Strategy does not set out clearly enough the roles and responsibilities for meeting the affordable homes target and a Task and Finish group of elected members and officers has been developing a new affordable housing strategy.
- 33 The Council's Improvement Priority for housing is broader than the provision of affordable housing. The Council also wants to work with partners to support people who are or are about to become homeless. The Council took effective action to prevent homelessness in 2013-14 and, as in the previous year, remained in the top quartile for performance within Wales. The number of households accepted by the Council as homeless and in priority need was one of the lowest in Wales and consequently the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation was, on average, lower than in other councils in North Wales. The average time homeless households spent in temporary accommodation in Denbighshire was also low and represented top quartile performance amongst councils in Wales.

#### The Council has improved the performance of its Human resource service

- 34 In our last Annual improvement Report we noted that the Council's Corporate Human Resources (HR) service had made limited progress in meeting its key internal targets during 2012-13 and we proposed that the Council needed to address these weaknesses. The revised staff appraisal system, for example, had been subject to delays and the subsequent consistency of its implementation did not appear to have been monitored effectively.
- 35 The Council has largely addressed this proposal for improvement. Follow up work by the Wales Audit Office and internal audit follow-up reports indicate that good progress is now being made in addressing key areas for improvement. The HR service has a clearer understanding of the cost of the service, and how this compares with other councils. Recent internal surveys indicate that satisfaction levels with the Corporate HR service have improved. Outcome and performance information for the Corporate HR service is more comprehensive and key performance measures for the service are in place. The new appraisals system is now fully operational across all services and subject to systematic quality review.

## The progress of initiatives to support the Denbighshire economy has been inconsistent, but improved arrangements are likely to support the Council's ambitions

- 36 Strengthening the Denbighshire economy is a high priority for the Council. Six of the Council's 14 priority Themes include links to the local economy and the Annual Delivery Plan for 2013-14 included an ambitious and diverse programme of activities intended to support the local economy. In late 2013, the Council adopted a new 10-year Economic and Community Ambition Strategy (ECAS) that superseded some aspects of the Delivery Plan and refocused resources on a narrower set of economy-related activities. These changes, together with an additional in-year re-prioritisation of economy-related initiatives, make it difficult to compare progress and performance during 2013-14 against the Council's original intentions.
- 37 Nevertheless, the Council made good progress with some of its rescheduled economy-related activities, but overall performance during 2013-14 was inconsistent. Of the six priority Themes involved, the Council assessed the year-end status of three as 'Acceptable' and one as 'Good'. The other two priorities were assessed as 'Unknown' because the data needed to assess progress was not yet available. The Council expects to have more comprehensive data available from 2014-15 onwards to help demonstrate the impact of its activities. Of the 15 initiatives where economy-related activity took place during 2013-14, eight were on target, but seven were behind schedule.
- 38 Some of the activities completed or on target during 2013-14 - such as research into opportunities for social enterprises - had a relatively low profile, but others were highly visible. For example, a range of construction projects associated with the Rhyl Going Forward programme were underway or were completed during 2013-14, including an iconic new harbour bridge for cyclists and pedestrians and the construction of a hotel on the site of the former Honey Club in Rhyl.
- 39 Overall, 16 of the 31 ECAS-related activities originally scheduled for delivery in 2013-14 were either withdrawn or postponed. Some activities were withdrawn because responsibilities for delivery changed. For example, responsibility for producing a business case for the electrification of the North Wales coast rail line was withdrawn because the business case is now being coordinated by Welsh Government. Some other activities were postponed either because insufficient resources were available during 2013-14 or because further research was needed. For example, four of the six activities within the High Quality Skilled Workforce theme were postponed. With hindsight, the Council recognised that it needed a better understanding of the advanced skills needed by local and regional employers before tailoring its skills training.

- 40 The Council has established the Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board (the Board), comprising elected members and senior officers, with roles and responsibilities linked to the ECAS. The Board meets monthly and provides a strategic focus for the programme by directing, monitoring and co-ordinating economy-related activities. The Board's disciplined focus on priorities should help the Council to maintain – or where necessary, increase – the pace of activity and reduce the likelihood of project and programme slippage.
- 41 Following a review during 2014, the Board has strengthened its programme and project management arrangements. These now promote a more systematic approach to progress monitoring and reporting. Robust programme management and better management information promote good governance and should help the Board to make better-informed and more timely decisions.
- 42 The Board's 2014 review also prompted a restructuring of the Economic and Business Development Team to reflect the priorities and activities it is expected to deliver. Overall, the Council expects the restructuring exercise to contribute savings of about £200,000 to the budget savings target for 2016-17.
- 43 By the end of 2013-14, the Council was optimistic about the longer term prospects for its economic ambition priority. This was because many of the activities delivered during 2013-14 – such as mapping the regional growth locations to identify supply chain and job opportunities – provided the knowledge and infrastructure needed to target business support effectively. The Council's optimism also reflects activity during and since 2013 to strengthen the associated governance and programme management arrangements.

**The Council is making good progress in committing its Discretionary Housing Payments and improvements in monitoring since April 2015 will help to clarify their impact**

- 44 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 heralded a significant change to the administration and distribution of benefits and will have a major impact on many citizens. In April 2011, the UK Government embarked on a programme of reform, which will culminate with the phased introduction of Universal Credit between October 2013 and 2017. A major focus of the UK Government's plans are changes to housing benefit, which are aimed at reducing annual expenditure by around £2.3 billion. These changes will mean that millions of households in Great Britain will receive less in benefits.
- 45 In January 2015, the Auditor General for Wales published a report on how well councils were managing the impact of welfare reform changes on social housing tenants in Wales. The report reviewed the management and use of DHP by councils in Wales and concluded that the allocation, distribution, administration and use of these payments have significant inconsistencies and weaknesses. We followed up this work at individual councils.

- 46 Our review found that, in Denbighshire, the Council has clearly signposted DHP on its website and it is easy for customers to apply for assistance. The five-page DHP application form includes some additional supporting information on the Council's application process to assist customers in completing the form. However, the Council requires applicants to provide detailed information about their income and expenditure and we consider this may discourage vulnerable people from applying for DHP because it could be seen as onerous and off-putting. The Council also has no adopted policy for DHP and it is not clear how the Council uses these resources to assist people to reduce the impact of welfare reform changes such as the Spare Room Subsidy or benefit cap.
- 47 The Council has systems in place to monitor the amount spent against the amount of money provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, and the budget remaining to assist applicants. The Council also monitors the speed of processing applications as well as the number of customers that have been assisted. However, the Council does not monitor the number of landlords supported to ensure there is good coverage across all sectors and areas, nor does it monitor the impact of its DHP payments and how these resources have helped customers affected by the changes introduced under welfare reform and its impact on sustaining tenancies. The Council does monitor the reasons why an applicant requests a second DHP payment. By April 2015, most councils in Wales, including Denbighshire County Council, had implemented an agreement to adopt a uniform approach to the future distribution of DHP payments, in part to address the significant inconsistencies and weaknesses identified in our review.
- 48 At the end of November 2014, the Council had paid out £147,002 of its Department for Work and Pensions allocation of £202,519, which represents 72 per cent of its allocation. This indicates that the Council is trying to use DHP to support those who require help but needs to link DHP into a wider strategic welfare policy to demonstrate the impact of its work.

### Progress was made to improve compliance with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme

- 49 The role of the WLC was created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. New powers to impose standards on organisations came into force through subordinate legislation on 31 March 2015. The WLC will continue to review Welsh language schemes by virtue of powers inherited under the Welsh Language Act 1993.

- 50 The Commissioner works with all councils in Wales to inspect and advise on the implementation of language schemes. It is the responsibility of councils to provide services to the public in Welsh in accordance with the commitments in their language schemes. Every Council is required to provide an annual monitoring report to the Commissioner outlining its performance in implementing the language scheme. The Commissioner analyses every monitoring report, provides a formal response and collects further information as required.
- 51 The Commissioner reported that, during 2013-14, the Council commissioned an independent audit of the Welsh language in Denbighshire. A report was drawn up which submitted 90 recommendations to the authority. The Council intends to respond to the audit formally in 2015 and draw up an action plan. The Council has a number of other relevant initiatives. It has identified areas for improvement as a result of a mystery shopper report by Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych. The Council intends to formalise the work of monitoring third party contracts during 2014-15, leading to an annual report by the Purchasing Department. It intends to expand the mentoring scheme for Welsh learners to include more members of staff. Another aim is to identify language champions to promote the Welsh language throughout the organisation.

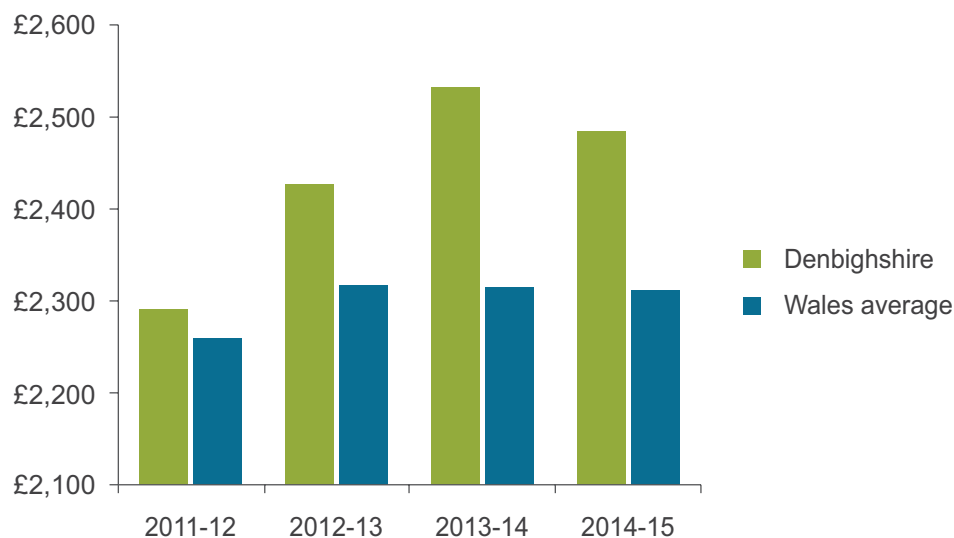
# Use of Resources

## The Council has good financial management arrangements with no immediate shortcomings

- 52 The Council has a good track record in delivering identified savings within year against the planned actions that it approved. The Council successfully identified, planned for and delivered a range of recurring and non-recurring savings required to meet the budget shortfall between 2011-12 and 2013-14. There were no unidentified savings that needed to be developed at the time the 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14 budgets were approved and the Council's planned reductions and savings were achieved in all three years. The Council's corporate framework for strategic financial planning is effective and supports delivery of the corporate visions and the Council's aims and improvement objectives.
- 53 The Council has a number of policies supporting its financial planning arrangements, with responsibilities set out in respect of budget setting, monitoring and reporting. The Council has a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which is cross-referenced to its Improvement Objectives. The MTFP covers a five-year period. The 2014 version sets out how the remaining savings gap is to be addressed in 2015-16 and beyond, although the lack of clarity about short and medium-term future levels of Welsh Government funding hinders the Council in its planning process.
- 54 The Council's approach to setting its revenue budget has been to reduce costs incrementally, based on saving proposals from services and corporate budgets. The process has worked well in the past but the Council recognises that this approach has now run its course. For 2015-16, services are being reviewed under a Freedoms and Flexibilities programme to achieve a target of £12 million savings over the next two years. This is the most significant change to the budget process and will focus on what a service does and how much it costs, and attempt to analyse whether service provision is statutory, aligned to a corporate priority or discretionary.
- 55 The Council's financial management and control arrangements are robust and are being managed effectively. The Council's Financial Regulations include a section on budgets, covering financial planning and budgeting; budgetary control; virement and exceptional supplementary budgets. The responsibility for setting the Council's Budget is the sole responsibility of Members, after advice from Officers of the Council. This is a statutory responsibility. The Council must set a balanced budget and there must be sufficient funding available in the financial year concerned to match the expected level of expenditure. Members determine the allocation of resources between Directorates, resource centres and the associated policies. In conjunction with the Head of Finance and Assets, individual Directors are responsible for the more detailed aspects of budget setting.

- 56 A new forecasting, monitoring and reporting system has been put in place. This is called Collaborative Planning. It ensures a more consistent approach to budgetary control across the Council by collating budgetary information onto an on-line system and reducing the need for the use of various spreadsheets within different service departments. Cabinet receives a monthly budget report. The reports show the projected outturn for the year (rather than the position at a particular point in time) compared to the original budget. These reports contain details of any significant variation in spend coupled with corrective action.
- 57 The Council's 2014-15 savings and efficiencies plans are fit for purpose, are being effectively managed and are likely to be achieved. Efficiency savings plans had been developed for 2014-15 across all Council departments. The plans include clear descriptions of where savings would be made. Planned savings are monitored as an expression of how much of the annual savings have been achieved to date. Over the last three years, over 90 per cent of the required savings were achieved by the end of the second quarter. Half-yearly budget reports are presented to the full Council with any shortfall in savings reported by the Cabinet to the next full Council meeting.
- 58 The Council's 2014-15 Savings Plan takes appropriate and relevant account of the future financial pressures the Council faces. Despite a very challenging grant settlement from the Welsh Government, the Council set a balanced budget for 2014-15 which included a 3.5 per cent increase in council tax and savings of £8.5 million. The Council is also identifying further efficiency savings and prioritising possible cuts to services.
- 59 The Council forecasts that additional savings of at least £17.1 million will be required during 2015-16 and 2016-17. When setting its 2015-16 budget, the Council identified savings of £7.3 million, increased Council Tax by three per cent and funded the remaining shortfall of £0.5 million from general balances.
- 60 **Exhibit 1** below compares the Council's planned gross revenue expenditure (net of income) per head of population over the last four years with the average for councils across Wales.

### Exhibit 1 – Gross revenue expenditure (net of income) per head of population



Source: Stats Wales

- 61 The graph shows that expenditure per head in Denbighshire was well above the Wales average in each of the three years prior to 2014-15. This reflects mainly the factors such as deprivation and rurality that influence the Welsh Government's distribution formula for Revenue Support Grant. However, the 2011 Census also revealed that previous population projections, on which funding levels had been based, had over-estimated the population of Denbighshire. As a result, expenditure per head appears to have increased by significantly more than the increase in the Wales average since 2012-13. Since 2011-12, we calculate that spend per head has increased by two per cent in real terms in Denbighshire compared with an average three per cent reduction across Wales.
- 62 We include in [Appendix 6](#) some information about the distribution of the Council's financial resources in 2013-14 and about trends in the Council's gross revenue expenditure and income since 2008-09. The data are drawn from the Council's Statements of Accounts.
- 63 As in all councils, the costs of education and social care form a high proportion of the Council's expenditure. A little under half its gross income for 2013-14 derived from Revenue Support Grant (36.8 per cent) and Non-Domestic Rates (8.7 per cent). These are income sources over which the Council has no control, and Revenue Support Grant is falling. Income from Non-Domestic Rates, at 8.7 per cent of total income, formed a lower than average proportion of total income. In Denbighshire, 'other income' (including fees and charges) represented 39 per cent of the Council's income for 2013-14, a little above the Wales average of 37 per cent.



# Governance

## The Council's risk management arrangements are robust and fit for purpose

- 64 Risk management arrangements continue to strengthen, with active roles taken by Heads of Service, Cabinet and the Corporate Governance Committee. These various groups all work together to understand and manage risk, enabling forward work plans for both scrutiny and Cabinet to have a strong focus on addressing risk issues.
- 65 The Council has recognised the importance of managing risk and a corporate risk register with supporting guidance is in place. Key risks are identified and assessed as high, medium, or low. The Council has endorsed the risk management strategy and corporate risk register and has regard to it when allocating resources. Cabinet has agreed that it should consider updates to the corporate risk register every six months. Individual service areas produce their own risk registers, which they consider alongside their service improvement plans.
- 66 Risk management is seen as a high priority in all service areas and risks are managed at a project and corporate level. The corporate risk register contains a timeframe covering the period when the risks could mature. The process for monitoring how each of the services manages its risks is consistent and accountability arrangements are clear. Risks are well managed on large individual projects and are directly managed by the head of service if it is considered that there is an additional greater corporate risk.
- 67 All decision making is documented, including where it is decided not to include low-level risks in the registers, but the new online system for monitoring risk management has not yet been subject to testing by Internal Audit to confirm that adequate audit trails and controls are in place and that they work. The risk management strategy does not stipulate the minimum frequency for the review of service-level risk registers and it is not clear at a service level if all registers are being reviewed with the same frequency.
- 68 The Council's Corporate Governance Committee plays an appropriate role in ensuring that there are suitable processes in place for the identification and management of risks to assist with its role and the development of the Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement sets out clearly how risks are managed and monitored. There are processes to capture new accepted risks but there are no mandatory checks that all service risk registers have considered whether any service risks need to be considered by the Cabinet for inclusion as a corporate risk.

## The Council produces well informed balanced evaluations of its performance

- 69 The Council's Service Challenge arrangements continue to provide elected Members and managers with comprehensive and detailed position statements drawing on the available performance data and on the progress of major projects. Senior staff and elected Members subsequently challenge the service's position statement and allow officers to set service performance in the context of known risks, and to narrow the focus of the subsequent challenge meeting to those matters that are most relevant. As we noted in last year's Annual Improvement Report the service challenges form an important strand in the Council's self evaluation process, enabling senior managers and elected Members to understand more fully how well each service is performing against targets and in the national context, and to identify what needs to be done in areas that are performing less well.
- 70 The Council has met its improvement reporting duties under the Measure and the Auditor General's November 2014 **Improvement Assessment Certificate** ([Appendix 3](#)) concluded that the Council had discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure. In particular:
- a the Council had published an assessment of its performance during 2013-14 in its **Annual Performance Report 2013/14** (the Report) before 31 October 2014;
  - b the Report assessed the Council's performance in the preceding financial year (2013-14) and set out how the Council had sought to discharge its duties under the Measure;
  - c the Report evaluated the Council's success in achieving its improvement objectives and expresses its view clearly;
  - d the Report included a short section for citizens who wanted to provide feedback or make comments on the Report;
  - e the Report included details of performance and comparisons as measured by the national statutory performance indicators; and
  - f the Report included a short section on the ways in which the Council had sought to collaborate.

# Appendix 1 – Status of this report

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) requires the Auditor General to undertake an annual improvement assessment, and to publish an annual improvement report, for each improvement authority in Wales. This requirement covers local councils, national parks and fire and rescue authorities.

This report has been produced by staff of the Wales Audit Office on behalf of the Auditor General to discharge his duties under section 24 of the Measure. The report also discharges his duties under section 19 to issue a report certifying that he has carried out an improvement assessment under section 18 and stating whether, as a result of his improvement plan audit under section 17, he believes that the authority has discharged its improvement planning duties under section 15.

Improvement authorities are under a general duty to ‘make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of [their] functions’. Improvement authorities are defined as local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue authorities.

The annual improvement assessment is the main piece of work that enables the Auditor General to fulfil his duties. The improvement assessment is a forward-looking assessment of an authority’s likelihood to comply with its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement. It also includes a retrospective assessment of whether an authority has achieved its planned improvements in order to inform a view as to the authority’s track record of improvement. The Auditor General will summarise his audit and assessment work in a published annual improvement report for each authority (under section 24).

The Auditor General may also, in some circumstances, carry out special inspections (under section 21), which will be reported to the authority and Ministers, and which he may publish (under section 22). An important ancillary activity for the Auditor General is the co-ordination of assessment and regulatory work (required by section 23), which takes into consideration the overall programme of work of all relevant regulators at an improvement authority. The Auditor General may also take account of information shared by relevant regulators (under section 33) in his assessments.

# Appendix 2 – Audit of Denbighshire County Council’s 2014-15 Improvement Plan

## Certificate

I certify that I have audited Denbighshire County Council’s (the Council) Improvement Plan in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

## Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan describing its plans to discharge its duties to:

- make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- make arrangements to secure achievement of its improvement objectives; and
- make arrangements to exercise its functions so that any performance standard specified by Welsh Ministers is met.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its Improvement Plan as soon as is reasonably practicable after the start of the financial year to which it relates, or after such other date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Council is responsible for preparing the Improvement Plan and for the information set out within it. The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in preparing and publishing its plan.

As the Council’s auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit of the Improvement Plan, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties to prepare and publish an Improvement Plan in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

## Scope of the Improvement Plan audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information, or whether the Improvement Plan published by the Council can be achieved. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure will examine these issues. My audit of the Council's Improvement Plan, therefore, comprised a review of the plan to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the plan complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing its plan.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

Huw Vaughan Thomas  
**Auditor General for Wales**

CC: Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Local Government and Government Business  
Huw Lloyd Jones, Manager, Wales Audit Office  
Gwilym Bury, Performance Audit Lead, Wales Audit Office

# Appendix 3 – Audit of Denbighshire County Council’s Assessment of 2013-14 Performance

## Certificate

I certify that I have audited Denbighshire County Council’s (the Council) assessment of its performance in 2013-14 in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 (the Measure) and my Code of Audit Practice.

As a result of my audit, I believe that the Council has discharged its duties under sections 15(2), (3), (8) and (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

## Respective responsibilities of the Council and the Auditor General

Under the Measure, the Council is required to annually publish an assessment which describes its performance:

- in discharging its duty to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions;
- in meeting the improvement objectives it has set itself;
- by reference to performance indicators specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance indicators; and
- in meeting any performance standards specified by Welsh Ministers, and self-imposed performance standards.

The Measure requires the Council to publish its assessment before 31 October in the financial year following that to which the information relates, or by any other such date as Welsh Ministers may specify by order.

The Measure requires that the Council has regard to guidance issued by Welsh Ministers in publishing its assessment.

As the Council’s auditor, I am required under sections 17 and 19 of the Measure to carry out an audit to determine whether the Council has discharged its duty to publish an assessment of performance, to certify that I have done so, and to report whether I believe that the Council has discharged its duties in accordance with statutory requirements set out in section 15 and statutory guidance.

## Scope of the audit

For the purposes of my audit work I will accept that, provided an authority meets its statutory requirements, it will also have complied with Welsh Government statutory guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.

For this audit I am not required to form a view on the completeness or accuracy of information. Other assessment work that I will undertake under section 18 of the Measure may examine these issues. My audit of the Council's assessment of performance, therefore, comprised a review of the Council's publication to ascertain whether it included elements prescribed in legislation. I also assessed whether the arrangements for publishing the assessment complied with the requirements of the legislation, and that the Council had regard to statutory guidance in preparing and publishing it.

The work I have carried out in order to report and make recommendations in accordance with sections 17 and 19 of the Measure cannot solely be relied upon to identify all weaknesses or opportunities for improvement.

Huw Vaughan Thomas  
**Auditor General For Wales**

CC: Leighton Andrews, Minister for Public Services  
Huw Lloyd Jones, Manager, Wales Audit Office  
Gwilym Bury, Performance Audit Lead, Wales Audit Office

# Appendix 4 – Annual Audit Letter

Councillor Hugh Evans – Leader  
Dr. Mohammed Mehmet – Chief Executive  
Denbighshire County Council  
County Hall  
Wynnstay Road  
Ruthin  
Denbighshire  
LL15 1YN

Dear Councillor Evans and Dr Mehmet

## **Annual Audit Letter – Denbighshire County Council 2013-14**

This letter summarises the key messages arising from my statutory responsibilities under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 as the Appointed Auditor and my reporting responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice.

### **The Council complied with its responsibilities relating to financial reporting and use of resources**

It is Denbighshire County Council's (the Council) responsibility to:

- put systems of internal control in place to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions and to ensure that its assets are secure;
- maintain proper accounting records;
- prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with relevant requirements; and
- establish and keep under review appropriate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 requires me to:

- provide an audit opinion on the accounting statements;
- review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- issue a certificate confirming that I have completed the audit of the accounts.

Local authorities in Wales prepare their accounting statements in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. This code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards. On 30 September 2014, I issued an unqualified audit opinion on the accounting statements confirming that they present a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and transactions. My report is contained within the Statement of Accounts. The key matters arising from the accounts audit were reported to members of the Corporate Governance Committee in my Audit of Financial Statements report on 29 September 2014. This report also included a number of additional matters to help the Council further strengthen its systems of internal control.



**I am satisfied that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources**

My consideration of the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness has been based on the audit work undertaken on the accounts as well as placing reliance on the work completed as part of the Improvement Assessment under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Auditor General will highlight areas where the effectiveness of these arrangements has yet to be demonstrated or where improvements could be made when he publishes his Annual Improvement Report.

I issued a certificate confirming that the audit of the accounts has been completed on 30 September 2014.

**My work to date on certification of grant claims and returns has not identified significant issues that would impact on the 2014-15 accounts or key financial systems**

My ongoing work on the certification of grant claims and return has not identified any issues to date in relation to the accounts and/or key financial systems. I will report any key issues to the Head of Finance once this year's programme of certification work is complete.

The financial audit fee for 2013-14 is currently expected to be in line with the agreed fee set out in the Annual Audit Outline.

Yours sincerely

Derwyn Owen  
**For and on behalf of the Appointed Auditor**

## Appendix 5 – National report recommendations 2014-15

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
May 2014	Good Scrutiny? Good Question!	R1 Clarify the role of executive members and senior officers in contributing to scrutiny.
		R2 Ensure that scrutiny members, and specifically scrutiny chairs, receive training and support to fully equip them with the skills required to undertake effective scrutiny.
		R3 Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a clear rationale for topic selection;</li> <li>• be more outcome focused;</li> <li>• ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired; and</li> <li>• align scrutiny programmes with the council's performance management, self-evaluation and improvement arrangements.</li> </ul>
		R4 Ensure that scrutiny draws effectively on the work of audit, inspection and regulation and that its activities are complementary with the work of external review bodies.
		R5 Ensure that the impact of scrutiny is properly evaluated and acted upon to improve the function's effectiveness; including following up on proposed actions and examining outcomes.
		R6 Undertake regular self-evaluation of scrutiny utilising the 'outcomes and characteristics of effective local government overview and scrutiny' developed by the Wales Scrutiny Officers' Network.
		R7 Implement scrutiny improvement action plans developed from the Wales Audit Office improvement study.
		R8 Adopt Participation Cymru's 10 Principles for Public Engagement in improving the way scrutiny engages with the public and stakeholders.

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
July 2014	Young people not in education, employment or training - Findings from a review of councils in Wales	<p>R1 Together with partners, map and review expenditure on NEETs services to better understand the resources required to deliver the Framework.</p> <p>R2 Clarify their strategic approach to reducing the proportion of 19 to 24 year olds who are NEET as well as their approach for 16 to 18 year olds.</p> <p>R3 Focus on young people with significant or multiple barriers to engaging with education, employment or training rather than those who are more likely to re-engage without significant additional support.</p> <p>R4 Develop their objectives and targets for reducing the number of young people NEET so that they can be held to account and their work aligns with the Welsh Government's targets and objectives.</p> <p>R5 Ensure that elected members and partners fully understand that councils have a clear responsibility for leading and co-ordinating youth services for 16 to 24 year olds.</p> <p>R6 Improve the evaluation of the effectiveness and relative value for money of the services and interventions in their area that are intended to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET.</p>

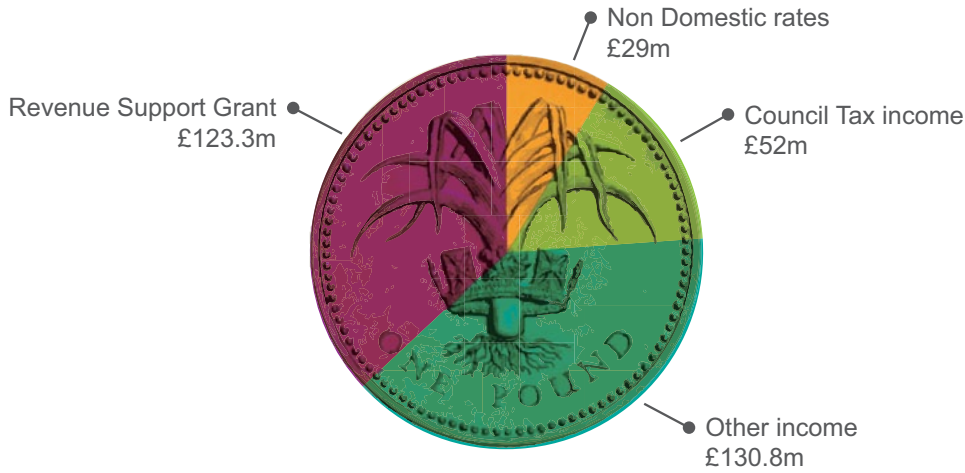
Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
October 2014	<b>Delivering with less – the impact on environmental health services and citizens</b>	<p>R1 Revise the best practice standards to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• align the work of environmental health with national strategic priorities;</li> <li>• identify the wider contribution of environmental health in delivering strategic priorities of the Welsh Government; and</li> <li>• identify the benefit and impact of environmental health services on protecting citizens.</li> </ul> <p>R2 Provide scrutiny chairs and members with the necessary skills and support to effectively scrutinise and challenge service performance, savings plans and the impact of budget reductions.</p> <p>R3 Improve engagement with local residents over planned budget cuts and changes in services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consulting with residents on planned changes in services and using the findings to shape decisions;</li> <li>• outlining which services are to be cut and how these cuts will impact on residents; and</li> <li>• setting out plans for increasing charges or changing standards of service.</li> </ul> <p>R4 Improve efficiency and value for money by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the statutory and non-statutory duties of council environmental health services.</li> <li>• Agreeing environmental health priorities for the future and the role of councils in delivering these.</li> <li>• Determining an 'acceptable standard of performance' for environmental health services (upper and lower) and publicise these to citizens.</li> <li>• Improving efficiency and maintaining performance to the agreed level through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– collaborating and/or integrating with others to reduce cost and/or improve quality;</li> <li>– outsourcing where services can be delivered more cost effectively to agreed standards;</li> <li>– introducing and/or increasing charges and focusing on income-generation activity;</li> <li>– using grants strategically to maximise impact and return; and</li> <li>– reducing activities to focus on core statutory and strategic priorities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>R5 Improve strategic planning by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identifying, collecting and analysing financial, performance and demand/need data on environmental health services;</li> <li>• analysing collected data to inform and understand the relationship between 'cost: benefit: impact' and use this intelligence to underpin decisions on the future of council environmental health services; and</li> <li>• agree how digital information can be used to plan and develop environmental health services in the future.</li> </ul>

Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2015	<b>Managing the Impact of Welfare Reform Changes on Social Housing Tenants in Wales</b>	<p>R1 Improve strategic planning and better co-ordinate activity to tackle the impact of welfare reform on social-housing tenants by ensuring comprehensive action plans are in place that cover the work of all relevant council departments, housing associations and the work of external stakeholders.</p>
		<p>R2 Improve governance and accountability for welfare reform by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appointing member and officer leads to take responsibility for strategic leadership on welfare reform and be accountable for performance; and</li> <li>• ensuring members receive adequate training and regular briefings on welfare reform to be able to challenge and scrutinise performance and decisions.</li> </ul>
		<p>R3 Ensure effective management of performance on welfare reform by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• setting appropriate measures to enable members, officers and the public to judge progress in delivering actions;</li> <li>• ensuring performance information covers the work of all relevant agencies and especially housing associations; and</li> <li>• establishing measures to judge the wider impact of welfare reform.</li> </ul>
		<p>R4 Strengthen how welfare-reform risks are managed by creating a single corporate-level approach that co ordinates activity across the Council and the work of others to provide adequate assurance that all the necessary and appropriate actions to mitigate risk are taking place.</p>
		<p>R5 Improve engagement with tenants affected by the removal of the spare-room subsidy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the provision of regular advice and information on the options open to them to address the financial impact of the change in their circumstances;</li> <li>• the promotion of the ‘Your benefits are changing’ helpline; and</li> <li>• the provision of support to tenants specifically affected by the removal of the spare-room subsidy to participate in regional/national employment schemes.</li> </ul>

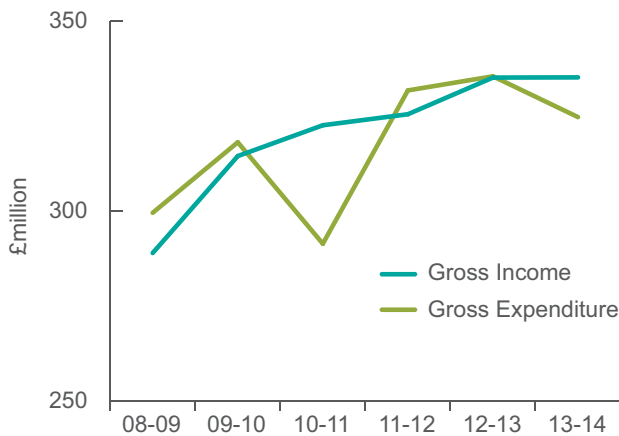
Date of report	Title of review	Recommendation
January 2015	<p><b>Managing the Impact of Welfare Reform Changes on Social Housing Tenants in Wales</b></p>	<p>R7 Improve management, access to and use of Discretionary Housing Payments by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing a clear policy or guide that is available in hard copy and online to the public that sets out the Council's policy and arrangements for administering Discretionary Housing Payments;</li> <li>• clearly defining eligible and non-eligible housing costs covered by Discretionary Housing Payments in application forms, policy documentation and applicant guidance leaflets;</li> <li>• clearly setting out the maximum/minimum length of time that such payments will be provided;</li> <li>• setting and publishing the timescale for the Council making a decision on Discretionary Housing Payments applications;</li> <li>• including information within public literature on the Council's policy for right to review or appeal of a decision and the timescales and process to be followed in deciding on these; and</li> <li>• clearly define the priority groups for Discretionary Housing Payments in public literature to ensure that those seeking assistance, and those agencies supporting them, can assess whether such payments are a viable option to address their housing and financial needs.</li> </ul>

# Appendix 6 – Information about Denbighshire County Council’s resources

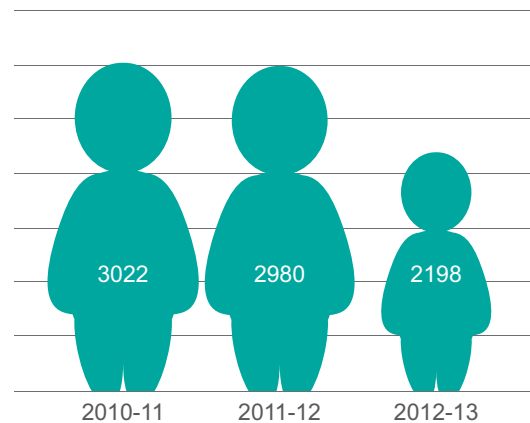
Total Gross Income 2013-14



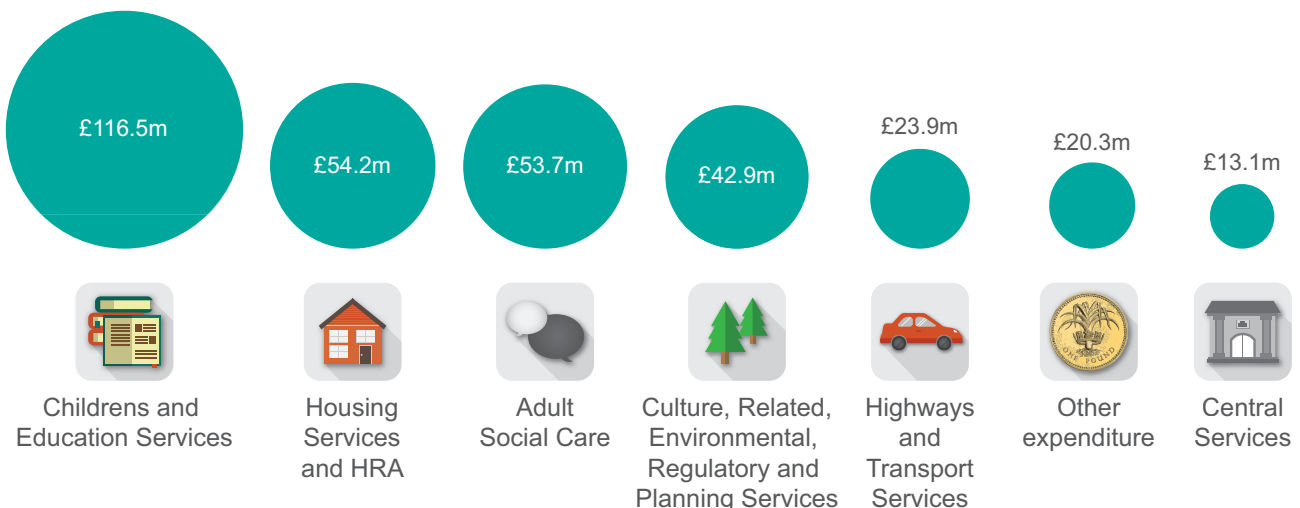
Total Income and Expenditure



Number of whole time equivalent staff 2010-11 to 2012-13



Total Gross Expenditure by service area



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**Report To:** County Council

**Date of Meeting:** 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015

**Lead Member / Officer:** Cllr Bobby Feeley/Phil Gilroy

**Report Author:** Sandra Jones, Older People Strategy Development Officer

**Title:** Ageing Well in Denbighshire

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## **1. What is the report about?**

This report describes the requirement to produce an Ageing Well Plan for Denbighshire, in accordance with Guidance received from the office of the Commissioner for Older People in Wales.

The Ageing Well in Wales Programme was formally launched in October 2014 as a five year partnership of national and local government and major public and third sector agencies in Wales. The Programme is hosted and chaired by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. The first Programme of its kind in the UK, the Ageing Well in Wales Programme contributes to and complements the Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People (Phase 3) 2013-2023. The Programme's overall aim is to ensure that, within Wales, "there is an improvement in the wellbeing of people aged 50 and over".

Denbighshire's Ageing Well Plan sets out how the five priority themes of the Ageing Well in Wales programme will be delivered in Denbighshire. The five themes are: Age Friendly Communities, Dementia Supportive Communities, Falls Prevention, Opportunities for Employment, Learning & New Skills, Loneliness and Isolation.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information regarding Denbighshire's Ageing Well Plan and to seek the County Council's endorsement of it. This Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That Denbighshire County Council considers this Ageing Well Plan and supports its implementation.

## **4. Report details.**

In common with other local authority areas, the population of Denbighshire is ageing and this has major implications for all services, particularly Health and Social Care services. There needs to be full corporate ownership of the key issues around the needs of the older population and how they should be addressed in future. We have produced a Strategy for Supporting Independence in Denbighshire (SID) which

recognises the importance of this agenda and our Ageing Well Plan is a key part of the Strategy.

Both SID and the Ageing Well Plan require a major focus on early intervention and prevention and these are also key themes of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, which is coming into force in April 2016. There is general recognition that we need to move away from the traditional way of providing services, which created an over reliance on statutory services and work with our partners in developing a range of initiatives which do far more to support people within their own communities. There is an important requirement to encourage preventative measures at earlier stages and working with communities to enable them to become more supportive of older people.

Each Local Authority in Wales is required to develop an Ageing Well Plan which has to be submitted to the Welsh Government and the Commissioner for Older People in Wales by October 2015. The Commissioner intends to monitor the implementation of all local plans and she will provide an independent report on the local (and national) achievements against outcomes. This is therefore a high profile requirement which we have to deliver as effectively as possible with the support of our key partners.

## 5. The Five Themes

**a. Age Friendly Communities:** The aim is to meet the needs of older people, and people of all ages, in each individual community by responding directly to their needs. Such communities are expected to encourage and enable older people to engage with their surroundings and environment, and continue to engage socially within those communities, thereby maintaining their health, independence and wellbeing.

**b. Falls Prevention:** Falls have a major impact on needs for Health and Social Care services and are often a key factor in both hospital admissions and residential care admissions. It is therefore imperative to have a range of measures in place which prevent falls and help older people to live longer in their own homes and remain active in their communities.

**c. Dementia Supportive Communities:** The ideal is for all communities to demonstrate a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia. One third of people who are aged over 65 are likely to suffer from dementia which means that all families are likely to be affected by it. According to the Older People Commissioner, *"the focus ... needs to be on making our communities truly dementia supportive, so that people can live well with dementia"*.

**d. Opportunities for employment, learning and new skills:** Older people have a wealth of knowledge and experience which is often underappreciated and undervalued. Tackling age discrimination and recognising the value and worth of older people to the local economy in Denbighshire is of critical importance and more needs to be done to enable older people to access employment and learning opportunities.

**e. Loneliness and Isolation:** These have been shown to have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Eradicating loneliness and isolation may be unrealistic, but we need to work at all levels in identifying and tackling the root causes.

## **6. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The Ageing Well Plan will contribute to the implementation of Denbighshire's Wellbeing Plan 2014-2018 and also to the Council's Priorities within the Corporate Plan 2012 – 2017. Both of these refer to the importance of supporting people to live independently

## **7. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

We envisage that early intervention and prevention initiatives for older people will be strengthened through the implementation of this Plan and this should lead to a reduction in demand for statutory services and consequently, in costs of services.

## **8. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out. See Appendix 2

The main conclusions are that there will be no negative implications for people sharing protected characteristics.

## **9. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Consultation has been carried out with Denbighshire's Older People's Reference Group (OPRG), Age Connect North Wales Central's Over 50s Forums and the My Life, My Way group.

## **10. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

It is envisaged that the Ageing Well Plan for Denbighshire will lead to early intervention and prevention measures which should lead to a reduction in projected demand in statutory services going forward. Any direct costs arising from the Plan will need to be contained within existing budgets.

## **11. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

If unsupported Denbighshire would not meet our directive from the Commissioner for Older people in Wales Office regarding local Ageing Well plans and the Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales.

## **12. Power to make the Decision**

It is a requirement by the Commissioner for Older People in Wales that each Local Authority produces an Ageing Well Plan by October 2015.

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# Denbighshire's Ageing Well Plan 2015/2019

*Ensuring Denbighshire is a good place to grow older for  
everyone*



## Foreword

Cllr Bobby Feeley – to follow

# Ageing Well in Denbighshire



## Introduction

This is Denbighshire's first **Ageing Well Plan** and it should be considered alongside both our Wellbeing Plan 2014 – 2018, which is our single overarching plan for Supporting Independence and Resilience and our Supporting Independence Strategy which is our key strategy for supporting the people within their community and preventing the need for statutory intervention.

Denbighshire's Wellbeing Plan 2014-2018 vision:

- ✓ People are active, connected and contribute to their community.
- ✓ People take notice of what's going on around them, and in doing so, people keep learning about their world
- ✓ People prioritise their wellbeing and actively plan to maintain their independence



This Ageing Well Plan sets out how the five priority themes of the [Ageing Well in Wales Programme](#) will be delivered in Denbighshire. The five themes are: Age Friendly Communities, Dementia Supportive Communities, Falls Prevention, Opportunities for Employment, Learning & New Skills, Loneliness and Isolation. The Plan can only be delivered effectively if we can do more on a partnership basis to enable people maintain their own health and wellbeing as they become older.

*“There is much that individuals can do to maintain their own health and overall wellbeing, but much more is required if we want Wales to be a good place to grow older. Public services, the third sector, the commercial sector, national and local government and many others must work together, for example, to create age-friendly environments, opportunities for learning and employment and ensure that practical support is available to prevent loneliness and isolation. A joined-up approach is required that focuses on very clear outcomes, outcomes that reflect the biggest challenges faced by people to age well.”- **Sarah Rochira, Older Peoples Commissioner.***

The key elements of this Ageing Well Plan align with the Well-being outcomes within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which are intended to promote independence and give people a stronger voice and control. Together, they will promote equality, improve the quality of services and enhance access to the provision of information people receive. It will also encourage a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.

The following principles have been identified by the Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People in Wales (2013-2023) and we wish to adopt these in relation implementing this Ageing Well Plan and making Denbighshire a better place in which to grow older.

- **Social participation** – older people enjoy a better quality of life, have active social lives (if desired), and loneliness and unwanted social isolation is minimised. Older people are not subjected to abuse.
- **Diversity** – older people are not discriminated against because of their age, and do not experience multiple discrimination on account of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, or sexual orientation in addition to their age.

- **Access to information** – older people have access to information and advice about services and opportunities, and are not disadvantaged when accessing them.
- **Learning and activities** – older people have opportunities to be engaged in lifelong learning and other appropriate social activities
- **Healthy ageing** – older people enjoy good physical, mental and emotional health and well-being with the aim of being able to live independently for longer, with a better quality of life and continue to work and participate in their communities.
- **Shared spaces** – older people find public places welcoming, safe and accessible.
- **Living in the community** – older people are able to participate and contribute in their communities and access services and amenities.
- **Housing** - Older people have access to housing and services that supports their needs and promote independence.

- **Energy** – older people live in energy efficient homes and can afford to heat their homes to the temperature required to protect health.

The Ageing Well Programme's overall aim is to ensure that within Wales there is an improvement in the well-being of people aged 50+. The intention is to support and champion a positive attitude towards ageing and the benefits an ageing society brings and to ensure that older people have a strong voice that is listened and responded to.

We are committed to ensuring that this programme is implemented effectively in Denbighshire.

### **Local Context**

Denbighshire County Council has an overall population of 94,510 (2013 Mid-Year Estimates) with 40,445 aged 50 and above; more people across the whole of England and Wales are living past 100 – 7,090 in 2002 to 12,320 in 2012 (ONS mid-term data) and many people will spend as long or longer in retirement than in employment. Older people make important contributions to society as family members, carers, volunteers and as

active participants in the workforce and through contributing to society in other ways such as voting in elections for example.

See Appendix I for further information about Denbighshire's population

**This Ageing Well Plan has 5 key elements:**

**Age Friendly Communities** - Such communities will encourage and enable older people to engage with their surroundings and environment, and continue to engage socially within those communities, thereby maintaining their health, independence and wellbeing.

**Falls Prevention** - Will help older people to maintain their health, safety and wellbeing, live longer in their own homes and remain active in their communities.

**Dementia Supportive Communities** - Need to demonstrate a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia in all our communities.

**Opportunities for employment, learning and new skills** – Recognising that older people have a wealth of knowledge and experience which is often undervalued The aim is to increase the recognised value of older people through further learning, training employment and volunteering opportunities.

**Loneliness and Isolation** -They have been shown to have a significant impact on health and general wellbeing. Eradicating loneliness and isolation may be unrealistic but we need to work at all levels in identifying and the root causes.

**The following section provides more detail of each of these elements including; expected outcomes, key actions and priority tasks for 2015-2016.**

### Age Friendly Communities

#### Overarching Aim: To make Denbighshire a County of Age Friendly Communities

The World Health Organisation sums up an Age Friendly Community as follows: “An age-friendly city adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.”

In practice, an Age-Friendly community is one where local people have decided to prioritise better support to people as they age. This can include physical design, promoting better access and mobility, promoting people’s social engagement and developing support and relationships between the generations. The most important aspect is that it is an integrated approach to thinking about the places where people live and how best to promote older people’s wellbeing and engagement with their physical and social environments.

As part of the process for Wales to be recognised as an Age-Friendly Nation, Denbighshire is one of the 22 of Welsh Local Authorities which has signed up to the Dublin Declaration; showing our real commitment at a local level to creating communities that are inclusive and supportive for all, regardless of their age.

Denbighshire County Council signed the Dublin Declaration confirming its commitment to ongoing work and policy development around Age Friendly communities and participation in a co-ordinated network across Wales. It will also give recognition to the council's leadership and commitment to addressing the needs of older people. The Declaration also includes a pledge that where it is possible we will take forward action in the following areas:

- a. Awareness of older people
- b. Processes of citizen-centred engagement
- c. Urban spaces and public places
- d. Housing
- e. Public transport systems
- f. Participation in social and cultural life
- g. Employment and volunteering opportunities and lifelong learning
- h. Community support and health services

A number of these priority areas are already embedded within existing service activity and resources in Denbighshire, and reflect the County Council's commitment to improving the quality of life for older people in the county by providing quality services. This is evidenced through the priorities outlined in our Wellbeing Plan and Supporting Independence in Denbighshire Strategy (SID).

## Outcomes and Actions

### **1. The importance of Age-Friendly Communities is recognised at all levels throughout Denbighshire**

1.1. Support the creation of Age-Friendly Communities across Denbighshire.

1.2. Define what is meant by an Age-Friendly Community in a Denbighshire context and to formalise the recognition process our communities need to follow in order to be officially recognised as being Age-Friendly.

1.3. Establish Age-Friendly Champions in local communities.

### **2. The voices of all generations are heard and actively included in the creation and ongoing development of their Age-Friendly Communities.**



2.1. Actively promote the inclusion of all generations in discussions about their community, with particular reference to groups sharing protected characteristics.

2.2. Facilitate the development of shared public spaces (both physical and social) as an integral element of an Age-Friendly Community.

2.3. Support and encourage communities to identify and realise the assets (actual and potential) that contribute towards an Age-Friendly Community.

### **3. Denbighshire's Governance structures and processes support the development of Age-Friendly Communities and inter-generational practice.**

3.1. For Age-Friendly Communities to feature in key strategic planning documents in all Local Service Boards.

3.2. Develop information packs, training and development resources and learning networks for professionals, to embed the understanding and practice of Age-Friendly approaches in strategic planning and implementation.

3.3. Establish Age-Friendly Advocates within our Planning, Housing, Transport and Education departments.

## Priority Tasks 2015 -2016

- Develop 1 Intergenerational Age Friendly Community in Bodelwyddan via the Bodelwyddan Town Plan, where loneliness has been identified as a specific issue. Within the activity, explore development of befriending schemes and other opportunities to bring people together; for example setting up a My Life, My Way group, University of the Third Age (U3A), 50+ Forum.
- Actively promote the inclusion of all generations in discussions about their community, with particular reference to groups sharing protected characteristics for a shared understanding of what constitutes an Age Friendly Community.
- Work with Communities for All Ages UK, Age Connect North Wales Central and Denbighshire's community to produce 1 DVD for Denbighshire outlining characteristics of age friendly communities.
- Work with People to People/Pobl i Bobl in Corwen to support and encourage communities to identify and realise the assets (actual and potential) that contribute towards an Age-Friendly Community.
- Develop information packs, training and development resources and learning networks for professionals, to embed the understanding and practice of Age Friendly approaches in strategic planning and implementation
- Raise awareness of Age Friendly Communities with Local Authority service heads, partners (including Health, Town & Community Councils and Third Sector) to influence the creation of communities that are inclusive for all people regardless of age.
- Hold 1 full day Age Awareness Training event with Vocational Lead in Health, Workforce Development and Third Sector, providing opportunity for Denbighshire's older people to inform the programme and assist with the day as trainers.

## Falls Prevention

**Overarching aim:** To support older people to reduce their risk of falling, reducing the number of falls amongst older people in Wales.

Falls prevention is a key issue in the improvement of health and wellbeing amongst older people. Falls are a major cause of disability and death in older people in Wales, and result in significant human costs in terms of pain, loss of confidence and independence. It is estimated that between 230,000 and 460,000 people over the age of 60 fall in Wales each year. Between 11,500 and 45,900 of these suffer serious injury: fracture, head injury, or serious laceration. The work of the Falls Prevention network will help older people to maintain their health and wellbeing, live longer in their own homes and remain active in their communities.

There is also significant financial cost to health and social care services associated with dealing with the results of falls. Falls are estimated to cost the NHS in the UK more than £2.3billion per year<sup>14</sup>. Evidence suggests that falls prevention can reduce the number of falls by between 15% and 30%, and that well organised services, based on national standards and evidence-based guidelines, can prevent falls and reduce death and disability from fractures.

A number of substantial national and local initiatives are underway in Wales to address the issue of falls, ranging from prevention through to treatment. Whilst the 1000 Lives Multiagency Falls Collaborative for Wales focuses

on those who have already fallen, the falls prevention network of Ageing Well in Wales will address early intervention for those older people at risk of falling for the first time. The network and any development and delivery of falls prevention services that result from the Programme will support an older person's wellbeing as well as addressing specific identified risk factors for falls. This work will link with Public Health Wales' Transforming Health Improvement Programme which is looking at evidence-based interventions on key topic areas across the life course

## Outcomes and Actions

### 1. Older people and their carers are aware of the preventable causes of falling and know how to reduce their risk.

1.1. Work with older people and their carers to develop **increased awareness of the risk of falls, and** promote the value of early intervention and prevention to reduce the risk of falling.

1.2 Explore with our partners what interventions that can be delivered by professionals and volunteers to raise awareness of falls risk and preventive measures with individual older people and their carers.

### 2. Current levels of early identification and preventive interventions are mapped and assessed to inform future development.

2.1. Implement available guidance to assist with:

- early identification of risk,
- developments of risk assessment tools
- development of appropriate interventions in all settings
- development of preventive interventions including ,falls prevention exercise classes, home safety checks, installations and modifications, medication reviews, low vision assessments and sight tests, and footcare.

2.2 Develop local audit/mapping of local services in these areas

2.3. Identify barriers to the availability of interventions outlined in 2.1 and work with partners to seek solutions and increase provision, ensuring that interventions are evidence based and evaluated

### **3. Falls prevention is integrated into other older people's health and social care programmes as part of a wider 'ageing well' approach.**

3.1. Collaborate with other local programmes such as those on frailty, dementia, concussion and chronic conditions, to develop complementary/integrated approaches and protocols in relation to risk assessments and interventions.

3.2. Promote access to and strengthening of community based opportunities, such as Ageing Well clubs, to support healthy ageing and as key exit routes for maintaining and improving health and strength after discharge from formal falls services.

3.3. Work with the providers of community healthy ageing clubs, classes and events to support the development of evidence based activities.

#### Priority Tasks 2015 -2016

- Reduce number of falls through promotion of the Falls Prevention Strategy; raising awareness of the risks of falls amongst older people and prevention.
- Work with Falls coordinator in Denbighshire to promote falls awareness amongst older people through dissemination of Falls Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) leaflet.
- Increase number of people identified at risk of falls through partnership work. For example SPoA officer and Fire Service officers are trained in use of FRAT as part of Home Safety Assessment.
- Work with partners to increase numbers of community settings where interventions can be carried out rather than Leisure Centre bases
- Collaborate with other national programmes such as those on frailty, dementia, chronic conditions for example to develop integrated approaches in relation to interventions
- Promote access to and strengthening of local community based opportunities (such as Age Connect NW Central toe nail cutting service, Fire Service, Care & Repair and so on) to support health ageing as part of key exit routes after discharge from formal falls service

## Dementia Supportive Communities

**Overarching Aim: To make Wales a dementia supportive nation by building and promoting dementia supportive communities**

Statistics from the Alzheimer's Society show that of those living with dementia in the UK, 84% live in England, 8% in Scotland, 5% in Wales and 2% in Northern Ireland. If the prevalence of dementia remains the same, the number of people with dementia in the UK is forecast to increase to 1,142,677 by 2025 and 2,092,945 by 2051, an increase of 40% over the next 12 years and of 156% over the next 38 years.

Developing dementia supportive communities is crucial to the wellbeing of older people, especially the thousands of people living with dementia, regardless of official diagnosis, and the people around them that are also affected.

People affected by dementia talk about the everyday challenges they face in living well with dementia. This can include difficulty using technology, getting appropriate service in shops, banks and post offices, using transport, going on holiday and maintaining social contact and hobbies. Although help from health and care services is

vitaly important, making it possible for people affected by dementia to live well will require help from people and organisations across society

A dementia supportive community is any community that shows a high level of public awareness and understanding of dementia (for example, a local or national organisation such as a shop, bank or corporation, or a village, town or city). Such communities are more inclusive of people with dementia, and improve their ability to remain independent and have voice, choice and control over their lives. Creating dementia supportive communities requires a social movement: one that mobilises all sections of society to act, respond and give their time, inspired by the ambition to make their community more dementia friendly.

As emphasised by the Welsh Government's National Dementia Vision for Wales, people who receive an early diagnosis of dementia and are given access to appropriate information, support and care, are able to live well with dementia. The Dementia Supportive Communities network will work to facilitate this and encourage the development of communities and have the capacity to support people affected by dementia so they can enjoy the best possible quality of life.

The network recognises that it is not only the individual who is affected by dementia, it also impacts on their family, friends, colleagues and carers. Ageing Well in Wales therefore uses the term 'people affected by dementia' to recognise the wider effects



## Outcomes and Actions

### **1. Denbighshire is an environment where people affected by dementia feel confident, valued and understood.**

- 1.1. Engage with people affected by dementia to identify what constitutes a 'dementia supportive community' and disseminate best practice examples.
- 1.2. Work with partners to further develop and adopt a national recognition process for 'Dementia Friendly' community and commercial businesses and organisations.
- 1.3. Establish a compendium of organisations, dementia action alliances and communities in Denbighshire that are working towards being recognised as dementia supportive/friendly.

### **2. People affected by dementia in Denbighshire note an improvement in the timely identification of dementia and support provided before, during and after identification.**

- 2.1. Work with professional bodies, organisations and community groups to improve assessment, diagnosis and care.
- 2.2. Identify current support available to people affected by dementia, as well as gaps in provision.
- 2.3. Identify and promote current and future opportunities for prevention.

### **3. Enhanced and extended education, training, information and advice around dementia is established.**

- 3.1. Promote positive images of people affected by dementia to drive attitudinal change.
- 3.2. Ensure engagement of public services, such as housing and transport, with the dementia agenda.
- 3.3. Promote awareness and understanding of dementia and the issues people affected by dementia face

## Priority Tasks 2015 -2016

- Establish a compendium of organisations, dementia action alliances and communities in Denbighshire that are working towards being recognised as dementia supportive/friendly.
- Identify and promote current and future opportunities for prevention
- Health: Promote uptake of mandatory e-learning package for all staff on Dementia Awareness within health (BCU)
- Leisure Services: Raise awareness and understanding of Dementia through commissioned play (The “D Word)
- Health: Develop Dementia Safe Environments within Community Hospitals
- Promote use of Dementia RED Care Information Points at GP Surgeries.
- Assist and promote Alzheimer’s Society’s recruitment of Support Volunteers to raise awareness of dementia.
- EMH Project Groups: continue to work to ensure that Dementia becomes ‘everybody’s business’ and that the dementia friendly communities are strengthened. Continue to develop informal peer to peer support within the groups.
- Reablement staff working within EMH Project Groups: Ensure that appropriately trained care staff will be available to address any personal care issues which may arise, expanding accessibility to the groups to a ‘wider audience’: Normalise attendance at the groups and ensure everyone’s dignity is maintained at high standards throughout the day.
- Provide carers of people living with dementia with greater access to a wider range of support and information through close working partnership with Healthy Carers Worker.
- Involve EMH Project Workers in Denbighshire’s People to People Talking Point - to provide advice and information about a range of dementia friendly opportunities within the local community to minimise reliance on formal services and enhance individual’s quality of life and sense of wellbeing.
- Create further Dementia Friendly Groups during 2015/2016; encourage the development of working relationships with the Rotary Club in Ruthin to engage with community volunteers and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector.
- Take forward Dementia Friends sessions in schools and colleges during the coming academic year, to facilitate intergenerational understanding.
- Continue to strengthen links and engagement with health colleagues and Glan Traeth.

## Opportunities for Learning and Employment

**Overarching aim: To ensure the experiences of older people in Wales (Denbighshire) is optimised through continued learning and employment**

Older people have a wealth of knowledge and experience which is currently underappreciated and undervalued in the workplace. Tackling age discrimination and recognising the value and worth of older people in Wales will be a key feature in the work of this network; older people are currently worth over £1 billion to the Welsh economy every year. The network will aim to increase the recognised value of older people through further learning, employment and volunteering opportunities.

It is good for the individual, the community and the economy for older people to be engaged in some form of employment, education or training. Learning for older people has a range of benefits, such as:

- ✓ Promoting full economic and societal participation
- ✓ Contributing towards personal wellbeing and fulfilment
- ✓ Supporting creativity and innovation, and
- ✓ Increasing efficiency as workers or volunteers.

The need to prioritise opportunities for employment and new skills for older people has been added to the Ageing Well in Wales Programme in recognition of its prevalence as an issue for older people in Wales. The Strategy for Older People (Phase 3) 2013-23 states that older people who are unemployed are more likely to be

long-term unemployed; around 45% of unemployed people aged 50-64 have been unemployed for a year or more compared to 30% of 18-24 year olds and 38% for 25-49 year olds.

With the economic downturn affecting the traditional models of retirement, older people must be able new learning and employment opportunities to remain in or re-enter the labour market. Older people require access to learning for a number of reasons. For example, with an increasing number of older people unable to afford retirement at State Pension age, the provision of learning and skill development opportunities to improve their employment prospects becomes ever more important. For other older people who are able to retire when they choose, access to learning is a key factor in maintaining their wellbeing. Learning and skills development in this context includes financial and digital inclusion, helping older people to become more resilient in later life.

By improving the employment prospects of older people and empowering them to remain engaged longer with society, Opportunities for Learning and Employment will also complement the work of the Loneliness and Isolation network.

## Outcomes and Actions

### 1. Older people in Denbighshire benefit from maximised opportunities for participation.

- 1.1. Increase the number of older people who volunteer.
- 1.2. Increase the number of older people continuing their learning and skill development before and after retirement.
- 1.3. Identify and share successful community models for older people's participation.

### 2. Older people in Wales benefit from maximised opportunities to increase their income.

- 2.1. Increase the numbers of people aged 50+ in Wales who are economically active.
- 2.2. Develop and improve older people's financial inclusion schemes.
- 2.3. Increase the number of people aged 50+ who are accessing education and training.

### 3. Older people in Wales feel empowered to plan effectively for their future.

- 3.1. Raise awareness amongst older people of current governmental and other advice and information schemes to assist in building their financial resilience.
- 3.2. Develop a live compendium of current provision.
- 3.3. Work with partners to run a pilot programme to support older people through economic transitions.

## Priority Tasks 2015 -2016

- Increase the number of older people who volunteer through use of Denbighshire's Volunteer Kinetic
- Publicise Volunteer Kinetic to all partners and across Ageing Well Networks
- Work in partnership nationally to produce 1 on line pre-retirement training resource
- Deliver 1 training session on Age Awareness with older people, Vocational Lead (Health) and Social Care Workforce Development Officer
- Outline how schools and businesses can work together though Denbighshire's Economic Business Development "Pathways Plus".
- Contribute to the OPUS Business Plan: A key target group is people 54+.
- Work with and contribute to Cyswllt Dysgu ACL partnership Strategic Plan (2014-2017)
- Hold 1 Celebration of Learning event with Cyswllt Dysgu partnership.
- Work with Cyswllt Dysgu, North Wales Women's Centre, University of the Third Age, Communities First and others to promote the range of opportunities for learning and development.
- Work with partners e.g. Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council, Communities First, Age Connect North Wales Central, British Red Cross, NW Women's Centre and others to promote opportunities for older people to volunteer, train and develop.
- Promote My Life, My Way across the County. Establish 1 new meeting group with the focus on Creativity and Growth.

## Loneliness and Isolation

**Overarching Aim: To reduce levels of loneliness and isolation and their negative impact on health and wellbeing as experienced by older people.**

Loneliness and isolation are cross-cutting issues that seriously impact on the health and wellbeing of older people in Denbighshire. They are also the basis for social exclusion and are a significant and pressing problem that cross all boundaries of social class, race, gender identification, sexual orientation, financial status and geography. Eradicating loneliness and isolation may be unrealistic, but working at all levels, individual, organisational and strategic, identifying and tackling the root causes is not.

Research demonstrates that loneliness has an effect on mortality that is similar in size to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. It is associated with poor mental health and conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension and dementia. Loneliness also has a much wider public health impact too, as it is associated with a number of negative health outcomes including mortality, morbidity, depression and suicide as well as health service use.

Given the budgetary reductions to community and public services, often seen as “lifelines”, older people are at an increased risk of loneliness and isolation, sometimes referred to as “silent killers”. More than 75% of women and a third of men over the age of 65 live alone. Without the means to leave their homes, or with fewer visits from community workers and service providers, an increasing number of older people will feel lonely and isolated resulting in damaging effects to their mental health.



One of the key priorities of Ageing Well in Wales and the Strategy for Older People in Wales is tackling loneliness and social isolation. Loneliness amongst older people is a problem for some people living in Denbighshire, in fact evidence suggests that loneliness affects people of all ages. One of the ways we aim to address this in Denbighshire is to have 3 questions about loneliness added to the next Resident's Survey.

Tackling loneliness and social isolation will require an intergenerational approach, facilitating or supporting active involvement of and connection to Denbighshire's communities.

Supporting an individual's independence, promoting empowerment and emphasising inclusion within communities will not be addressed by formal service provision alone, but through informal support: There is a need to work in partnership to develop or re-able strong communities that are able to take action themselves in support of their own health and wellbeing. Such communities are built on a high quality physical environment, and supported by universal services and appropriate and accurate information. This therefore can only be addressed in partnership with people and the communities themselves through adoption of an asset based approach to address issues.

## Outcomes and Actions

### **1. Loneliness and isolation are recognised as public health and safety issues in Denbighshire.**

- 1.1. Raise the profiles of loneliness and isolation as public health issues.
- 1.2. To ensure that health and social care information and advice services address the impact of loneliness and isolation on older people's wellbeing.
- 1.3. Empower older people to be aware of the risks of loneliness and isolation to their wellbeing.

### **2. The main causes and factors of loneliness and isolation amongst older people living in Denbighshire are identified and understood.**

- 2.1. Identify the key causes of loneliness and isolation amongst older people.
- 2.2. Identify the impact loneliness and isolation have on the individual, the community and the economy.
- 2.3. Identify and develop current and potential interventions that could successfully reduce loneliness and isolation amongst the emerging older generation.

### **3. The provision of innovative and accessible support is developed, addressing the impact of changes to life circumstances that older people face.**

- 3.1. Ensure older people are properly and meaningfully consulted regarding public transport provision.
- 3.2. Ensure older people have the financial means to participate in social activities.

3.3. Older people are aware of and have access to housing schemes that promote social interaction and inclusion.

#### Priority Tasks 2015 - 2016

- Hold 1 Learning Exchange on Loneliness between older people, front line staff and other professionals to identify the key causes of loneliness and isolation amongst older people.
- Add 3 questions on Loneliness to Denbighshire's Resident's Survey (Using UCLA Loneliness measurement Scale) to begin to understand loneliness.
- Identify the impact loneliness and isolation have on the individual, the community and the economy.
- Produce 1 bilingual information sheet on loneliness.
- Promote key causes of loneliness to partners.
- Develop 1 additional My Life, My Way group within Extra Care Housing (ECH), working with ECH Officer.
- Ensure that the loneliness agenda includes people living in Care Homes: Introduce and test Denbighshire's My Life My Way within 2 Care Homes in Denbighshire.
- Develop access to, and the range of befriending schemes in Denbighshire, including people living in Care Homes and carers; promote Telebuddies, NW Women's Centre, Gofal and Age Connect NW Central initiatives.
- Ensure older people are properly and meaningfully consulted regarding public transport provision.
- Raise the profile of loneliness and isolation as public health issues
- Work with faith groups to develop access to faith based support; Engage with the Minority Ethnic Elders Advocacy (MEEA) Project to raise awareness of the project amongst local minority groups.
- Work with the Denbigh 'Carriageworks' to assist development and promotion of Inter Faith work such as Threshold Choirs
- Prompt further interventions to address loneliness - such as Community Navigator pilot - through continued promotion of Literature Review on Loneliness to partners.

**Appendix I Denbighshire's older population at 2013**

	Number	%
50 plus	40445	42.8%
60 plus	27716	29.3%
65 plus	21189	22.4%
75 plus	9439	10.0%
85 plus	2663	2.8%

**Estimates for mid-2013 by age profile for people over 50 in total and by gender.**

	Male	Female	All
Aged 50	687	734	1421
Aged 51	691	730	1421
Aged 52	635	689	1324
Aged 53	717	618	1335
Aged 54	637	619	1256
Aged 55	569	639	1208
Aged 56	584	612	1196
Aged 57	595	586	1181
Aged 58	598	615	1213
Aged 59	571	603	1174
Aged 60	594	617	1211
Aged 61	608	630	1238
Aged 62	635	673	1308
Aged 63	663	683	1346
Aged 64	724	700	1424
Aged 65 to 74	5763	5987	11750

<b>Aged 75 to 84</b>	3093	3683	6776
<b>Aged 85 and over</b>	944	1719	2663
<b>Total over 50</b>	19308	21137	40445

# Ageing Well in Denbighshire 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Equality Impact Assessment

# Ageing Well in Denbighshire

**Contact:** Sandra Jones.

sandra.c.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk

**Updated:** 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015

## 1. What type of proposal / decision is being assessed?

A strategic or service plan

## 2. What is the purpose of this proposal / decision, and what change (to staff or the community) will occur as a result of its implementation?

Ageing Well in Denbighshire sets out how the national Strategy for Older People in Wales and the Ageing Well in Wales Programme will be implemented locally. The aims are:

- . To create a Wales where full participation is within the reach of all older people and their contribution is recognised and valued;
- . To develop communities that are age-friendly (intergenerational) while ensuring older people have the resources they need to live;
- . To ensure that future generations of older people are well equipped for later life by encouraging recognition of the changes and demands that may be faced and taking action in preparation.

Outcomes the Welsh Government want to achieve by 2023:

Diversity – older people are not discriminated against because of their age, and do not experience multiple discrimination on account of gender, ethnicity, disability, religion and belief, or sexual orientation in addition to their age.

Age is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The Act places a legal duty on public bodies to consider the needs of people of all ages when designing and delivering services and in the provision of goods and facilities. Over 42.8% of our residents are 50+. Helping those residents to age well supports our duty under this Act.

## 3. Does this proposal / decision require an equality impact assessment? If no, please explain why.

**Please note:** if the proposal will have an impact on people (staff or the community) then an equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken



<Please Select>	Yes
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**4. Please provide a summary of the steps taken, and the information used, to carry out this assessment, including any engagement undertaken**  
*(Please refer to section 1 in the toolkit for guidance)*

Engagement has taken place with Denbighshire's Older People's Reference Group (OPRG), Age Connect North Wales Central Over 50s Forums and the My Life, My Way group. In addition, as part of the engagement process, the report will be taken to Council.
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**5. Will this proposal / decision have a positive impact on any of the protected characteristics (age; disability; gender-reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation)?**  
*(Please refer to section 1 in the toolkit for a description of the protected characteristics)*

it is envisaged that there will be a positive impact on all of the protected characteristics.
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**6. Will this proposal / decision have a disproportionate negative impact on any of the protected characteristics (age; disability; gender-reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation)?**

No
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**7. Has the proposal / decision been amended to eliminate or reduce any potential disproportionate negative impact? If no, please explain why.**

<Please Select>	Yes. Following engagement the format was changed completely.
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**8. Have you identified any further actions to address and / or monitor any potential negative impact(s)?**

No	<If yes please complete the table below. If no, please explain here>
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Action(s)	Owner	By when?
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<Please describe>	<Enter Name>	<DD.MM.YY>
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<Please describe>	<Enter Name>	<DD.MM.YY>
<Unrestrict editing to insert additional rows>	<Enter Name>	<DD.MM.YY>

## 9. Declaration

Every reasonable effort has been made to eliminate or reduce any potential disproportionate impact on people sharing protected characteristics. The actual impact of the proposal / decision will be reviewed at the appropriate stage.

<b>Review Date:</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2016
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Name of Lead Officer for Equality Impact Assessment	Date
Sandra Jones	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2015

**Please note you will be required to publish the outcome of the equality impact assessment if you identify a substantial likely impact.**

COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Meeting	Item (Description / Title)		Purpose of Report	Council Decision Required (yes/no)	Lead member and Contact Officer
<b>7 October 2015 (special meeting)</b>	1	Attendance by representatives of BCUHB	Update from BCUHB and the NWCHC; Public Engagement Exercise	No	Gary Williams
		Attendance by representatives of North Wales Community Health Council			
<b>20 October 2015</b>	1	Annual Performance Report		Yes	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill / Liz Grieve
	2	Annual Improvement Report		Yes	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill / Alan Smith
	3	Hackney Carriage By-Laws	For Council to approve revised by-laws in respect of Hackney Carriages	Yes	Cllr David Smith /Graham Boase
	4	Denbighshire's Housing Strategy	For Council to approve Denbighshire's Housing Strategy	Yes	Graham Boase/ Angela Loftus
<b>Council Briefing 2 November 2015</b>	1	Safeguarding and Protection		N/A	Cllr Bobby Feeley / Phil Gilroy / Leighton Rees
<i>(actual timing of this item is dependent on the WG's publication of its proposals in respect of the responses to the consultation on the Prof. Donaldson report which</i>	2	<i>Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales (Professor Donaldson Report)</i>	<i>To discuss the potential implications of the recommendations arising from the approved recommendations for children and young people in Denbighshire and for the local education authority</i>	N/A	<i>Cllr. Eryl Williams/Karen Evans</i>

COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

<i>closed on 8 May 2015)</i>					
	3	The Well-being of Future Generations Act	To discuss the implications on services	N/A	Liz Grieve
	4	Potential Options for Re-investing Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Funds	To discuss the appropriate use of the funds	N/A	CLlr Barbara Smith / Jamie Grove
<b>1 December 2015</b>					
<b>26 January 2016</b>	1	Budget for 2016/17	To agree the Council's budget for the 2016/17 financial year	Yes	CLlr Julian Thompson-Hill / Richard Weigh
<b>23 February 2016</b>	1	Council Tax	For Council to set the level of Council Tax for 2016/17	Yes	CLlr Julian Thompson-Hill / Richard Weigh
	2	Committee Timetable / Annual Review of Political Balance	To approve the committee timetable until the end of 2017 and review the political balance of the committees	Yes	Steve Price
	3	Consideration of Final Draft Procurement Strategy & CPR's			Tom Booty
<b>Council Briefing 7 March 2016</b>	1	Child Sexual Exploitation		N/A	CLlr Bobby Feeley / Nicola Stubbins / Colin Tucker
<b>12 April 2016</b>	1	Nominations for the Posts of Chair and Vice of Council	To agree the nominations.	Yes	Gary Williams
<b>Annual Meeting 10 May 2016</b>	1	Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of Council	For Council to appoint the Council's civic leaders for the 2016/17 municipal year	Yes	Gary Williams

COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

<b>COUNCIL BRIEFING 6 June 2016</b>	1	Learning from Rotherham – Corporate Safeguarding Panel		N/A	Cllr Bobby Feeley / Nicola Stubbins
<b>5 July 2016</b>					
<b>6 September 2016</b>					
<b>18 October 2016</b>	1	Annual Improvement Report		Yes	Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill / Alan Smith
<b>COUNCIL BRIEFING 14 November 2016</b>					
<b>6 December 2016</b>					

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**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>September</i>	<b>21 Aug 2015</b>	<i>October</i>	<b>5 Oct 2015</b>	<i>December</i>	<b>16 Nov 2015</b>
<i>January 2016</i>	<b>11 Jan 2016</b>	<i>February</i>	<b>8 Feb 2016</b>	<i>April</i>	<b>24 Mar 2016</b>

Updated 28/08/2015 SP

Council Work Programme.doc

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