

To: Members of the Performance
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 10 March 2017

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **9.30 am** on **THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2017** in **CONFERENCE ROOM 1A, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN.**

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 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 5 - 26)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 6 January 2017 and 26 January 2017 (copies attached).

5 LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE (Pages 27 - 44)

To consider a report (copy attached) to provide Members with information about the new Framework of Library Standards (2017-2020), highlighting Denbighshire's most recent performance where applicable.

9.40 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.

6 YOUR VOICE REPORT - Q3 2016/2017 (Pages 45 - 66)

To consider a report (copy attached) on the Council's performance in dealing with complaints under its corporate complaints process. The report also includes information on the method used for collecting customer feedback, collating it into a Customer Effort Dashboard, which is then used to inform future service improvements.

10.30 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.

~~~~~ **BREAK 11.15 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.** ~~~~~

**7 PROGRESS ON DELIVERING DENBIGHSHIRE'S HOUSING STRATEGY**  
(Pages 67 - 88)

To consider a report (copy attached) on the progress made to date in delivering the key outcomes and actions identified in Denbighshire's Housing Strategy.

**11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m.**

**8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 89 - 136)

To consider a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (copy attached) seeking a review of the committee's forward work programme and updating members on relevant issues.

**12.15 p.m. – 12.30 p.m.**

**9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

To receive any updates from Committee representatives on various Council Boards and Groups.

**12.30 p.m. – 12.35 p.m.**

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Councillors**

Councillor Barry Mellor (Chair)

Meirick Davies  
Huw Hilditch-Roberts

Dewi Owens  
Arwel Roberts

Colin Hughes  
Geraint Lloyd-Williams

Gareth Sandilands  
Joe Welch

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All Councillors for information  
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## **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, RUTHIN, LL15 1YN on Friday, 6 January 2017 at 9.30 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Meirick Davies, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Barry Mellor (Chair), Dewi Owens, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Sandilands and Joe Welch.

Cabinet Members – Councillors Hugh Irving and Bobby Feeley attended at the Committee's invitation for items relating to their portfolio.

Councillor Win Mullen-James was in attendance for Agenda item 5, in her capacity as the Chair of the Adult In-house Social Care Task and Finish Group.

Observers - Councillor Gwyneth Kensler, Councillor Martyn Holland and Councillor David Smith.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Chief Executive (MM), Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Head of Community Support Services (PG), Head of Facilities, Assets and Housing (JG), Programme Manager- Business Change (TB), Strategic Planning Team Manager (NK), Customer and Quality Manager (MB), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (SJ).

Also in attendance- Rhys Dafis, Regeneration Services Director for Grŵp Cynefin.

### **COUNCILLOR RAYMOND BARTLEY - TRIBUTE**

The Chair paid tribute to the late Councillor Raymond Bartley, a member of the Committee and the task and finish group, who had passed away recently. Condolences were conveyed to his family and as a mark of respect all in attendance stood in silent tribute.

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colin Hughes and Geraint Lloyd-Williams

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill (Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Corporate Plan) for business items 6 and 8.

### **2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Bobby Feeley declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5.

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

No urgent matters had been raised.

#### **4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 29 September 2016 were submitted:-

***RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2016 be received and approved as a correct record.*

#### **5 UPDATE ON OPTIONS APPRAISALS FOR IN-HOUSE CARE SERVICES**

Councillor Win Mullen-James, Chair of the Task and Finish Group who had been tasked with reviewing the Council's in-house social care provision, in introducing the Group's findings with respect to the future use of Awelon paid tribute to late Councillor Raymond Bartley, who had been a dedicated member of the Task and Finish Group and the Committee. Councillor Bartley had worked tirelessly to safeguard the rights and welfare of the elderly and vulnerable in the county throughout his career, and would be greatly missed.

In her introduction the Chair of the Task and Finish Group informed the Committee that the Group was of the view that the recommendation contained in the report (previously circulated) would meet the demand for both care and support in the preferred Extra Care arrangements as well as support community activities for residents and the wider community within the new community facilities. The Task and Finish Group was also of the view that the entire project would benefit from being managed by the 3 current users of the site – the Council, Grŵp Cynefin and the Committee of Canolfan Awelon - coming to a mutually beneficial agreement. Hence the reason why the Group was recommending that they work together to implement the best configuration for the site based on Options 2a, 2b and 3a in the report. By adopting this approach individuals currently living in the residential part of the site would be able to remain there for as long as their needs could still be met.

The Chair welcomed Rhys Dafis, Grŵp Cynefin's Regeneration Services Director, to the meeting for the discussion on the proposals and feasibility study.

The Corporate Director: Communities and the Head of Community Support Services detailed the feasibility study undertaken by Grŵp Cynefin, which respected the spirit of the Cabinet resolution in May 2016, and outlined the conclusions drawn at the end of the study.

Responding to the Committee's questions the Corporate Director: Communities, Head of Community Support Services, Lead Member for Social Care (Adults and Children's Services), Chair of the Task and Finish Group and Grŵp Cynefin's Regeneration Services Director:

- confirmed that Option 3 put forward by Cabinet in May 2016, relating to engaging with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to investigate the feasibility of developing additional nursing care capacity in Ruthin, was still being pursued. However, the schools site, adjacent to the present hospital in the town would not become vacant for some time. The

proposals for consideration at the current meeting related to the Awelon site, which was a separate entity. Any future proposals which may be put forward, either separately or in conjunction with BCUHB for the former schools site, could potentially further enhance health and social care provision in the Ruthin area;

- explained the Council and the Regulators roles in inspecting and monitoring care and support both in care establishments and in people's own homes. This was a multi-layered approach, the quality of care and support provided was closely monitored as were safeguarding arrangements. Contracts for the provision of care were regularly monitored to ensure that all contract specifications were being met. A quarterly report on quality monitoring of external care services was provided to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG);
- advised that, with a view to enhancing the Council's contract monitoring capacity, a recruitment exercise would be undertaken in the new financial year for an additional contract management post within the Council's Contracts Management and Review Team;
- confirmed that the majority of the Council's arranged social care placements were within the independent sector in the county;
- emphasised that the proposals being put forward for the future provision of social care services in Denbighshire were not being driven by the need to realise budget savings. The primary driver was meeting legislative requirements and providing services which were in line with residents' needs and choices and which improved outcomes for the individual concerned. Whilst budget pressures had become more of a factor in recent years, the approach of supporting independence and supporting people in their own homes was a long-term aim of the Council. The Extra Care complex approach enabled individuals to have a level of independence and couples to stay together when one or both needed care or different intensity of care, in an environment that they could regard as their 'own home', thus improving their quality of life;
- advised that the Council had a duty to utilise public money effectively and efficiently. The intention of the proposals contained within the report was to improve outcomes for individuals whilst meeting their identified needs. The proposals under consideration for Awelon specifically stated that no current resident would be expected to move to another establishment for as long as their needs could be safely met at Awelon;
- confirmed that the proposed £7m investment proposed for Awelon was an investment by Grŵp Cynefin, the Council's contribution would be to transfer the site to Grŵp Cynefin, who already operated the Llys Awelon Extra Care housing complex on site;
- explained that with respect to Options 2a, 2b and 3a the eight temporary residential care bedrooms was a guide to how many would be needed whilst the remodelling and refurbishment work was taking place. As and when work was due to commence this number could be increased or decreased to meet the demand at that time from residents who wished to remain at Awelon. 'Temporary' units would continue to be available for as long as they were required, they would not be subject to time constraints. To ensure the development can be progressed in as timely and smooth a way as possible, no new 'residential' residents would be admitted to Awelon;

- confirmed that needs defined currently as ‘residential needs’ could be met within extra-care facilities, and were actually met in extra-care facilities that were currently in existence. The advantage of the extra-care facilities was that when residents’ needs increased they did not have to move out, instead their care packages were changed to meet their increased needs. Whilst the Council was not, by law, permitted to provide nursing care in its establishments the development of extra-care facilities would result in less upheaval and disruption to vulnerable people’s lives when their care needs increased;
- confirmed that the Council and Grŵp Cynefin were looking to work closely with the Committee of Canolfan Awelon with a view to identifying their requirements and incorporating them into the final plans for the complex. The ultimate aim would be to enhance the offer available at the community centre for the local community;
- advised that from Grŵp Cynefin’s perspective they would be looking towards developing an integrated facility to benefit residents and the wider community which would deliver the Group’s core vision of improving residents’ quality of life. This was similar to their approach for developing extra care housing in Denbigh, those plans were currently being consulted upon;
- advised that for Grŵp Cynefin from a value for money perspective Option 2a would be the most cost effective. However, they were willing to work with the other two partners to develop any of the three preferred options. It may be at the conclusion of this exercise that the final option may contain an element of all three preferred options;
- explained the reason why Option 1 had been deemed unviable. This was because of the risk involved with adapting an old, inefficient energy usage building that would not in the long-term deliver a sustainable solution for providing modern social care services. The proposed new extra-care facility would provide at least the same level of residential care as at present, but aspired to provide a much more holistic living and care package that would supplement and enhance each individual resident’s well-being;
- advised that if Option 1 was to be recommended the Council would need to find a new partner to deliver the development and would need to invest circa £2m in refurbishing the current building;
- emphasised that the main consideration in relation to the proposals was the model of care that should be delivered in future. The Council was expected to commission/deliver services which improved outcomes for residents and which were sustainable in the long term having regard to the demographic changes which lay ahead. By developing bespoke extra care facilities, similar to those proposed for the Awelon site, better outcomes could be delivered for residents as there would be a wider range of choices available to them in future;
- reassured members that the health, safety and welfare of residents during the remodelling work would be of paramount importance to all partners and every effort would be made to support and reassure them and their family members/carers before the work commenced, as well as during and after its completion;
- advised that if approval for the proposals development were given Grŵp Cynefin would form a Partnership Group, as it had done with similar developments elsewhere, to engage with residents, families, carers and stakeholders with a view to alleviating fears and misconceptions and finding solutions to identified problems etc. Grŵp Cynefin had also in the past revisited

residents, stakeholders and Partnership Group members twelve months following the completion of the project to undertake an evaluation of the project and the impact on their lives. The same approach was likely to be adopted for this project;

- the design for the extra-care facility at the Awelon site would be 'dementia friendly' throughout, similar to the design being proposed for Grŵp Cynefin's Denbigh extra-care facility;
- the facility would also have an apartment for visiting family members/friends to use;
- proposals for the majority of apartments being two-bedroomed units were based on service-users preferences, these were also practical for residents who would require overnight carers;
- advised that Grŵp Cynefin would not be responsible for delivering care services at the new facility, these would be commissioned from an independent provider following a tendering exercise. Consequently, not all current staff at Awelon would be transferred over. Some staff were likely to be offered to transfer to Grŵp Cynefin i.e. canteen staff. Nevertheless, Council officers had already had discussions with staff regarding the potential implications for them of the proposals under consideration. All of the care staff were highly skilled and therefore their skills would be in great demand in health and social care establishments. The Council, via its HR Department, would make every effort to support staff to find alternative employment

The Lead Member read a message she had recently received from relatives of a former resident of the extra-care facility at Rhyl, in which they thanked the facility's staff for the devoted care they had given their relative throughout her time there, and in particular the dignified care they had given her and them during her final days. In the Lead Member's view this epitomised the whole concept of extra-care. The Task and Finish Group's Chair also gave an example of how the extra-care facility had enriched a resident's life and improved his/her general health now that he/she was no longer socially isolated.

Grŵp Cynefin's Regeneration Services Director extended a welcome to councillors to visit any of their extra care schemes to see the facilities on offer and speak to residents.

Prior to the conclusion of the discussion the Committee Chair permitted a member of the public present to address the Committee. In her address she asked the Committee to consider in detail the actual floor space size of the proposed new Canolfan Awelon. She was of the view that it should not be of a smaller floor space size than the current facility. She also asked the Committee to consider who should be charged with managing the community facility in future. In her view there would always be a need for some level of 'residential care' going forward or otherwise local hospitals would continue to be full to capacity.

Committee members emphasised the need for the new Canolfan Awelon to be designed in a way that met residents and the wider community's needs. The current Canolfan Awelon was widely used by the local community, as had been illustrated by members at the meeting. It would therefore be important that any future design could accommodate a wide range of users whilst meeting residents' needs at the same time, and that public access to the community centre would not

impinge on residents' privacy. Members also requested that the Council make every effort to support community groups to find alternative suitable accommodation to conduct their events whilst the remodelling work was being undertaken.

The Chair thanked everyone involved for the production of a very detailed feasibility study and for their work in bringing the proposals forward for the Committee's consideration. He also thanked everyone present for diligently scrutinising the proposals.

A minor amendment to the recommendation put forward by the Task and Finish Group (as detailed in the report) was proposed and seconded. On being voted upon the Committee, by a majority:

**RESOLVED:** *having had regard to the observations made at the meeting and the conclusions of the Well-being Assessment, to recommend to Cabinet that it:*

- a) should take account of the Well-being Impact Assessment as part of its considerations;*
- b) agrees with the Committee that Options 1 and 3b of Grŵp Cynefin's Feasibility Study are not viable options for the reasons stated in appendices 1 and 5 of the report respectively; and*
- c) authorises discussions to commence between local Members, officers, Grŵp Cynefin and the committee of Canolfan Awelon to work through Options 2a, 2b & 3a to take forward the best configuration for the site that meets all parties' needs and provides least disruption for existing residents/tenants, and that these discussions include floor space requirements for the Canolfan Awelon Community Centre*

*(At a suitable point, this would enable the remaining Awelon Site to be cleared and for work to begin on the extension. The task and finish group were of the view that maximising the number of Extra Care units developed (as set out in Option 2a) would deliver the optimum arrangements for providing Extra Care Housing with Community Facilities on the Awelon site. However, it was acknowledged that further discussions need to take place with the committee for Canolfan Awelon to ensure the final scheme can deliver the community activities they already provide.*

*This meets the preferred option of Cabinet following discussion in May 2016 and will secure up to 35 additional Extra Care apartments on the site whilst enabling those residents who are currently receiving residential care services to remain on site through the development if that is their wish, as well as continuing to provide community facilities to promote independence and reduce social isolation.)*

The original recommendation, as outlined in the report, was then proposed, seconded and voted upon. As the majority of the Committee abstained from voting on the original recommendation the amended recommendation as detailed above will be submitted to Cabinet for approval. Members also asked that the report to Cabinet states clearly why Option 1 is not considered a viable option.

## 6 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND REVISED CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

In the Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance's absence the Facilities, Assets and Housing Programme Manager – Business Change introduced the report (previously circulated) which outlined the progress to date with the Procurement Transformation Programme, specifically the impact of the implementation of the Procurement Strategy and the revised Contract Procedure Rules. In his introduction he detailed the contents of the report and advised that the actual impact of the new strategy on the local economy had been slower than anticipated. Nevertheless, the Service was working closely with the Economic and Business Development Team with a view to co-ordinating attendance at events to promote the benefits to businesses of trading with the Council, and in a bid to assist small and medium sized businesses to consider tendering for contracts or for supplying goods to the Council, by helping them to register with the Authority as potential suppliers for specific types of contracts or provisions.

Members were advised that the 'Commissioning Form', a copy of which was attached to the report, had proved extremely useful in identifying problems at an early stage for contracts over £25K in value. All contracts over £10K in value were now required to be entered on to the Proactis system. There were benefits to the Council of using this system for procurement as the purchaser could not proceed to award the contract unless all required stages and checks had been completed. This ensured compliance with the Strategy and with Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).

One specific area of procurement arrangements which had been identified for improvement was the recording of the percentage spent with local businesses. The figures for 2015/16 seemed low despite the fact that the County was spending a significant amount of capital expenditure on the new Rhyl High School project. The reason for this was that the main contractor, Willmott Dixon's, invoicing address was outside the area. Nevertheless, the Council was aware that a significant amount of the work on the site and been sub-contracted to local tradespeople and that goods had been purchased locally. Potential solutions for accurate geographical apportionment of the Council's contract expenditure were currently being explored. Gwynedd Council seemed to have an effective method for capturing local spend, although fewer large contractors from the North West of England or the West Midlands tended to tender for contracts in North West Wales due to the distances involved with delivering the work.

Responding to members' questions officers advised that:

- ten people were employed in the Procurement Team which undertook procurement work for both Denbighshire and Flintshire County Councils. The team was currently being re-structured. However, the number of members in the team would remain as at present;
- the Procurement Team was currently working closely with the Economic and Business Development Team with a view to establish a good knowledge base on small businesses in the area with a view to encouraging them to tender for smaller contracts, or working together to bid for larger contracts;
- every effort was made to simplify the wording of tender documentation and make it accessible and less time consuming for small and medium sized businesses, who did not employ dedicated contract bidding officers, as the

- Council as part of its corporate priority of developing the local economy was keen to work with local businesses to encourage them to bid for contracts etc.;
- the Procurement Team were planning to provide training to new councillors following May's local elections on how they could help local businesses to interact and do business with the Council;
  - the Council had not set a specific 'percentage spent with local businesses' target when developing its Procurement Strategy, it had instead decided that it would be more worthwhile to monitor the local spend element on a regular basis with a view to continually increasing the local spend proportion over time;
  - Procurement Team members were always willing to assist managers with enquiries with respect to procurement practices. It was extremely encouraging that, in a recent survey, the number of middle managers who now considered their knowledge of procurement procedures to be either good or very good had increased considerably;
  - work was currently underway across both Denbighshire and Flintshire with respect of public transport contracts following the demise of GHA Coaches;
  - in line with the requirements of the new Welsh Language Standards all public adverts in relation to contract opportunities will be published in both Welsh and English. There was no requirement under the Standards for supporting documentation to be available in Welsh;
  - once contracts were let the Service who procured the work/goods would be responsible for monitoring the quality of it and ensuring that every aspect was delivered in line with the contract specification;
  - there were frameworks, which included Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), in place for regularly procured works. For these types of contracts managers would be expected to complete evaluation questionnaires;
  - officers were currently exploring the potential for having a uniform approach for quality assurance across all Council contracts;
  - community benefit requirements had to be applied to all contracts in excess of £1m – the documentation relating to these high value contracts required the successful bidder to evidence the community benefits achieved;
  - the Council was of the view that having a representative from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) serving on the Procurement Transformation Board was a more transparent option than actually having one local business person on the Board, this approach ensured the independence of that appointment; and
  - the Council was bound by public contract regulations when advertising for tenders or letting contracts. Nevertheless it was always willing to support local businesses, as far as it was legally able to do so, to register on the Council's business register for tenders etc.

Members suggested that collating data on the number of local people employed under each contract let by the Council could be a useful statistic to measure the local impact of the Strategy and its consequential impact on developing the local economy.

Prior to concluding the discussion the Committee was advised that the recently introduced Minor Works Frameworks would be independently evaluated after six months in operation. Officers also undertook to enquire with the Economic and

Business Development Team on the actual number of local businesses that belonged to the FSB. It was:

**RESOLVED** - *subject to the above observations that the new Procurement Strategy and revised Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) had resulted in improved performance of the organisation in relation to procurement activity.*

As a number of members had to leave the meeting at this juncture the remaining members agreed to continue to transact the business on an informal basis for the remainder of the meeting.

With members' consent the order of business was varied at this juncture.

## **7 'YOUR VOICE' COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE (Q2)**

The Lead Member for Customers and Libraries introduced the report (previously circulated) which gave an overview of the Council's performance in dealing with complaints, compliments and suggestions received under the corporate 'Your Voice' customer feedback policy during quarter 2 of the 2016/17 year. The report detailed performance in relation to complaints received in respect of council delivered services and services commissioned from external providers.

The Customer and Quality Manager, deputising for the Interim Principal Manager (Support Services), detailed the contents of the report and advised that the Council was looking to do more work around learning from complaints, with a view to improving services, during the forthcoming year. It was pleasing to report that there had been fewer complaints and more compliments during quarter 2 than in the first quarter. There had been a concerted effort within services to deal with complaints on time. There had been a steady improvement in dealing with complaints within the expected timescale as illustrated in the graph on page 223 of the committee papers.

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member and Customer and Quality Manager undertook to establish the specific nature of the 'workload pressures' experienced in both the Children's Service and the Highways and Environmental Service which had resulted in response times for complaints not being met. It was emphasised that the Social Services Department acknowledged receipt of any complaint within 48 hours of its receipt. Members expressed their concern that workload pressures was being highlighted as a factor and wanted assurances that individuals' workloads were not excessive and consequently affecting service delivery or the welfare of staff members. It was:

**RESOLVED**- *subject to the provision of the requested information that the Council's performance in dealing with Customer Feedback be received.*

## **8 CORPORATE PLAN (Q2) 2016/17**

In the Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance's absence the Strategic Planning Team Manager introduced the report (previously circulated) detailing the Council's performance in delivering its Corporate Plan 2012-17 during

quarter 2 of the 2016-17 year. She drew members' attention to a number of areas in the Executive Summary (Appendix 1), these being:

- the effectiveness of the new approach for handling investment enquiries which had secured the investment by Wagg Foods in Bodelwyddan;
- the lack of capacity identified for businesses who wanted to expand and grow in the county;
- that asbestos checks in the Council's housing stock would only be required to be undertaken once; and
- the increase in the number of exclusions from the county's schools and school absenteeism.

Members regarded the increase in school exclusions and absenteeism as a cause for concern. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator informed the Committee that Communities Scrutiny Committee had examined school absenteeism at a meeting in the autumn of 2016 and undertook to circulate the report presented to that Committee and the associated minute of the discussion to enable members to determine whether they should examine the statistics and reasons behind them in more detail. Members therefore:

***RESOLVED-*** that subject to the above observations and the provision of the requested information, to receive the report on the Council's overall performance in improving outcomes for citizens and delivering its Corporate Plan.

## **9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (SC), which requested the Committee to review and agree its forward work programme and which provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

A copy of the 'Member's proposal form' had been included in Appendix 2. The SC requested that any proposals be submitted to herself. The Cabinet Forward Work programme had been included as Appendix 3, and a table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising on progress with their implementation, had been attached as Appendix 4.

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work programme for future meetings, Appendix 1, and discussed whether the meeting scheduled for 27 April if viable could be incorporated with the meeting scheduled on the 16 March and subsequently the meeting on the 27 April be cancelled. This was suggested due to proximity of the County Council Elections which were due to be held at the beginning of May to the April meeting.

The Scrutiny Coordinator agreed to enquire if proposed item scheduled for the 27 April would be available for the March meeting and communicate with the Committee after her enquires.

The Committee:

**RESOLVED-** *subject to the above enquiries being made that its Forward Work Programme be confirmed.*

## **10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Gareth Sandilands advised that he had recently attended a meeting of the Council's Strategic Investment Group (SIG) at which a number of long-term funding investment bids had been discussed.

**Meeting concluded at 13:00 p.m.**

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## **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 26 January 2017 at 9.30 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Meirick Davies, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Colin Hughes, Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Barry Mellor (Chair), Dewi Owens, Arwel Roberts, Gareth Sandilands and Joe Welch

Cabinet Members – Councillor Martyn Holland, Councillor David Smith, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill and Councillor Eryl Williams attended at the Committee's invitation for items relating to their portfolio.

Observers – Councillor Martyn Holland

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Chief Executive (MM), Head of Education (KIE), School Effectiveness Performance Officer: Secondary (JM), Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation (AS), Senior Engineer: Bridges (JH), Section Manager: Network Management (TT), Head of Highways and Environmental Services (TW), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (SJ).

Also in Attendance – Marc Berw Hughes, Senior Challenge Advisor GwE

Co-opted Members Kathleen Jones and Gareth Williams attended for agenda item 4.

### **1 APOLOGIES**

No apologies were received.

### **2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Barry Mellor, Gareth Sandilands and Martyn Holland declared a personal interest in Agenda item 4 - Key stage 4 Examination results as they are all School Governors in local schools.

Councillor Colin Hughes declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6 - Bridge Maintenance Strategy as Cadw was discussed and he is currently employed by Cadw.

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

No urgent matters.

## 4 KEY STAGE 4 EXAMINATION RESULTS

The Head of Education introduced the report (previously circulated) which presented the Committee with the verified performance data on Denbighshire schools' external examinations results at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and post 16. Benchmarked information was also contained in the report on the Authority's performance in comparison to other local authorities. GwE's Senior Challenge Advisor was welcomed to the meeting and he explained the data contained in the report, advising that the county had improved its overall performance in relation to the main KS4 results indicator and met the set target. He advised that due to national changes to the curriculum schools and local authorities were currently experiencing a period of some uncertainty, which was likely to last for up to two years. In addition, some schools had presented pupils for the new qualification a year in advance of other schools, this had impacted on overall performance particularly the Level 2 Threshold results.

Following its establishment GwE's initial focus had been on supporting the primary education sector to improve. Consequently, this had led to a slippage in performance of secondary schools across the region. In a bid to redress this situation GwE and the local education authority had drawn-up a rapid action plan, which included the introduction of better ways of working with secondary schools to support them through curriculum changes.

Members were advised that Welsh Government (WG) reporting requirements in relation to educational data had changed for the 2015/16 year, with local authorities now being required to include in their data statistical information on the achievement of pupils Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS). However, local education authorities did not have a uniform method for measuring, collating or recording information on EOTAS pupils' achievements, and consequently this led to some considerable disparity in the overall performance and benchmarking data. All North Wales authorities were concerned on the inconsistent approach to recording EOTAS information across Wales and as a result they and GwE were in discussions with the WG on how the reporting aspect could be improved.

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member for Education, Head of Education, Principal Education Manager and GwE's Senior Challenge Advisor:

- advised that there had been some significant changes within GwE recently, including a change of leadership. This had resulted in an evaluation of the organisation which had led to a re-alignment of roles and focus for the service;
- confirmed that the profile of primary education in Denbighshire was now good. The focus had now turned towards the secondary sector where teams would be established to work around individual schools to support them on their journey of improvement;
- confirmed that a strong working relationship existed between GwE and Denbighshire's Education Service Officers. Both partners worked effectively together as one team whilst also challenging each other;
- confirmed that that local education authority tracked the attainment of each individual pupil in the county throughout their educational journey. Now that both Education and Children's Services had been merged into one service it

would be easier for officers to check whether any social problems were acting as a barrier to a pupil's achievement. It was acknowledged that individual circumstances were key to pupils' performance;

- advised that as the WG had changed its reporting requirements late in the academic year, too late to enable the Council to amend its education delivery plan for the year, the local authority would now need to re-align its targets to be in line with the WG;
- advised that Denbighshire's Free School Meal (FSM) profile was 14<sup>th</sup>, this was based on it being the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived area in Wales;
- confirmed that data was held by the Council on high achieving pupils, particularly those who attained A\* grades;
- informed members that there were circa 50 pupils in Denbighshire who were EOTAS. The County had built up a profile of each of these individual pupils, some of whom had transferred in from outside the area, and a number of which required significant intervention;
- advised that whilst some of the schools which were currently a cause of concern and would require intensive targeted support were located in Communities First areas, additional monetary resources was not always the answer to their problems. Some had suffered from a lack of effective leadership, on personnel and governor level, others had pressures placed upon them due to the pupil cohort numbers;
- accelerated Improvement Boards had been established at all three secondary schools in the county which were a cause of concern at present as it was widely acknowledged that strong leadership on all levels was key if schools were to be successful. Ysgol Brynhyfryd was a recent example of how strong leadership could improve outcomes;
- advised that Cabinet at its meeting earlier in the week had approved to proceed to formally consult on proposals to close both primary and secondary Catholic Schools in Rhyl and replace them with a 3 to 16 Catholic School on the same site and to approve funding for designing a new school in due course;
- confirmed that Head teachers in the county were keen to undertake a piece of work on how to improve educational outcomes for average achievers in the county, as they had some concerns that these pupils may be missing out due to resources and efforts being targeted at high achievers and/or challenging pupils. The Head teachers also wanted to explore whether it would be worthwhile to introduce 'other' more vocational type courses for these pupils in order to support them to realise their full potential. Members were of the view that this would be a useful piece of work to undertake and that it would also be beneficial to compare data on pupil choices at the start of Year 10 with the KS4 data to see how many pupils 'dropped' their chosen subjects during the two year period with a view to understanding what had led to their decision. The Committee recommended that these studies be undertaken and their conclusions reported to them in due course;
- agreed with members that schools needed to be honest with pupils when accepting their entry to 6<sup>th</sup> forms. They needed to be sure that A Levels and University based education was in their best interests and that they were not setting them up to fail. In some cases apprenticeships may better suit them and help them realise their full potential;

- confirmed that Denbighshire was performing above its expected ranking with respect of the number of pupils Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET);
- explained that different ‘measures’ used for school performance benchmarking could sometimes be deceptive i.e. FSM. Ysgol Glan Clwyd was a prime example of this as it had a low number of pupils receiving free school meals this meant that it was placed in the same all Wales benchmarking ‘family group’ as schools in some very affluent and privileged areas;
- advised that whilst school absenteeism generally followed a well-defined pattern of being more prevalent amongst older boys, the trend in Blessed Edward Jones’ Catholic School was different as absenteeism was a problem amongst girls. The local education authority was monitoring this situation closely and in regular contact with the school with respect of the matter. The Catholic Church’s co-opted representative for education scrutiny undertook to take this matter and other matters relating to the Catholic schools up with the Diocese.

Prior to the conclusion of the discussion the Lead Member for Education assured the Committee that the County’s Education Department was very thorough and had a detailed profile of each pupil educated in the county, be they in the Authority’s schools or elsewhere. The Committee then:

**Resolved: subject to the above observations –**

- (i) to receive the information on the performance of the County’s schools and pupils against previous performance and external benchmarks which were currently available;***
- (ii) that a report detailing GwE’s new structure, the anticipated impact and timelines for the realisation of the expected outcomes (including the targets that will be put in place to measure the impacts) be presented to the Committee at the earliest opportunity in the term of the new Council; and***
- (iii) that a report on the findings of the work to be undertaken measuring pupils progress from choosing their subjects in Year 10 to achieving their results at end of year 11 (including projected grades, intervention/support given and consequential final grades) be presented to the Committee when available).***

## **5 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

Introducing the report (previously circulated), which sought the Committee’s observations on the deletions, additions and amendments to the Corporate Risk Register, the Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance detailed the main amendments to the Register following the recent review. He advised members that the Register was a ‘fluid’ document and officers were keeping a watching brief on the risks and on potential new risks. Potential new risks on the horizon included Brexit, Funding of specific anti-poverty and reducing deprivation programmes, and public sector reform. Not enough information was available on these areas as yet to enable the Council to determine the risks they posed and any measures that could be implemented to mitigate any risks.

In response to members' questions the Lead Member and officers advised that:

- the Corporate Governance Committee, which had examined the Risk Register process at its meeting the previous day had been satisfied that the process was a thorough one;
- the Future of Adult In-house Social Care Task and Finish Group would continue to meet once the new Council was formed, as the work involved with transforming the delivery of in-house care service would take some considerable time to be delivered in their entirety;
- risk number DCC014 relating to Health and Safety matters would always be classed as 'high impact' despite all necessary measures being put in place, due to the life threatening consequences posed by inadequate health and safety measures;
- the risk identified in respect of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) (DCC021) related to the interfaces between the Council and the Health Board. Now that a Regional Partnership Board had been established the risk of poor communication and interaction, which could lead to a misalignment of priorities, had been reduced, hence the decision to reduce the risk score;
- a decision on a potential 'new approach' for administering the current 'Communities First' fund was expected from the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children on 14 February 2017. The Council was in the process of making representations to the WG on the importance of this source of funding for Denbighshire's most deprived wards, emphasising that the Authority could utilise the funding and maximise its use for the benefit of vulnerable residents in those deprived communities, ensuring that it was used to empower them to improve their resilience and become sustainable.

Committee members highlighted a number of areas which in their view could pose some considerable risk to the Council in future. These included:

- the digital era – this would had the potential to transform the way the Council transacted all its business. The Authority would need to be ready for this change and ambitious in the way it approached it to ensure that it was not left behind;
- the cost of social care in future was expected to 'outstrip' the available resources. The Council would therefore need to manage this risk closely. Central Government should also be making a concerted effort to try and address resource shortages in this area; and
- risks relating to post-surgical care of patients once it was determined that they would not require care in an acute hospital setting.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee:

***Resolved: - subject to the above observations to note the deletions, additions and amendments to the Corporate Risk Register.***

## **6 BRIDGE MAINTENANCE STRATEGY**

The Lead Member for Public Realm introduced the report (previously circulated) outlining the method by which the Council managed its highway structure assets

and explained how it intended to manage its current backlog of work in relation to those structural assets. Via a PowerPoint presentation a Senior Engineer – from Highways and Environmental Services gave members an overview of the County's approach to managing its Highway Structures. He outlined the definitions for the different highway structures which made up the Council's Highway Structures estate along with the number of structures in each category:

- 150 highway bridges (53 of which were listed and a further 6 were scheduled);
- 258 culverts;
- in excess of 300 retaining walls; and
- more than 300 a Public Right (PROW) of Way bridges

If the Council had to replace all of the above it would cost it in the region of £313m. In addition to the Highway Act 1980 the Council also had a duty to maintain all scheduled or listed monuments (including bridges).

The Senior Engineer:

- outlined the Asset Management Process followed by the Council and the myriad of Advice Notes and BSEN safety standards with which it had to comply;
- detailed Denbighshire's Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) which set out local standards and the risk based approach adopted to the frequency of inspection – this approach, also adopted by other County Highway Authorities and the North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agency, had saved the authority a substantial amount of money compared to complying with National Standards whilst not compromising asset users' safety;
- outlined the amounts of funding allocated from within the Highway and Environmental Service's Revenue and Block Capital budget for 2016/17 for highway structure management and advised that this equated to £445K;
- provided data on the number of structures which had been assessed as weak structures, some of which had already been placed under weight restriction orders. Details were given on the various weight restrictions usually applied on structures and the types of vehicles which would be affected by different restrictions. Whilst weight restrictions were applied on safety grounds they could potentially have an adverse effect on residents, business, community life and emergency vehicles' access to areas and properties;
- displayed photographic evidence of different highway structures and the various types of erosion/material deterioration incurred and repair undertaken or required on the a number of structures across the county;
- advised that the appendix to the report detailed both the revenue and capital costs associated with the structures in the proposed Highway Structures Backlog Works Project. The estimated cost of this project would be circa £6m over a 10 year period and would be jointly funded from the Highway Block Capital Budget, which had been increased by approximately £320K per annum. Undertaking the project over a 10 year period would ensure that other projects funded from within the Highway Block Capital Budget would not be adversely affected too much by having funding diverted from them to the structures project. During the course of this work bridges and retaining walls would be restricted in order to reduce the rate of deterioration and ensure that they did not

collapse. It was also proposed to increase the revenue budget to support the backlog programme and to maintain a planned preventative maintenance programme. A number of efficiency measures, including employing specialist staff rather than procuring services from external specialists, were being explored in order to realise value for money during the course of the project. The remainder of the proposed budget requirement would be subject to an additional capital bid in due course;

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member, Senior Engineer and Highway Service Managers advised that:

- the prioritisation list for maintenance work on structures was flexible and was subject to change on a regular basis due to sudden changes in their material conditions i.e. severe weather/flood damage; structural damage caused by vehicles etc.;
- issues such as third party ownership and access to some structures for maintenance work need to be worked through;
- structural assessments were generally undertaken using mathematical modelling ;
- it was only when assessing structures that the actual extent of damage/erosion could be fully confirmed. It was during such assessments that engineers also could establish whether structures were actually built on much earlier structures across a river etc.;
- very few councils met the National Standards for Highway Structures, the majority undertook a risk based approach towards their asset management;
- scour was a major problem as it was undermining the foundation of a number of structures;
- the loading format for agricultural vehicles was 'shared' more evenly compared to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and consequently less highway structure damage was attributed to them;
- a regular programme of maintenance was undertaken on the county's largest bridge, the bridge spanning the river Clwyd on the Rhuddlan bypass. Modern bridges such as this one had been designed to have a 120 year lifespan, nevertheless they would require regular maintenance during their lifetime;
- Cadw had provided a financial contribution towards the work undertaken on the river Elwy Bridge at the bottom of the High Street in St. Asaph;
- the old bridge over the river Clwyd in Rhuddlan, now that it had been restricted to single lane traffic, was not considered to be at immediate risk as it was the external 19<sup>th</sup> century steel widening which was the cause of concern, not the earlier stone structure which was also listed;
- the benefits of dredging rivers below bridges had to be assessed on a bridge by bridge basis, as in some cases this could potentially cause more problems in the long term;
- a high level of trust existed between the Council's highways officers, heritage officers and Cadw which assisted repair work etc. to be undertaken swiftly when necessary, as happened when Pont Nantglyn suffered vehicle damage. The level of mutual trust between all parties ensured that the bridge was repaired within a short period of time and reduced the disruption for residents and local users;

- a number of meetings had taken place between Finance and Highways officers with a view to drawing up a deliverable backlog works plan, based on service efficiencies and a long-term spend to save strategy without the need to apply for prudential borrowing;
- officers had considered a 5 year backlog works plan but this would have incurred significantly higher costs;
- officers were in regular contact with neighbouring counties regarding conditions of structures which spanned rivers on the county's boundaries and which served as access routes to and from the county e.g. Pont y Ddôl, in the Trefnant ward;
- the Council did inform a number of satellite navigation programmes providers once weight restrictions were placed on structures or when any legal notifications relating to the highway system were published. It was the provider's responsibility to update its sat nav programmes;
- third party owners of bridges had the same responsibilities as the Council to maintain their assets. However the Transport Act of 1968 placed some financial liabilities on councils for strengthening some third party owned bridges; and
- the Council erected advisory signage where restrictions etc. were placed.

The Committee's representative on the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) confirmed that SIG had supported the proposals submitted for the Highways Structure Backlog Works Project and was recommending that County Council should approve them.

Members thanked officers for an extremely informative presentation and acknowledged that a staggering amount of investment would be required to raise all structures to National Standards. They were therefore of the view that the managed approach suggested in the report was a logical way of addressing the backlog and the risks identified. The Committee:

***Resolved: - to support the approach being taken by the Service to manage the backlog of works in relation to highway structures assets as per the suggested Highway Structure Backlog Works Project.***

## **7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (SC), which requested the Committee to review and agree its Forward Work Programme and provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

A copy of the 'Member's Proposal Form' had been included in Appendix 2, Cabinet Forward Work Programme at Appendix 3, and a table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising on progress with their implementation was attached at Appendix 4.

The Committee considered its draft Forward Work Programme for future meetings, Appendix 1, and the following amendments and additions were agreed:-

- 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2017: The Committee agreed that Lead Members be invited to attend the meeting.

- To Bring forward the report on Local Housing Strategy from 27April to the 16 March 2017 meeting.
- To incorporate a report on Library Service Standards and performance on the 16 March 2017 meeting as proposed in Appendix 2(a).
- To cancel the meeting scheduled for the 27 April 2017.

***RESOLVED – that, subject to the above amendments and agreements, the Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.***

## **8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Barry Mellor (Chair) informed the Committee he had recently become a Governor of Blessed Edward Jones R.C High School and was very optimistic that the new Chair of Governors at the school will have a positive impact.

**Meeting concluded at 12:50**

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to:</b>             | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>                                                               |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>       | <b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2017</b>                                                                   |
| <b>Lead Member / Officer:</b> | <b>Lead Member for Customers and Libraries/<br/>Head of Communications, Customers and Marketing</b> |
| <b>Report Author:</b>         | <b>Principal Librarian</b>                                                                          |
| <b>Title:</b>                 | <b>Library Service Standards and Performance</b>                                                    |

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

The report highlights the Library Service's performance against National Standards.

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

To provide Members with information about the new Framework of Library Standards (2017-2020), highlighting Denbighshire's most recent performance where applicable.

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

That the Committee notes and comments on the requirements of the 6<sup>th</sup> performance framework of Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in the future.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 Library authorities in Wales have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to deliver a 'comprehensive and efficient' service to its residents. The Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards enables MALD (Museums Archives and Libraries Division of Welsh Government, previously CyMAL) to measure and assess how authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties. The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework will become effective from April 2017 to March 2020.
- 4.2 Library Services submit an Annual Report each July, noting performance against 18 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators for the previous financial year, following which MALD responds with a formal assessment in September/October.
- 4.3 The current performance framework (Framework 5) covers the period 2014-2017, and consists of 18 Core Entitlements and 7 Quality Indicators with specific targets.
- 4.4 Throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework (2014-17), Denbighshire has met 17 of the 18 Core Entitlements, the only outstanding entitlement being a publicly available declaration of the Library Service's strategy and vision for the future. With the service having undergone a number of restructures, as well as having reported to 3 different Heads of Service during this period, it has not been possible to define a coherent strategy

nor a vision for the future until now. However, this particular entitlement will be addressed in 2017/18 in line with the development of the Service Business Plan for Customers Communication and Marketing.

- 4.5 Of the 16 Quality indicators in the current Framework, 7 have been given set targets by MALD. All other indicators are comparative with performance across all other Welsh authorities. The 7 with set targets are:

|   |                                                                                                                                         |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Support for individual user development (to access ICT infrastructure, digital content, information, and reader development activities) |
| 2 | Location of service points                                                                                                              |
| 3 | Expenditure on books and resources for public use.                                                                                      |
| 4 | Provision of appropriate reading material (% of the bookfund spent on the Welsh Language and on resources for children)                 |
| 5 | Provision of public access computers and wifi                                                                                           |
| 6 | Staffing levels and qualifications                                                                                                      |
| 7 | Opening hours                                                                                                                           |

Most of these feature in the new framework for 2017-2020, and more details are listed in Appendix A.

- 4.6 Of the 7 Quality Indicators with set targets, MALD assesses annually whether these have been met, partially met, or not met:

| <b>DCC quality indicators (out of 7)</b> | <b>Met</b> | <b>Partially met</b> | <b>Not Met</b> |
|------------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 2014/15                                  | 3          | 4                    | 0              |
| 2015/16                                  | 3          | 3                    | 1              |
| 2016/17 (DCC estimate)                   | 4          | 2                    | 1              |

- 4.7 The only target not met in 2015/16 concerned the expenditure on books and resources for public use.
- 4.8 In 2016/17 we estimate that 4 of the 7 targets will be met, the additional indicator to the 3 met in 15/16 being the provision of public wifi at all libraries. (Only 6 of the 8 libraries provided this facility in 15/16). However, we will not meet the indicator on expenditure on books (no.3) but will continue to partially meet the staffing indicator (no.6) and the provision of appropriate reading materials (no.4). Denbighshire invests more in the support of children's reading (one of our priority areas) than the target set by MALD, and, as such, we are considered not to be meeting the required expenditure level on children's books. Denbighshire has challenged this

interpretation on a number of occasions, and the definition and interpretation has changed for the new framework.

- 4.9 The new framework for 2017-2020, (entitled Connected and ambitious libraries), comes into effect in April 2017. It is based largely on the fifth framework, and continues to provide opportunities for libraries to deliver services in innovative ways and to make the best use of the resources available to them. The revised set of 12 Core Entitlements and 16 Quality Indicators is set out in Appendix A, with explanatory comments, and, where available, performance data, on Denbighshire's current position.
- 4.10 A welcome inclusion in the new framework is an indicator (Quality Indicator 4) which acknowledges the role libraries play in supporting health and well-being. Further details can be found in Appendix A.

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

The Library Service is a statutory responsibility of the Authority, and its service delivery contributes to a number of corporate priorities such as the fostering community resilience, service modernisation, digital inclusion, literacy, lifelong learning and community engagement. The Library Service's Annual Report to MALD includes a statement on how the service is contributing to the wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals, and this is included in Appendix B.

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

The transformation of libraries into community hubs will enable a range of other council services and partners to reach out to local communities through the existing network of premises and facilities. There are no financial proposals involved with this information report.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

- 7.1 A Well-Being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken, but the whole of the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Library Standards is set up to demonstrate that libraries have a clear contribution to make to the seven goals of Well-being of Future Generations Act.

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

Performance Scrutiny in December 2015 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2014/15. There have been no further consultations regarding this particular report.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Not applicable.

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

Not applicable

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Section 7.4.2 (b) of the Council's Constitution outlines scrutiny's powers in relation to policy objectives, performance targets and specific service areas.

**Contact Officer:**

Principal Librarian

Tel: 01824 708203

## Connected and ambitious libraries:

### The 6th Quality Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards: 2017 - 2020

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1. The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards will become effective from 2017 to 2020, and comprises of 12 Core Entitlements (CE) and 16 Quality Indicators (QI).
2. Denbighshire's position in relation to the 12 Core Entitlements are outlined in the following table:

| <b>CE</b> | <b>Libraries in Wales will:</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Denbighshire's position</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CE 1      | be free to join, and open to all members of their communities                                                                                                                                     | As this is a legal requirement of the 1964 Public Libraries Act, the service has always been free to join and is open to all members of the community. All libraries have dedicated spaces for children and young people, and resources are purchased for all ages, from baby board-books to adult fiction and large print.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| CE 2      | ensure friendly, knowledgeable and qualified staff are on hand to help                                                                                                                            | Since Nov 2015, most front-line staff have been re-designated as Customer Service Assistants, and as such have undertaken an extensive training programme which enables them to respond to a range of One Stop Shop council enquiries, transactions and cash handling in addition to their library duties and responsibilities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| CE 3      | provide access to a range of services, activities and high quality resources in a range of formats to support lifelong learning, personal wellbeing and development, and community participation. | A range of activities are delivered directly by the Library Service and in partnership with other organisations in support of the learning and well-being needs of local communities. These include Bookstart and Rhymetime sessions, ICT courses delivered by Coleg Llandrillo, Talking Points (Health and Well-being advice), Reading Groups, CAB surgeries, Welsh classes, Community Policing, Age Connect, Family Information Service, Macmillan Information Service, Children's Book Week, Summer Reading Challenge, DoFE and work experience opportunities etc. |

|      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CE 4 | provide appropriate services, facilities and information resources for individuals and groups with special needs.          | Assistive technology is available on public access pcs, and all library entrances are DDA compliant with automatic doors and ramps. Resources include large print and audio books, Boardmaker, subscription to the RNIB Talking Book Service and access to a range of e-books and e-zines. The Housebound Library Service delivers a personalised service to those unable to visit their local library due to illness or disability.                                                                                                                      |
| CE 5 | provide a safe, attractive and accessible physical space within suitable opening hours with suitable staffed opening hours | All service points are DDA compliant. Recent refurbishments have been undertaken at Prestatyn and St.Asaph (2013), Rhyl (2015) and Rhuddlan (2017) to provide a greater range of services and an attractive and accessible space for local communities. Opening hours were reduced by 7% in Nov 2015 in line with Denbighshire's Freedom and Flexibilities outcomes, but are still above the minimum requirement outlined in Quality Indicator 16. (see next table).                                                                                      |
| CE 6 | lend books for free, and deliver free access to information, including online information resources                        | Book borrowing is free, and requests/reservations for stock available from any library in Wales can be placed free of charge. (Items borrowed from libraries outside Wales incur a charge of £10 per item.) To encourage use by young people and children, there are no overdue charges for under 18s, and books lost or damaged when on loan to a child under 5 will not incur any replacement costs.<br><br>Free access to information is available at all libraries, and online information resources are available to library members 24 hours a day. |
| CE 7 | provide free use of the internet and computers, including Wifi                                                             | Access to the internet and computer facilities is free, and public Wifi is available at all libraries. Corporate Wifi is available at Rhyl, Prestatyn and Rhuddlan, enabling Denbighshire employees to work flexibly from three library locations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| CE 8 | provide access to services, cultural activities and high quality resources in the                                          | 44% of front-line staff provide access to services through the medium of Welsh, ranging from 12% in Rhyl to 100% in Corwen. In line with the Welsh Language Standards, the linguistic profile of front-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

|       |                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       | Welsh Language                                                                                                                                  | line staff will be considered when future vacancies arise. Bilingual and Welsh language activities and events form a regular part of the service, eg: Bookstart, Rhymetime, Reading Groups, Summer Reading Challenge activities, author sessions and Children's Book Week.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| CE 9  | will work in partnership to share catalogues and facilitate access to the resources of all Welsh libraries                                      | The implementation of the new Library Management System across the 6 North Wales Authorities in August 2016 provides for greater sharing of resources across the region, with most of the combined North Wales stock available for the public to borrow from Holyhead to Llangollen and Wrexham.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| CE 10 | work with a range of partners to promote and deliver services to new and diverse audiences, enabling more people to benefit from those services | Since November 2015, all front-line staff have been redesignated Customer Service Assistants, and have undergone an extensive training schedule to deliver a range of council wide functions and information services, including the processing of payments (Council tax, rents, parking fines, etc) and responding to a range of council related enquiries. Full-time Housing Benefit and Council Tax officers are now available Monday to Friday at Rhyl Library for public consultation and advice sessions, and other Council Departments and external partners, eg CAB, Glantraeth Memory Clinic, Careers Wales and others also deliver information and advice sessions. |
| CE 11 | regularly consult with users to gather their views on the service and information about their changing needs                                    | The Customer Surveys (Adults and Children) will be conducted in March 2017. In the meantime, specific consultations have been undertaken to determine the needs and views of Bookstart parents, the views of Rhyl Library users on the November 2016 refurbishment, and the feedback on the new opening hours at St Asaph resulted in a revised pattern which reinstated the Saturday hours. Regular feedback from users inform the stock management team about trends and future purchasing requirements. The service also responded to 25,540 customer requests and reservations during 2015-16, successfully meeting 86% within 7 calendar days.                           |

|       |                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CE 12 | provide access to the library service's strategy, policies, objectives and vision, in print and online, in a range of languages appropriate for the community | This is the only Core Entitlement not currently met, due to the service having reported to 3 Heads of Service during the last 3 years, in addition to having undergone a number of restructures. However, the current Head of Service recently presented a discussion paper to CET outlining a strategic direction for libraries in Denbighshire, and this will form the basis of a future public document which will meet the requirements of Welsh Government in 2017-18. |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

3. The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Library Standards consists of the following 16 Quality Indicators, most of which were included in the 2014-2017 Framework. Where appropriate, Denbighshire's performance for 2015-16 (the last full financial year with available data) is noted in the comments column on the right.

| WPLS QI | Indicator                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| QI 1    | <p><b>Making a difference</b><br/>% of adults who think that using the library has helped them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop new skills</li> <li>- Learn and find things out</li> <li>- Find health &amp; wellbeing information</li> <li>- Experience the library as an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place</li> <li>- make a difference in their lives</li> </ul> | <p>This particular indicator assesses the impact of library use on people's lives in a variety of ways.</p> <p>These indicators will be included for the first time in the March 2017 Customer Survey, and will provide us with valuable performance data and feedback for future service developments and improvements. This survey will be conducted annually from now on.</p>                                      |
| QI 2    | <p><b>Customer satisfaction with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choice of books</li> <li>- Standard of customer care</li> <li>- Standard of IT facilities</li> <li>- Overall standard</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                           | <p>The Framework 5 Customer Satisfaction Survey will be undertaken in March 2017, and responses will be compared with the following "Very good" and "good" responses (from 2,229 respondents) from the 2012 Survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choice of books: 84%</li> <li>- Standard of Customer Care: 98%</li> <li>- Standard of IT facilities: 86%</li> <li>- Overall Standard: 95%</li> </ul> |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>QI 3</p> | <p><b>Support for individual development through:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Ict support to access digital information</li> <li>(b) Training to improve literacy, numeracy, information and digital skills etc</li> <li>(c) Support to access local and national e-gov resources</li> <li>(d) Reader development programmes for children and adults</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) All staff support and assist customers to use the ICT infrastructure and to access digital information.</li> <li>(b) Bookstart and Rhymetime sessions support the development of literacy and reading skills, whilst Coleg Llandrillo Menai deliver a range of numeracy, literacy and ICT skills based courses at a number of libraries.</li> <li>(c) All staff support customers to accessing local and national e-gov resources, from Universal Credit applications to registering for Green Waste collections.</li> <li>(d) Reader Development activities include the Summer Reading Challenge, Children’s Book Week, author events and book launches.</li> </ul> |
| <p>QI 4</p> | <p><b>Support for health and wellbeing by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) offering the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Books Prescription Wales scheme</li> <li>- Designated health and wellbeing collection</li> <li>- Information about healthy lifestyles</li> <li>- Signposting to health and wellbeing services</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) regularly delivering the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shared reading groups</li> <li>- book clubs / reading groups</li> <li>- Macmillan or other health information partnerships</li> <li>- Dementia friendly champions and services</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p>Physical and mental well-being is a key offer of public libraries, not only through the provision of books and information, but also through referral schemes, specialist advice and signposting services.</p> <p>Denbighshire currently provides the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Book Prescription Wales Scheme</li> <li>- Information about healthy lifestyles</li> <li>- Shared reading groups</li> <li>- Reading groups</li> <li>- Macmillan health partnership</li> <li>- Talking Points</li> <li>- CAB</li> <li>- Age Connect</li> </ul> <p>An audit of Health and Well-being support services will be undertaken in 2017 to identify further service</p>                  |

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | improvements and support in this key area.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| QI 5 | <p><b>User training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Attendances at pre-arranged training sessions organised and/or hosted by library service</li> <li>(b) % of attendees who said that attendance helped them achieve their goals (sample)</li> <li>(c) No. of customers helped through informal training</li> </ul> | <p>This is a requirement of the current Framework, but to date, this data has not been collected. We will consider how best to capture, record and monitor our performance against this indicator for the new Standards Framework.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| QI 6 | <p><b>User attendances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) at library events &amp; activities organised by the library</li> <li>(b) events &amp; activities for those with special requirements or promoted for intended group / audience</li> </ul>                                                                      | <p>This indicator measures the attraction and relevance of library events and activities (informational, educational or cultural) for the resident population.</p> <p>(a) Denbighshire had the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of attendances per capita (37,267 attendances - 393 per capita) in 2015/16. (The Median was 223 per capita).</p> <p>(b) This element of the indicator is new for 2017 onwards, and will be reported for the first time in June 2018.</p> |
| QI 7 | <p><b>Location of service points</b><br/>75% of households within 2.5 miles of a library.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>88% of Denbighshire's households are within 2.5 miles of a static library.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| QI 8 | <p><b>Library use:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical visits</li> <li>- Virtual visits to the website</li> <li>- Number of active borrowers</li> <li>- Total members</li> <li>- Book issues (adults &amp; children)</li> <li>- Audio-visual issues</li> <li>- Electronic downloads</li> </ul>                     | <p>Physical visits saw an overall reduction of 9.9% in 15/16 due to a 7% reduction in opening hours and a 6 month postponement of the Housebound Library Service following a resignation. Confidence in the electronic people counters is low due to error readings and loss of data across two service points for a number of months, and a more effective solution is currently being considered. Actual data for 15/16 is reported here with Denbighshire's</p>    |

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>ranking out of 22 authorities). Some indicators were not included in the previous Frameworks, which is why the ranking is not available (n/a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical visits: 434,043 (8<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>- Virtual website visits: 37,665 (21<sup>st</sup>)</li> <li>- No of active borrowers: 15,083 (11<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>- Total members: 79,274 (n/a)</li> <li>- Total book issues: 395,739 (n/a)</li> <li>- Audio-visual issues: 27,303 (n/a)</li> <li>- E downloads: 4,112 (n/a)</li> </ul> |
| QI 9  | <p><b>Up-to-date and appropriate reading materials:</b></p> <p>(a) Minimum 243 items acquired per 1,000 pop or</p> <p>Minimum spend of £2,180 per 1,000 pop</p> <p>(b) % of bookfund spent on resources for children</p> | <p>Denbighshire's F&amp;F programme resulted in a 26% reduction (£44,490) in the 15/16 public Bookfund, and as a result, this particular Quality Indicator was not met in Framework 5.</p> <p>(a) 141 items per 1,000 pop were acquired in 15/16.</p> <p>The spend per 1,000 pop was £1,367.</p> <p>(b) 29% of the 15/16 Bookfund was prioritized on resources for children to support early literacy development and reading for pleasure.</p>                                                                                                |
| QI 10 | <p><b>Welsh Language resources:</b></p> <p>(a) Minimum 4% of bookfund spent on resources in Welsh</p> <p>(b) Total issues of Welsh Language resources</p>                                                                | <p>In 2011, 24.6% of the population said they could speak Welsh.</p> <p>(a) 9.9% (£12,840) of the 15/16 Bookfund was spent on resources in Welsh, from picture books to adult fiction, non-fiction and large print.</p> <p>(b) Total number of Welsh Language resources issued in 15/16 was 35,436</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| QI 11 | <b>Online access:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       | <p>(a) No of public access devices with access to internet and digital content</p> <p>(b) Wifi access for users</p> <p>(c) % take up of public access pcs</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <p>(a) 99 computers were available for public access in 15/16</p> <p>(b) Public Wifi is available at all 8 libraries</p> <p>(c) The take up of public access computers in 15/16 was 27%</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| QI 12 | <p><b>Supply of requests:</b></p> <p>(a) Minimum 64% available within 7 calendar days</p> <p>(b) Minimum 79% available within 15 calendar days</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Denbighshire's 15/16 performance:</p> <p>(a) 86%</p> <p>(b) 95%</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| QI 13 | <p><b>Staffing levels &amp; qualifications:</b></p> <p>(a) 3.6 FTE per 10,000 pop</p> <p>(b) 0.65 qualified staff per 10,000 pop</p> <p>(c) Qualified operational manager</p> <p>(d) Minimum 1% of staff hour spent on training</p> <p>(e) Volunteering opportunities</p> <p>(f) Total no. of volunteers</p> <p>(g) Total no. of volunteer hours</p> <p>(h) Volunteers with accreditation status</p> | <p>Denbighshire's 15/16 performance:</p> <p>(a) 3.58 (3.4 by March 2017)</p> <p>(b) 0.68 (0.5 by March 2017)*<br/>*Workforce development plan 2017-2020 will focus on addressing this.)</p> <p>(c) The operational manager is a Chartered Librarian with over 35 years' experience.</p> <p>(d) Approx 24% in 15/16 due to extensive OSS training from Nov 2015.</p> <p>(e) Yes</p> <p>(f) 38 (Mostly Young Volunteers with the Summer Reading Challenge)</p> <p>(g) 793 hours</p> <p>(h) 0</p> |
| QI 14 | <p><b>Operational expenditure:</b></p> <p>(a) Total revenue per 1,000 pop.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p>(a) £13,934 per 1,000 pop or £13.94 per capita. (Welsh highest was £18,760, and the median was £12,749).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| QI 15 | <p><b>Cost per visit</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Denbighshire's cost per visit in 15/16 was £2.53 (The Welsh highest was £3.53, and the Welsh lowest £1.83, the Median being £2.53). However, Denbighshire's restructure has meant that most front-line staff have been re-designated as</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Customer Services Assistants, rather than Library Assistants, and their higher pay grades reflect their multi-skilled and corporate Customer Services / One Stop Shop job description. |
| QI 16 | <b>Opening hours:</b><br>(a) Minimum 120 aggregate hours per 1,000 pop<br>(b) Total no. of unstaffed opening hours<br>(c) Total hours lost through unplanned/emergency/ staff unavailability etc | Denbighshire 15/16:<br>- 144 aggregate hours<br>- zero unstaffed opening hours<br>- zero emergency closures                                                                            |

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## Denbighshire Library Service 2015-2016

### 1. CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS WIDER WELSH GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES 2015-16

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Please provide a narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals (indicative length: 500 - 1,000 words).

#### 1.1 Improving public services

In 2014, Denbighshire's Senior Leadership Team consulted on the possibilities of developing the Authority's libraries as community based assets. Hand in hand with the corporate efficiency agenda, this led to a **Library Modernisation Programme** which considered the future of the service in the context of the Council's financial pressures. In consequence, a Council restructure, commencing in March 2015, saw the merger of the Library Service and One Stop Shops with the Customer Services and Cashiers team, with the specific aim of meeting the increasing expectations of customers and of transforming both services to deliver the digital agenda, whilst also reducing overall costs.

By November 2015 the **service-wide restructure** had resulted in a significant change in staff numbers, staff responsibilities and staff expenditure. All front-line posts transformed from Grade 3 Library Assistants to Grade 5 Customer Service Assistants with responsibilities for dealing with a range of Council enquiries, promoting digital self-service and channel shift, and the handling of cash and financial transactions, in addition to delivering a statutory Library Service. Despite some voluntary redundancies and reductions to staff contract hours, and a 7% reduction to opening hours, the principal focus was to ensure the continued presence and development of all libraries as **Community Hubs**.

Coinciding with the restructure was the refurbishment and transformation of Rhyl Library as a Community Hub. The model brings a number of council services together under one roof, and is an example of services working together for the benefit of the community. The Deputy Minister (Ken Skates) visited the new One Stop Shop in early November, and subsequently released the following Written Statement

"I am committed to our public libraries being welcoming community hubs which deliver a range of digital, literacy and cultural services, as well as providing access to other services."

The new range of services delivered from Rhyl includes:

- Dedicated council tax and housing benefit officers working from the library
- Regular advice surgeries, eg Talking Points, CAB, North Wales Police
- New payment kiosks replacing the previous Cash Office facility (previously at the Town Hall)

- Dedicated Council Information points
- 1-2-1 Consultation rooms
- Hot-desking facilities for Council staff, and corporate Wifi
- Meet and greet / reception desk to direct customers to the most appropriate area of the building

## **1.2 Digital inclusion**

Staff across all 8 libraries support and enable users of all ages to become digitally connected, whether by accessing online digital resources, searching for information, setting up email addresses, downloading e-books and e-zines, or logging on to a range of Government information and web portals such as Universal Credit and Job Seeker's Allowance. Denbighshire provides 99 free public access computers across its 8 libraries, with 6 locations also providing free Wifi to allow ease of access by a range of digital devices. Staff also guide and encourage users to self-serve facilities at appropriate libraries, whether it be council payments, such as parking fines or the collection of green bins, or whether it be book issues, returns or renewals.

## **1.3 Community health and well being**

A recent example of the Library Service working in partnership to address the health and well being of its communities is the regular Talking Point sessions which takes place at numerous library locations across the county. A Talking Point session is an opportunity for Denbighshire residents to meet health and social care staff from various partner organisations – for information and advice - and to talk face to face about the well-being outcomes they want for themselves or for others. Talking Points provide a pathway between adult social care services offered over the telephone and the more formal social care assessments that happen in a person's own home. Residents are encouraged to come along and explain what they feel is missing in their local community that could make a difference to their health and well-being and they can also get involved and share their knowledge, skills and experiences to improve the well-being of others in their community.

## **1.4 Tackling poverty / Education and Literacy**

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age in some of the most deprived areas of Wales, and is one of the Welsh Government's top priorities. Bookstart in Denbighshire operates two strands:

- Firstly, the universal Wales-wide book gifting scheme in which all children receive book packs at 18 months and 2 years old (funded by Welsh Government via Booktrust Cymru)
- And secondly - a programme of rhymetimes to develop children's language and cognitive skills and parents' confidence as their child's first educators (funded in Denbighshire by Flying Start)

Rhymetimes focus on giving parents confidence to support their child's early language and learning development. Songs, rhymes and stories in Welsh and English are introduced in a shared group environment where children also learn key socialisation skills. Cultural

diversity is celebrated and children with disabilities or behavioural issues are included. Parents build up a social network and discover the range of services available to support them.

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**Report to:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Customers and Libraries  
Interim Principal Manager, Support Services

**Report Author:** Statutory and Corporate Complaints Officer

**Title:** Your Voice report – Q3 2016/17

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## 1. What is the report about?

The report provides an overview of compliments, suggestions and complaints received by Denbighshire County Council under the council's customer feedback policy 'Your Voice' during Q3 2016/17. The report also includes Social Services complaints received under the statutory complaints procedure.

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

To enable the Committee to fulfil its scrutiny role in relation to the council's performance in dealing with customer feedback.

To provide the Committee with information regarding specific examples where council services have been learning from complaints.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee considers the content of this report and, if appropriate, identify any areas that require further scrutiny.

## 4. Report details

### Headlines for Q3 (please see appendix 1 for further detail):

- The council received 115 complaints during Q3 (5% [6] fewer than the previous quarter).
- The council received 132 compliments during Q3 (18% [29] fewer than the previous quarter).
- The council received 16 suggestions during Q3 (24% [5] fewer than the previous quarter).

### 4.2 Complaints regarding commissioned services (please see appendix 1 for further detail):

During Q3:

- 4 *stage 1* complaints were received regarding services provided by Civica (compared to 10 in Q1)
- 14 *stage 1* complaints were received regarding services provided by Kingdom Security (compared to 25 in Q1). This accounts for 50% of complaints received for Planning and Public Protection during Q3

- There were no *stage 2* complaints received regarding services provided by Civica (compared to 1 in Q2)
- There were no *stage 2* complaints received regarding services provided by Kingdom Security (compared to 2 in Q2)

### Performance – Q3 2016/17

- 90% (99/110) of stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescales. This does not meet the corporate target of 95%.
- Chart 1 in appendix 1 provides a four year trend of performance in relation to responding to stage 1 complaints. In four years, the corporate target was only met in four quarters. However, as previously discussed with the committee, the corporate targets are purposely very ambitious, and to meet the targets would represent a position of “excellence”.
- 60% (3/5) of stage 2 complaints were responded to within timescale. This does meet the corporate target of 95%.
- Chart 2 in appendix 1 provides a four year trend of performance in relation to responding to stage 2 complaints. Of the nineteen quarters highlighted, the target was met seven times.

### Stage 1 complaints

Four service areas are highlighted as having RED status for stage 1 complaints (table 1, appendix 1). RED status means less than 90% of stage 1 complaints were dealt with within the timescale of 10 working days. Further detail regarding the complaints where timescales were exceeded for those services are provided below:

### Legal, HR and Democratic Service

#### 1. **Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld

**Summary of complaint:** Alleged that Councillor had not attended any council meetings for over 6 months, therefore under the Local Government Act 1972 they should no longer be considered an acting councillor.

**Reason for being late:** This issue had been addressed with the complaint previous to the complaint being re-directed from the ombudsman. Further consideration was given to the challenge and the statutory provisions were revisited to ensure that the complaint could be comprehensively addressed. Unfortunately, we were unable to respond before the due date of the 19 December and the Christmas and New Year holiday period resulted in the reply to the complaint.

### Customers

#### 1. **Complaint Outcome:** Upheld in part .

**Summary of complaint:** Operator attitude was poor/unhelpful.

**Reason for being late:** Delay in Galw Gofal (out of hours service) feeding back results of their investigation

#### 2. **Complaint Outcome:** Upheld

**Summary of complaint:** Operator attitude was poor/unhelpful, incorrect information provided.

**Reason for being late:** Galw Gofal is our commissioned out of hours service. The Galw Gofal management undertook a significant investigation and produced a corrective action plan, while thorough in their approach, this did exceed corporate timescales. This information is used in our quality performance reviews with Galw Gofal.

## Planning and Public Protection

- 1. Complaint Outcome:** Not upheld – 1 day late  
**Summary of complaint:** Incorrect information provided to a business  
**Reason for being late:** Officers tried to contact the complainant to clarify the issues and this delayed the process
- 2. Complaint Outcome:** Not upheld – 4 days late  
**Summary of complaint:** Parking charges and parking time limits  
**Reason for being late:** High volume of emails / correspondence requiring a response
- 3. Complaint Outcome:** Upheld – 1 day late (following extension)  
**Summary of complaint:** Failure to comply with Welsh Language Standards during issue of Fixed Penalty Notice for littering  
**Reason for being late:** Investigating Officer was on leave over Christmas period and complainant had to be contacted to gain further clarification / information which delayed the process.
- 4. Complaint Outcome:** Upheld – 10 days late  
**Summary of complaint:** Unhappy with the way 'works in default' was handled, about an overgrown garden  
**Reason for being late:** Very complex case with several officers/services involved. The investigation was time-consuming and several queries needed to be fully investigated before responding

## Children and Family Services

- 1. Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld  
**Summary of complaint:** Communication from social worker, contact issues.  
**Reason for being late:** The complainant was unavailable when repeated attempts to contact were made.
- 2. Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld  
**Summary of complaint:** Service did not consider this a legitimate complaint, complainant clearly confused due to some health issues, but also issue of disguised compliance involved. Mum and child moved out of area, appropriate transfer arrangements made by practice leader as child was on the Child Protection Register.  
**Reason for being late:** Practice leader spoke to complainant day after complaint and explained process of registration transfer. This was unfortunately not confirmed in writing. Prior to transfer in conference, all involved staff visited to ensure continuity of care.
- 3. Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld  
**Summary of complaint:** Complainant unhappy with social worker, as he believed that she was discussing his support with his ex-partner.  
**Reason for being late:** Response was late as the enquiries that had to be undertaken to respond to the complaint and took longer than anticipated, this included a member of staff being unavailable due to sick leave.

## Learning from complaints – examples of customer feedback influencing service design and delivery:

**Customers:** Review of staff training in general, training on standards of customer service required, and an increase the quality monitoring

**Facilities, Assets & Housing:** 1. Staff training to ensure all staff can explain to customer's reasons for costings. 2. All staff attending customer service course.

**Highways & Environmental Services:** Commitment to undertake a review of the Council's existing literature regarding the procedure for dealing with contaminated bins.

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

The Your Voice scheme directly contributes to the corporate priority of: Modernising the Council.

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

All costs relating to customer feedback are absorbed within existing budgets.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

This is a performance report and no decision is being sought to make any changes that would impact on staff or the community. Therefore a Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

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

Monthly reporting to the Senior Leadership Team.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

There are no obvious financial implications arising from the report.

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

By not dealing with complaints effectively, the reputation of the Council may suffer.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Sections 7.3 and 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines the Committee's remit and powers with respect of Services' performance.

**Contact Officer:**

Statutory and Corporate Complaints Officer

Tel: 01824 706597.

## Your Voice information

### 1 Your Voice reporting periods

The following periods are used for reporting data:

- Quarter 1: 1-Apr to 30-Jun
- Quarter 2: 1-Jul to 30-Sep
- Quarter 3: 1-Oct to 31-Dec
- Quarter 4: 1-Jan to 31-Mar

### 2 Complaint response timescales

The 'Your Voice' feedback policy states that the following timescales should be adhered to when responding to complaints:

- Stage 1: **10** working days
- Stage 2: **20** working days

Please note: Community Support Services and Children and Family Services adhere to statutory timescales, which differ slightly from corporate.

### 3 Your Voice performance measures

A traffic light system is used to highlight performance in relation to response timescales to complaints. Performance is rated according to:

|              |                                                                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Red</b>   | less than 90% of complaints responded to within timescale                        |
| <b>Amber</b> | when more than 90% but less than 95% of complaints responded to within timescale |
| <b>Green</b> | more than 95% of complaints responded to within timescale                        |

Table 1: Overall complaint response times for stage 1 complaints – Q3

| Service                                                 | Quarter 1 - Stage 1 |        |      | Quarter 2 - Stage 1 |        |      | Quarter 3 - Stage 1 |        |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|------|---------------------|--------|------|---------------------|--------|------|
|                                                         | Rec'd               | Within | %    | Rec'd               | Within | %    | Rec'd               | Within | %    |
| Business Improvement & Modernisation                    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Legal, HR and Democratic Services                       | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 2                   | 1      | 50%  |
| Customers                                               | 8                   | 7      | 88%  | 5                   | 5      | 100% | 5                   | 3      | 60%  |
| Revenues and Benefits (ALL SERVICES PROVIDED BY CIVICA) | 6                   | 3      | 50%  | 10                  | 10     | 100% | 4                   | 4      | 100% |
| Education                                               | 2                   | 2      | 100% | 1                   | 1      | 100% | 2                   | 2      | 100% |
| Highways & Environmental Services                       | 36                  | 34     | 94%  | 27                  | 23     | 85%  | 35                  | 34     | 97%  |
| Facilities, Assets and Housing                          | 24                  | 24     | 100% | 19                  | 19     | 100% | 19                  | 19     | 100% |
| Planning and Public Protection                          | 42                  | 34     | 81%  | 35                  | 34     | 97%  | 28                  | 24     | 86%  |
| Community Support Services                              | 3                   | 3      | 100% | 2                   | 2      | 100% | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES                              | 10                  | 10     | 100% | 9                   | 9      | 100% | 10                  | 10     | 100% |
| CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES                            | 6                   | 4      | 67%  | 6                   | 4      | 67%  | 5                   | 2      | 40%  |
| Corporate Total                                         | 137                 | 121    | 88%  | 114                 | 107    | 94%  | 110                 | 99     | 90%  |

Chart 1: Stage 1 complaint response times – 4 year analysis

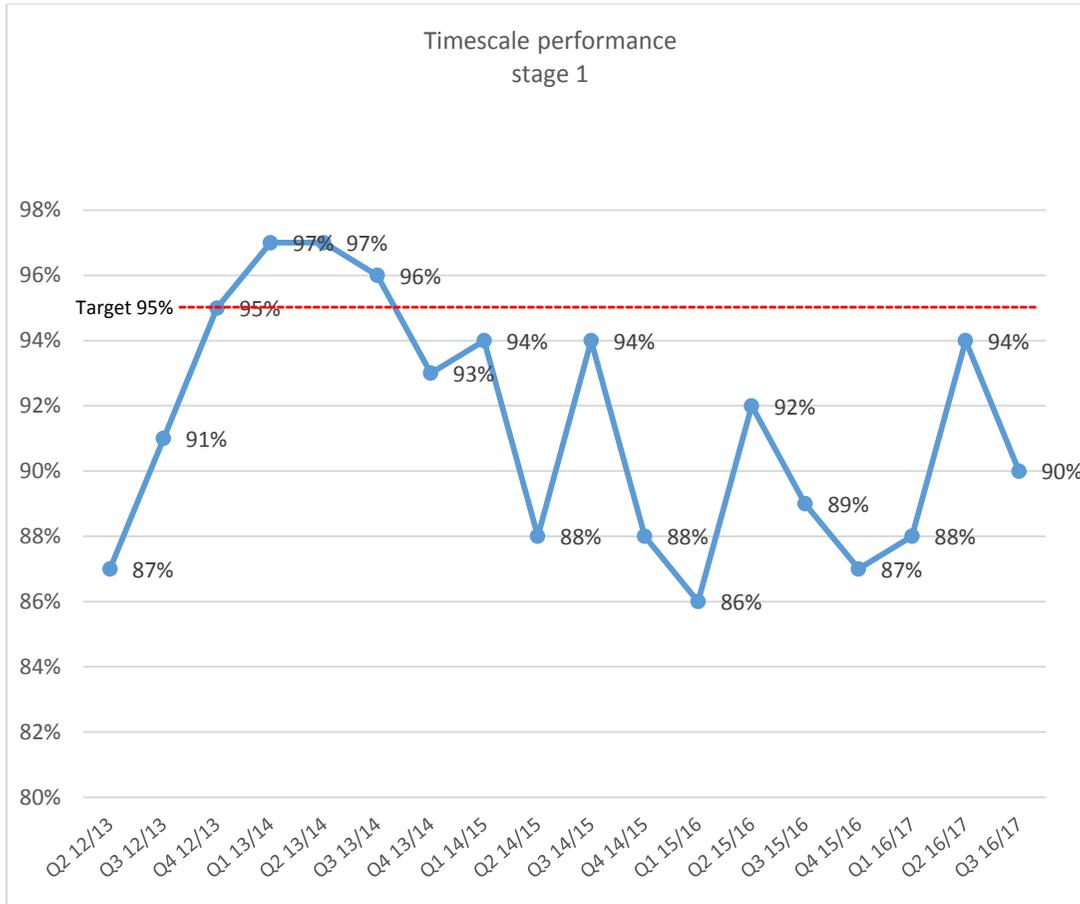


Table 2: Overall complaint response times for stage 2 complaints – Q3

| Service                                                 | Quarter 1 - Stage 2 |        |      | Quarter 2 - Stage 2 |        |      | Quarter 3 - Stage 2 |        |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|------|---------------------|--------|------|---------------------|--------|------|
|                                                         | Rec'd               | Within | %    | Rec'd               | Within | %    | Rec'd               | Within | %    |
| Business Improvement & Modernisation                    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Legal, HR and Democratic Services                       | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Customers                                               | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Revenues and Benefits (ALL SERVICES PROVIDED BY CIVICA) | 2                   | 2      | 100% | 1                   | 1      | 100% | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Education                                               | 2                   | 2      | 100% | 1                   | 1      | 100% | 2                   | 2      | 100% |
| Highways & Environmental Services                       | 0                   | 0      | -    | 1                   | 1      | 100% | 1                   | 0      | 0%   |
| Facilities, Assets and Housing                          | 0                   | 0      | -    | 2                   | 2      | 100% | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Planning and Public Protection                          | 8                   | 7      | 88%  | 5                   | 5      | 100% | 1                   | 0      | 0%   |
| Community Support Services                              | 2                   | 2      | 100% | 1                   | 1      | 100% | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES                              | 1                   | 1      | 100% | 0                   | 0      | -    | 1                   | 1      | 100% |
| CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES                            | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    | 0                   | 0      | -    |
| Corporate Total                                         | 15                  | 14     | 93%  | 11                  | 11     | 100% | 5                   | 3      | 60%  |

Chart 2: Stage 2 complaint response times – 4 year analysis

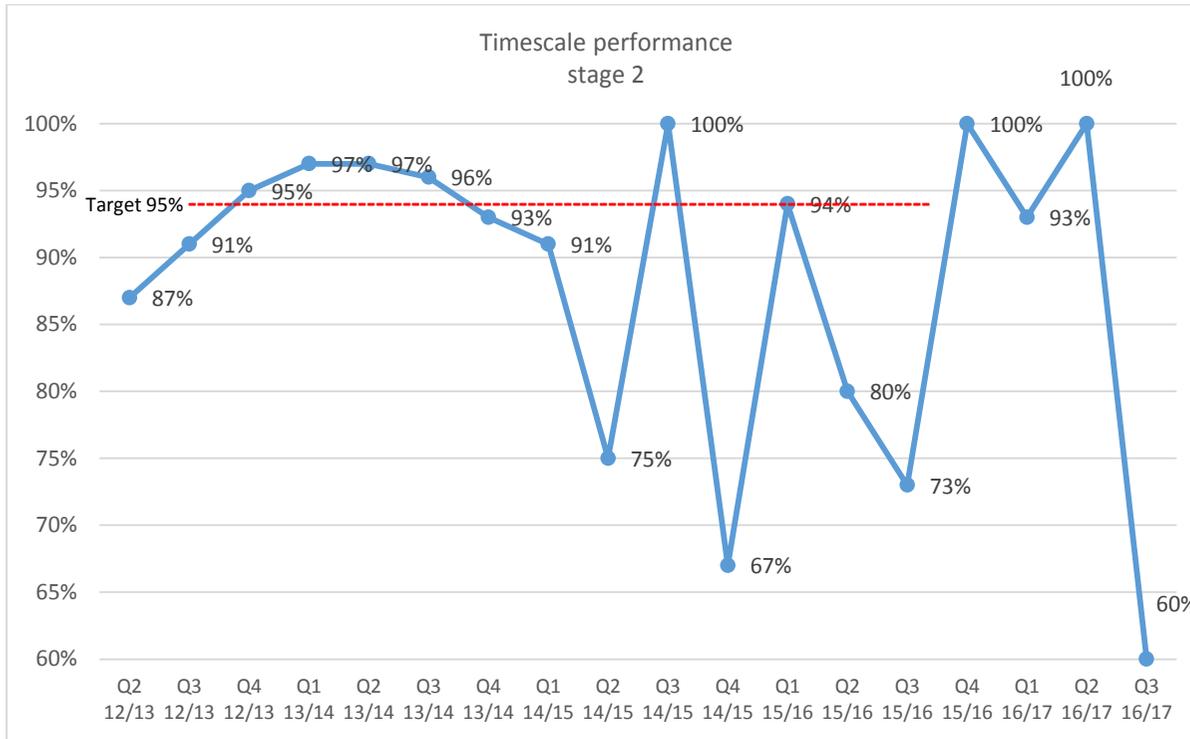
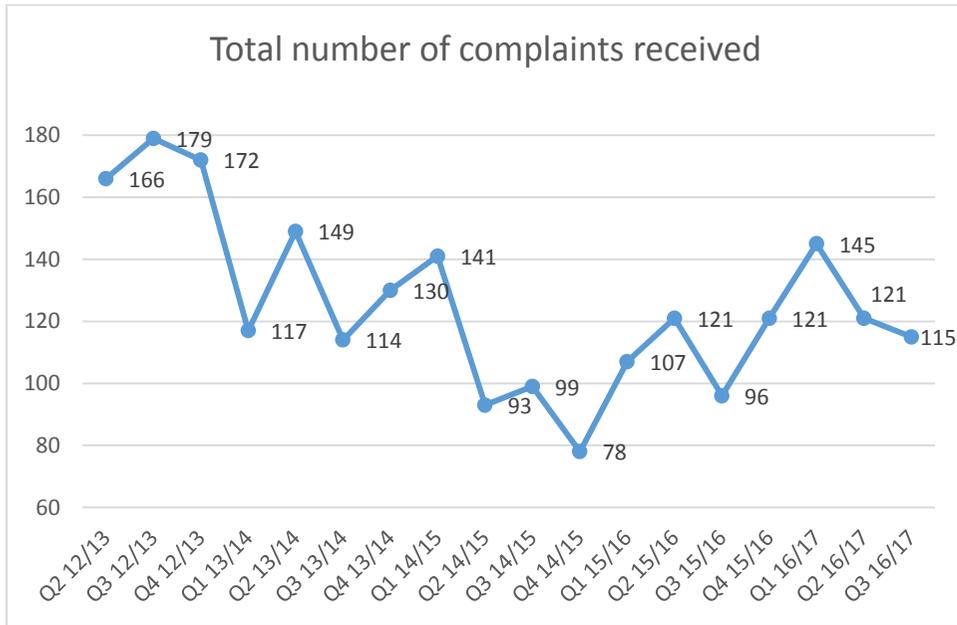


Chart 3: Total number of complaints received – 4 year analysis

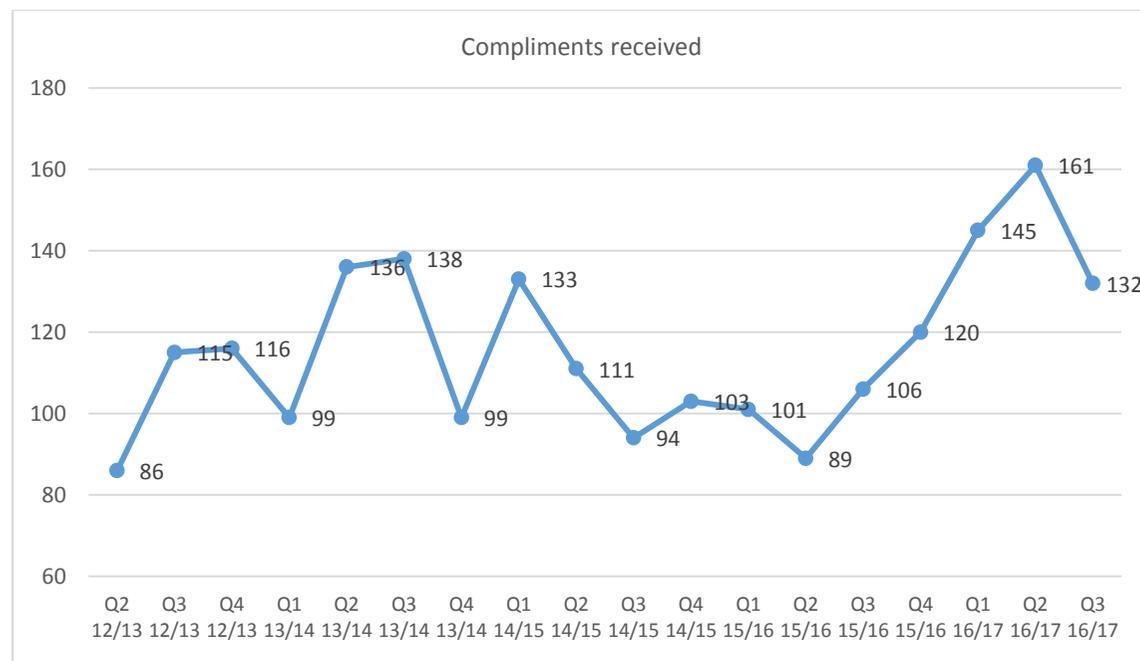


There is a clear downward trend in terms of overall numbers of complaints received. Changes to the way in which complaints are recorded accounts for this in part, but numbers are reducing year on year.

**Table 5: Compliments received during Q3**

| Service Area                           | Q1         | Q2         | Q3         | Q4 |
|----------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|----|
| Business Improvement and Modernisation | 0          | 1          | 0          |    |
| Legal, HR and Democratic Services      | 1          | 0          | 0          |    |
| Customers                              | 16         | 39         | 12         |    |
| Revenues and Benefits                  | 0          | 0          | 0          |    |
| Education and Children's Services      | 2          | 1          | 14         |    |
| Highways and Environmental Services    | 50         | 42         | 39         |    |
| Facilities, Assets and Housing         | 55         | 22         | 39         |    |
| Planning and Public Protection         | 7          | 16         | 10         |    |
| Community Support Services             | 14         | 40         | 18         |    |
|                                        | <b>145</b> | <b>161</b> | <b>132</b> |    |

**Chart 4: Compliments received – 4 year analysis**



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|                             |                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to:</b>           | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>                                               |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>     | <b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2017</b>                                                   |
| <b>Lead Member/Officer:</b> | <b>Lead Member, Customers/<br/>Head of Customers Communications &amp; Marketing</b> |
| <b>Report Author:</b>       | <b>Service Improvement Manager</b>                                                  |
| <b>Title:</b>               | <b>Customer Effort Dashboard</b>                                                    |

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

Provides information about a method by which customer feedback is currently being collected on behalf of Denbighshire, and collated into a Customer Effort Dashboard, providing the council with real time information about the customer experience and expectations which can be used to inform future service improvements.

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

To provide background information to explain the need for the survey, how it works, what information it provides and how this will help improve service delivery.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

For Scrutiny to be aware of the Customer Effort Dashboard and to regularly scrutinise the results and actions taken either as an appendix to the Your Voice agenda item, or as a standalone report.

**4. Report details**  
**Background**

The Customer contact centre has over 200,000 conversations with citizens a year and is therefore the largest touch-point the Council has with end users of Council services. By seeking their views immediately after they have contacted the Council we are able to gain more timely feedback on their experience, and intelligence gathered can more effectively fed back to services to identify potential improvements.

In order to assess whether we are delivering against our key values and vision as a Council, the Customers, Communications & Marketing Service has commissioned a 12 month contract for an external supplier, Ember Services Ltd, to undertake an independent analysis of our customers' satisfaction through the use of a survey.

The survey is text based and is sent to a random sample of citizens' mobile phones within 24 hours of them having called the Contact Centre in their preferred language. Frequent callers will only receive one request every 6 weeks. Within the text

message is a link to a website (optimised for mobile use) that asks the following questions:

|                                                                         |                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| What was the reason for your phone call?                                | Drop down list     |
| Did you try and use our website to resolve your query before calling? - | Yes/No             |
| Is this the first time you have contacted the Council about this query? | Yes / No           |
| If No, how many times?                                                  | 1 to 5, 5+         |
| How easy was it to get through to talk to someone about your query?     | Score 1 to 10      |
| How would you rate our Advisor's willingness to help?                   | Score 1 to 10      |
| How easy was it to get your query resolved?                             | Score 1 to 10      |
| How satisfied are you with your overall experience of speaking with us? | Score 1 to 10      |
| Please tell us why you have scored us this way?                         | Optional free text |
| What outcome did you expect when you contacted us about this service?   | Optional free text |

The survey results are benchmarked against other organisations and councils that are using the same survey method and against the Institute of Customer Service Satisfaction Index (CSI) – a comprehensive UK wide survey. This provides a high level understanding of how Denbighshire compares to other Local Authorities and how well we meet the expectations of our customers.

The practical actions required to improve our services, come from the analysis of customer comments. The sentiment of each comment and any reason for dissatisfaction will be established – this will highlight those areas that need improvement and what is required to be done to improve.

Over time, the trends will be monitored to ensure any improvements in customer services or in end service delivery are having a positive effect for our customer base. Please refer to *appendix 1* for results to date.

We are working with Ember to create a public-facing dashboard so that our performance will be publicly available.

We are also developing sophisticated analysis alongside our website statistics to identify which webpages require enhancement or development and to measure the potential for customers to want to self-serve.

*Appendix 2* provides information regarding our monthly Contact Centre call handling results (demonstrating an improvement in all areas over the last 12 months)

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

It contributes towards 'Modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers' by using customer feedback to improve service delivery and reduce customer effort in contacting the council.

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

It costs £1,950 per month (paid to an external supplier); the first 12 months has been funded through the Modernisation Board.

Involves some staff intervention in terms of data analysis, customer call-backs and completing identified actions to improve customer service and delivery.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

*n/a*

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

Modernisation Board and CCM.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

*n/a*

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

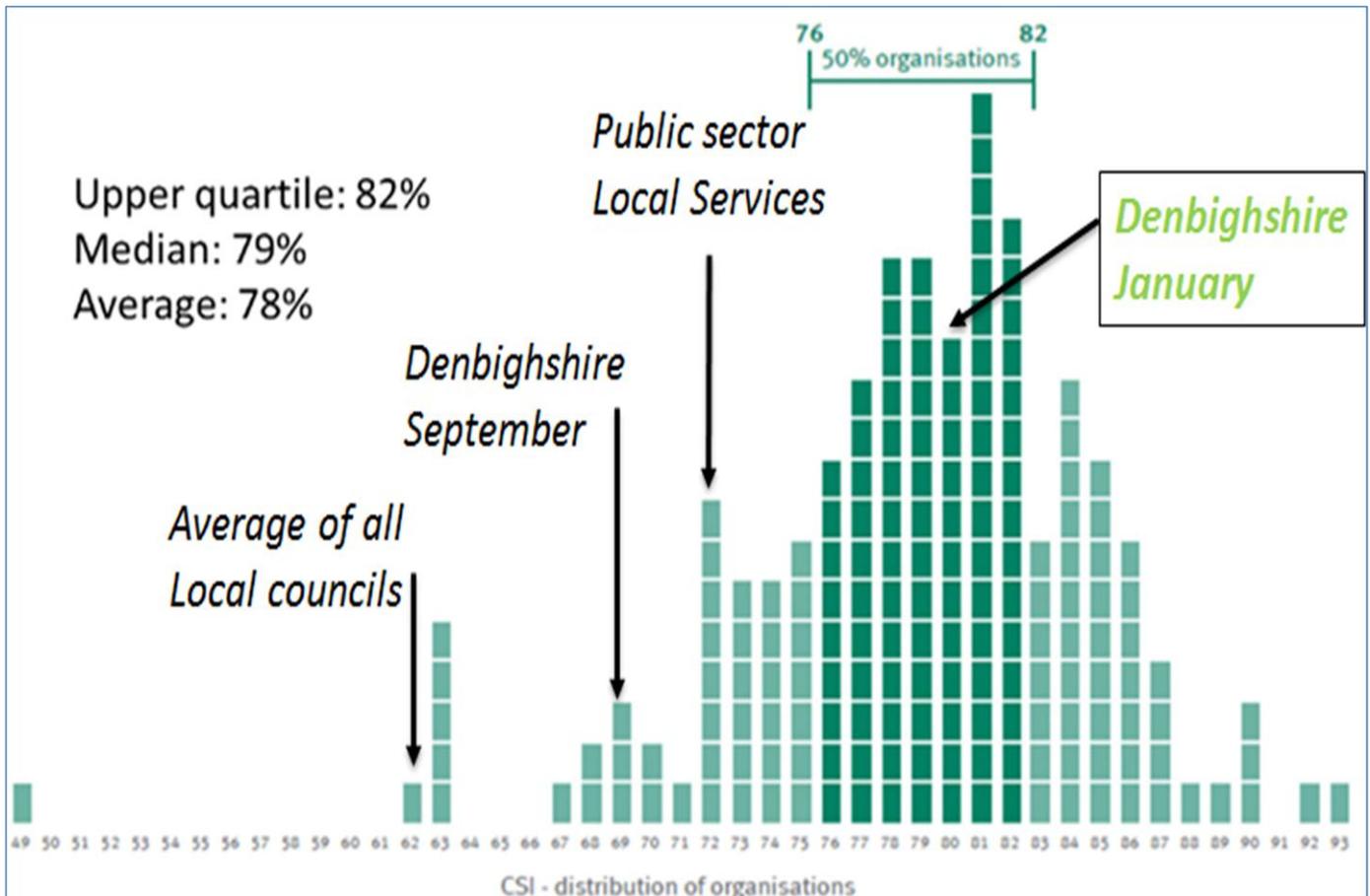
*n/a*

**11. Power to make the Decision**

*n/a*

Results to date (September 2016 – January 2017):

|                                                          |                          |                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Total surveys sent</b>                                | <b>8750</b>              |                                             |
| <b>Total surveys returned</b>                            | <b>831</b>               | <b>= 9% this is a very high return rate</b> |
| <b>Total verbatim received</b>                           | <b>671</b>               | <b>= 81% this is exceptionally high</b>     |
| <b>(where customers add narrative to their feedback)</b> |                          |                                             |
| <b>No. of calls/transactions to date</b>                 | <b>1.73 per customer</b> |                                             |



| <i>Customer Perception</i>     | <i>Positive Comments</i> | <i>Lowest/highest</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overall</b>                 | <b>63%</b>               | <b>58%/70%</b>        |
| <b>Agent Behaviour</b>         | <b>82%</b>               | <b>77%/86%</b>        |
| <b>Service Area Resolution</b> | <b>46%</b>               | <b>42%/56%</b>        |
| <b>Met Expectations</b>        | <b>56%</b>               | <b>52%/58%</b>        |

# Survey Results



# DCC Analysis

(1<sup>st</sup> quarter September - November 2016)

557 survey responses received between 1 September and 25 November 2016.

133 respondents (24%) of respondents had unmet expectations (the rest had them met or did not comment).

| No of respondents | Reason for unmet expectations                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 44                | Wanted some advice or better advice than they received |
| 39                | Wanted their problem resolved and it wasn't            |
| 21                | Wanted immediate resolution                            |
| 18                | Wanted more empathy                                    |
| 8                 | Wanted a straight-forward answer                       |
| 2                 | Wanted a specific date/appointment/timeframe           |
| 1                 | Wanted DCC to keep to time                             |

We identified 143 respondents who would benefit more a call-back from DCC, in the following groups :

| No of respondents | Reason for call-back    |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 76                | Need information        |
| 37                | Political               |
| 15                | Long running issue      |
| 7                 | Health & Safety         |
| 6                 | Tried the website first |
| 2                 | Urgent                  |

These two highest scores suggest a correlation.

Off the 557 respondents, scores were as follows

| No of respondents | How satisfied with experience? (1 - 10) |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 256               | 10                                      |
| 78                | 1                                       |
| 59                | 9                                       |
| 40                | 8                                       |
| 28                | 5                                       |
| 27                | 7                                       |
| 18                | 2                                       |
| 18                | 6                                       |
| 17                | 4                                       |

| No of respondents | How easy was it to get query resolved (1 - 10) |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 262               | 10                                             |
| 89                | 1                                              |
| 41                | 8                                              |
| 38                | 9                                              |
| 31                | 5                                              |
| 30                | 7                                              |
| 24                | 6                                              |
| 13                | 2                                              |
| 12                | 4                                              |

| No of respondents | Advisors willingness to help (1 - 10) |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 302               | 10                                    |
| 55                | 9                                     |
| 45                | 8                                     |
| 41                | 1                                     |
| 31                | 7                                     |
| 20                | 5                                     |
| 17                | 6                                     |
| 14                | 2                                     |
| 14                | 3                                     |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 12 | 3 |
| 4  | 0 |

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 10 | 3 |
| 7  | 0 |

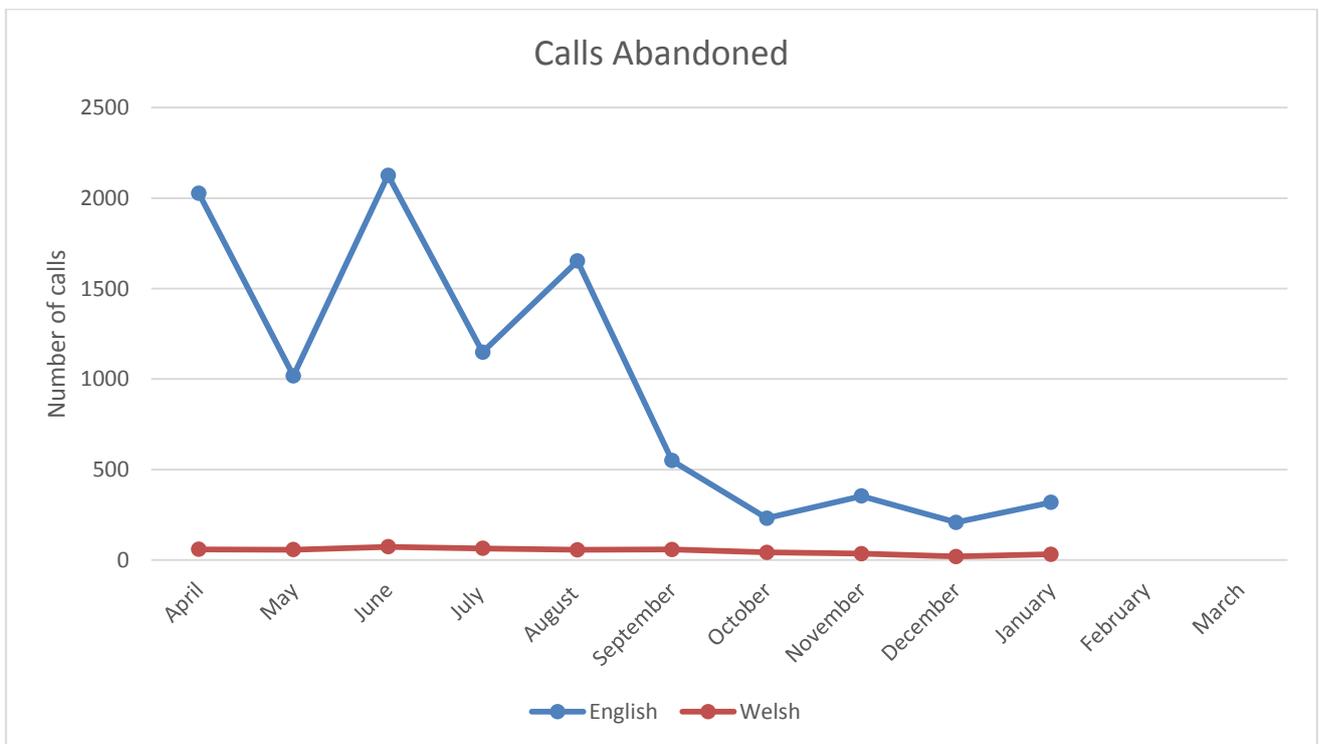
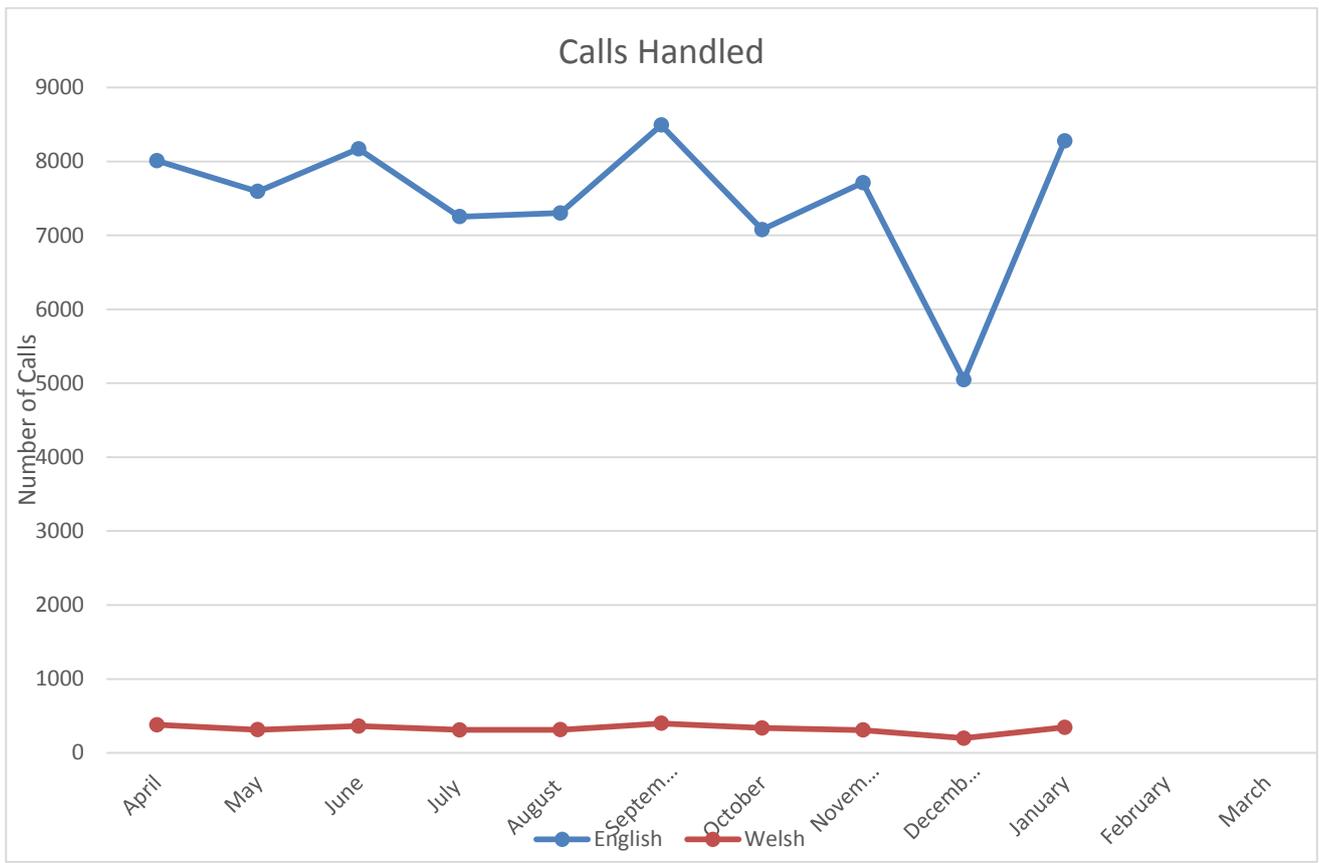
|    |   |
|----|---|
| 12 | 4 |
| 6  | 0 |

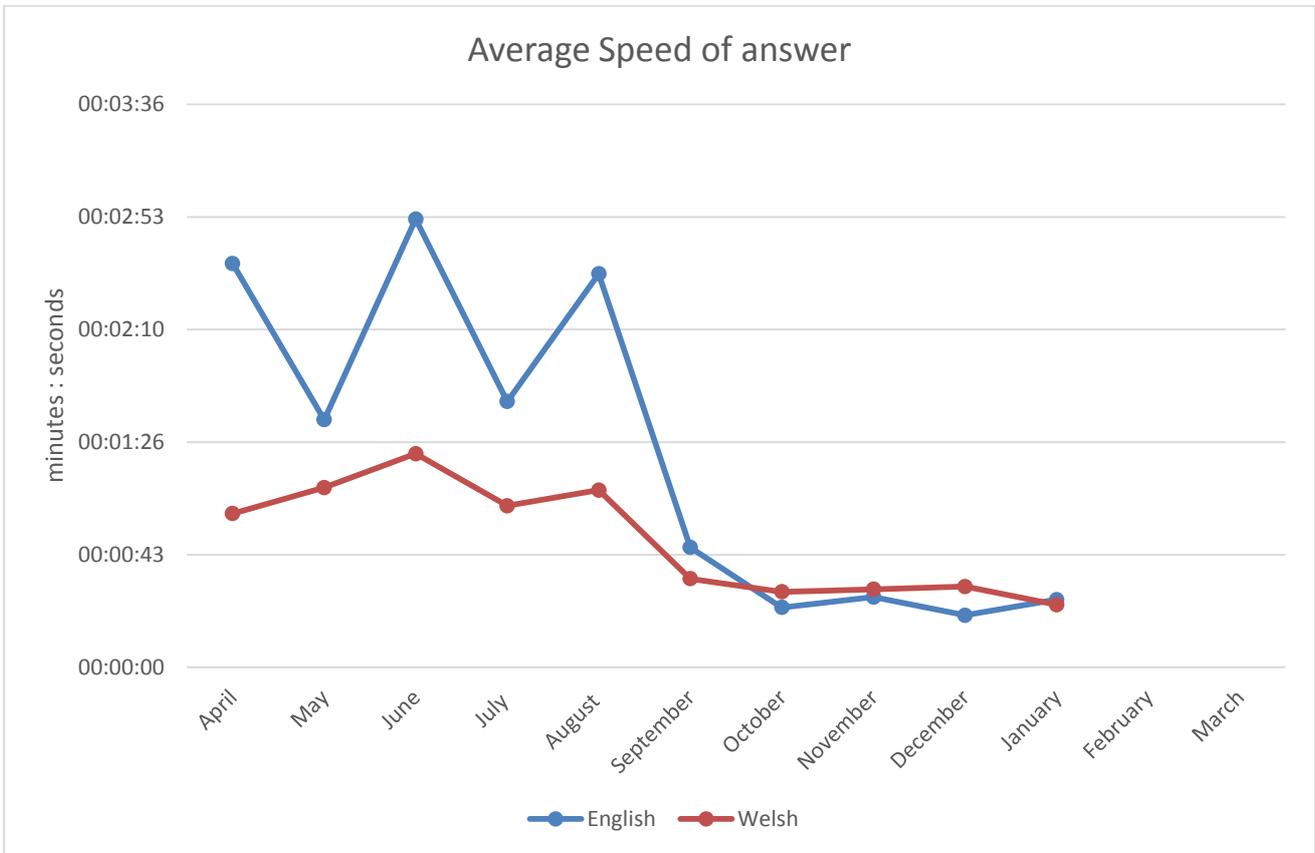
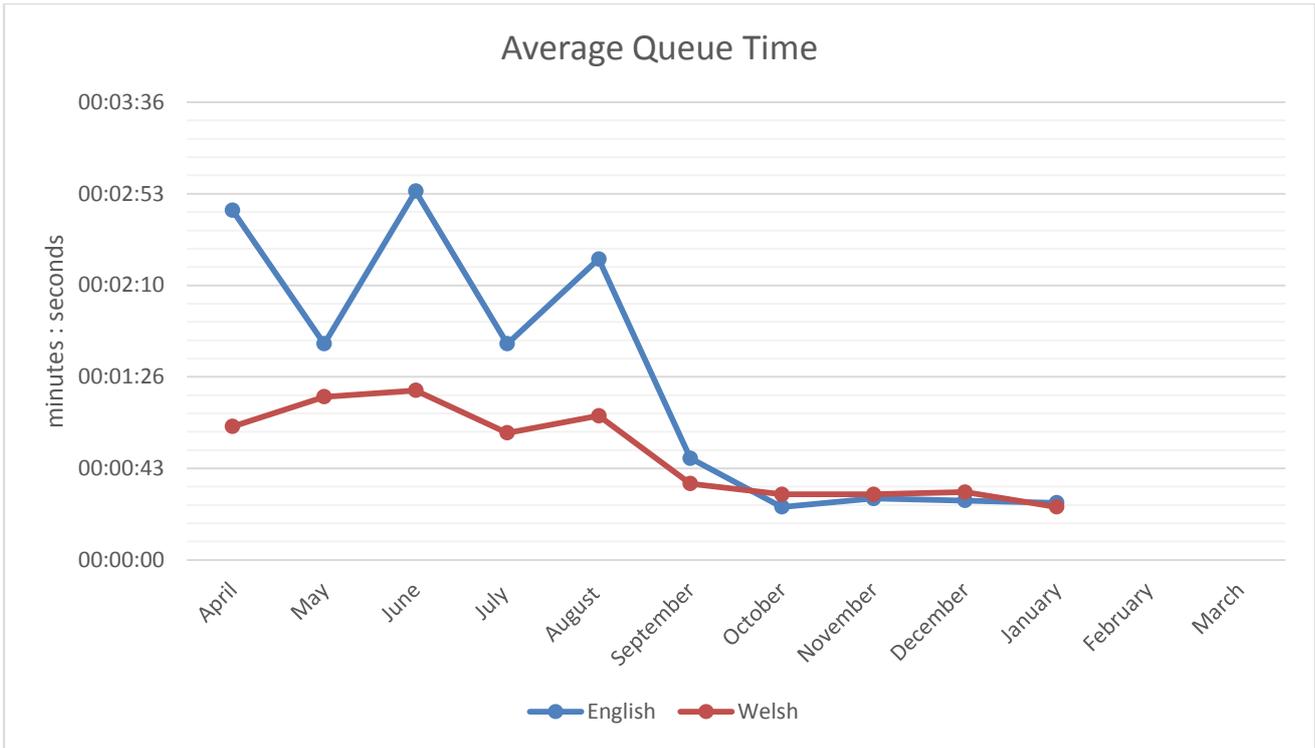
94 of the verbatim rated experience and ease of resolve at equal to 3 or under.

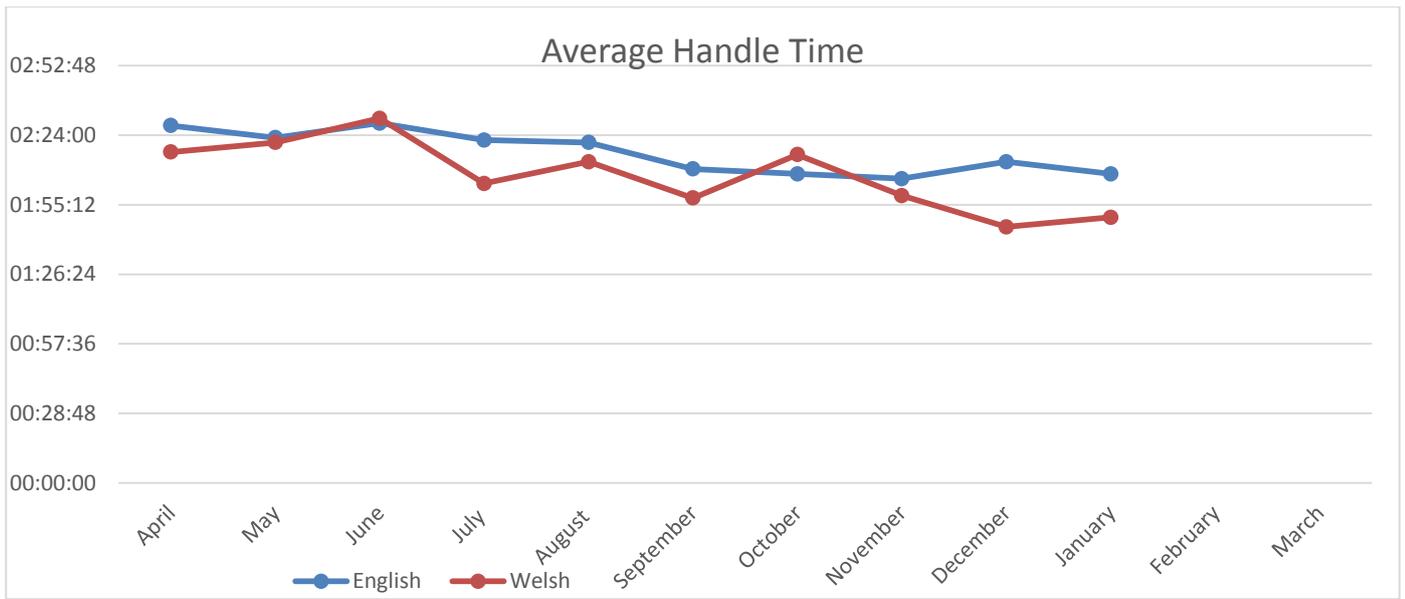
82 of these had useful text feedback which was analysed as follows :

| No of respondents | Area of dissatisfaction |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 31                | Lack of contact         |
| 28                | Lack of help            |
| 9                 | Fleet & Waste           |
| 6                 | Highways                |
| 3                 | Education               |
| 2                 | Misc                    |
| 1                 | Benefits                |
| 1                 | Parking                 |
| 1                 | Payments                |

This supports the earlier supposition that there is an issue around advice and information.







- Vertical axis measured in minutes : seconds

|                             |                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to:</b>           | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>                                                        |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b>     | <b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2017</b>                                                            |
| <b>Lead Member/Officer:</b> | <b>Lead Member for Modernisation and Housing/<br/>Strategic Planning and Housing Manager</b> |
| <b>Report Author:</b>       | <b>Local Housing Strategy and Development Officer</b>                                        |
| <b>Title:</b>               | <b>Progress on delivering Denbighshire's Housing Strategy</b>                                |

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

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Scrutiny on the progress made to date in delivering the key outcomes and actions identified in Denbighshire's Housing Strategy. Denbighshire's Housing Strategy was adopted by Council on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015. A table setting out progress on the Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

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

- 2.1 This report has been prepared as a result of a request from Performance Scrutiny to review progress on the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy.

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

- 3.1 That Scrutiny comment on the report's contents and continues to monitor delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 Denbighshire's Housing Strategy sets out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the County for the period 2016-2021. It is an important corporate document for the Council and provides the framework for all Council housing related functions (private & public). The Strategy is set within the framework of the Corporate Plan as detailed in 5.1 and sits alongside the Local Development Plan. The Strategy identifies 5 "Themes" which are priority areas for action to be targeted:

- More homes to meet local need and demand;
- Creating a supply of affordable homes;
- Ensuring safe and healthy homes;
- Homes and support for vulnerable people;
- Promoting and supporting communities.

- 4.2 Delivery of the Action Plan is overseen by the Housing Strategy Delivery Group, which is chaired by the Lead Member with responsibility for delivering the Housing Strategy, Cllr Barbara Smith. Membership of the Group comprises those Lead Members with responsibility for an area of housing within their portfolios, relevant Heads of Service and the Strategic Planning & Housing Manager.

- 4.3 The Group meets every two months and monitors and reviews progress, with input from the various Heads of Service and officers involved with delivering individual actions. Any potential issues in meeting targets are identified at the earliest opportunity. The Group also oversees the allocation of Social Housing Grant (SHG) which is awarded annually by Welsh Government to help bring forward affordable housing development by Housing Associations and is around £1 million per annum. This funding is controlled locally by the Council.
- 4.4 The Strategy is accompanied by a 61 point Action Plan, with 119 milestones identified to achieve them. It sets out in more detail the responsibilities of the various relevant teams within the Council and how we work with partners to help to realise the Council's vision for housing. The Strategy is a living document and more actions will be added as work progresses and others are completed. It is planned to review the action plan in autumn 2017 when the new corporate priorities have been set and the new Council Members are fully established, to ensure the Strategy still supports the vision for Denbighshire. The Strategy itself has a five year lifespan (2016 – 2021) and will need to be reviewed by 2021.
- 4.5 Four key outcomes were identified at the outset of the adoption of the Housing Strategy, to be achieved in year one. The table sets out the detail and the progress made against these:

| <b>Key outcome of Housing Strategy in year 1</b>                                                                         | <b>Progress made with key outcomes by December 2016 (1) and to date (2)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Increase social housing by a minimum of 7 units                                                                          | (1) 30 social homes brought forward between December 2015 – December 2016; 1 of these is now a Council home previously lost through the Right to Buy<br><br>(2) 39 social homes from December 2015 to February 2017 and 13 more due to complete this financial year including 1 ex-Council property being renovated by the Council |
| Improved standard of temporary homelessness accommodation solutions from within DCC housing stock and/or private options | (1) New procedures to ensure temporary accommodation solutions are checked by Housing Enforcement prior to occupation                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| A minimum of 5 Empty properties back into use as affordable housing                                                      | (1) 18 empty homes have been brought back into use through Houses to Homes loans and in partnership with North Wales Housing (December 2015 – December 2016)<br><br>(2) 4 further empty homes are currently in the process of being purchased and renovated                                                                        |
| Resourced neighbourhood plans                                                                                            | (1) Neighbourhood plans have been                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

|                                                           |                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| developed with our Council tenants to improve their areas | developed and are informing future planning of our Council Housing neighbourhoods. 4 Community Development posts commenced in November 2016 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Key areas of progress**

- 4.6 Of the 61 Actions identified, 27 have been delivered, with a number now embedded in operational delivery as ‘business as usual’, there is some minor slippage on 5 actions in accordance with the original deadlines set but all now have amended deadlines and plans in place to complete them, the remainder are all on track for delivery within the deadlines agreed.
- 4.7 Many of the initial actions of the strategy were concerned with developing frameworks to enable housing delivery. This has included regular meetings with the strategic officers of partner Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in addition to the operational meetings which were already carried out. A Housing Land Prospectus has been developed and is regularly updated to promote the land allocations in the county to stimulate interest.
- 4.8 An Empty Homes Delivery Plan and an Energy Efficiency Delivery Plan are being developed and overseen by the monitoring group. A review of the affordable housing commuted sums policy, has also taken place, in accordance with the recommendations of the affordable housing task and finish group. These plans and revised policy will be examined under the delegated decision process.
- 4.9 Cartrefi Conwy have been zoned to access Social Housing Grant (SHG) in Denbighshire, after a successful business case was submitted to Welsh Government. As a direct result of this 3 empty homes have been bought by this RSL in 2016 (using SHG funding) and will be refurbished during 2017 and let in 2017/18. They are also looking at a variety of new build opportunities across the County. There is also potential for Denbighshire ‘zoning’ to be extended to additional RSLs. . By expanding the zoning to other RSLs, it increases competition and improves opportunities for partnership working to bring forward housing in the county.
- 4.10 Facilities, Assets and Housing have conducted a full review of Council and HRA land holdings, with a view to enable council house development. In partnership with this review Social Housing Locality plans are being developed, across all the MAG areas. These are assessing in detail the current and forward planning need of social housing in each area. This will inform future development and planned improvements of Council housing.
- 4.11 Denbighshire County Council along with other local authorities and social housing providers have signed up to the Housing Pact with Welsh Government. The Pact is an agreement to bring forward a minimum 20,000 affordable homes across Wales during the period 2016 - 2021. A similar target was set by Welsh Government in the last Assembly term 2011 - 2015 of 10,000. This was exceeded, with a total of 11,508 affordable properties being made available across Wales; Denbighshire contributed 266 properties to this total (2.3%).

- 4.12 Since April 2016 a total of 35 affordable homes have been brought forward (target is 40 for April 2016 – April 2017) with another anticipated 12 new build properties to come forward in Llangollen and additional homelessness leased properties before the end of the financial year. A total of 55 affordable homes were provided in 2015/16.
- 4.13 A full homelessness review has been carried out including current and future provision of emergency and longer term homelessness accommodation. This will inform the Homelessness Strategy which is currently being developed and is a statutory requirement for the authority.
- 4.14 A 'Renting Ready' course has been introduced and is run in conjunction with Crisis. It aims to provide people with skills to explore their housing options and help sustain a tenancy. This is essential in helping to prevent future incidents of homelessness.

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

- 5.1 The themes of the Housing Strategy are structured to complement corporate priorities and principally support the following areas:
- Ensuring access to good quality housing;
  - Vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible;
  - Developing the local economy – development within the County will contribute towards securing local employment opportunities in the construction sector.

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

- 6.1 The actions contained in the Housing Strategy Action Plan are contained within budgets held by teams within the Council and external organisations such as Welsh Government and Housing Associations. These are regularly monitored and reported through the appropriate mechanisms.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

The report outlines information on the progress with the Housing Strategy Action Plan and does not seek a decision hence a Well-being Impact Assessment is unnecessary.

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

A full consultation process was undertaken with a wide range of partners to develop the Housing Strategy. These included Health, Housing Associations, City, Community and Town Councils and Councillors. The Housing Strategy Action Plan is regularly monitored and discussed by the Housing Strategy Delivery Group.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Any in-house cost implications arising from the Housing Strategy will need to be considered as future plans develop. However, with this in mind the Council's current

Housing Stock Business Plan includes an assumption that an element of HRA funding will be set aside to help deliver more affordable social housing in the County

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

The delivery of the Housing Strategy is a key priority for the Council. A range of mechanisms are in place to monitor progress including this report.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Local Government Act 2000. The following Housing Acts set out the Council's role with regard to the functioning of the housing market and delivery of a housing strategy: Housing Act 1985 (S8), Housing Act 2004 (S8), Local Government Act 2003 (S87), Housing (Wales) Act 2014

Scrutiny's powers with respect to monitoring the delivery of policy objectives is set out in Section 7.4.2 (b) of the Council's Constitution.

**Contact Officer:**

Local Housing Strategy and Development Officer

Tel: 01824 706844

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Denbighshire County Council

# Denbighshire's Housing Strategy

**Action Plan Update March 2017**

## Introduction

The Housing Strategy and accompanying Action Plan were adopted by the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 and are an amalgamation of all of our actions concerned with housing and housing related support. As a result the implementation of the Strategy is being undertaken by several different departments, in many instances working with partner organisations.

The relevant actions have been included in each service business plan as appropriate and are monitored by the relevant Lead Members and Heads of Service through the Housing Strategy Delivery Group, chaired by the Lead Member for Housing, Cllr Barbara Smith. The Housing Strategy is based around 5 key themes, and the Action Plan is structured around these themes, setting out the key actions required to deliver the desired outcomes for each key theme:

1. More homes to meet local need and demand
2. Creating a supply of affordable homes
3. Ensuring safe and healthy homes
4. Homes and support for vulnerable people
5. Promoting and supporting communities

The Action Plan identified 4 key outcomes to be delivered in Year 1. The table below sets out progress on these outcomes.

| Year 1 - Key outcomes                                                                                                    | Progress on key outcomes December 2016                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Increase social housing by a minimum of 7 units                                                                          | 30 social homes brought forward between December 2015 – December 2016; 1 of these is now a Council home previously lost through the Right to Buy |
| Improved standard of temporary homelessness accommodation solutions from within DCC housing stock and/or private options | New procedures to ensure temporary accommodation solutions are checked by Public Protection prior to occupation                                  |
| A minimum of 5 Empty properties back into use as affordable housing                                                      | 18 empty homes have been brought back into use through Houses to Homes loans and in partnership with North Wales Housing                         |
| Resourced neighbourhood plans developed with our Council tenants to improve their areas                                  | Neighbourhood plans have been developed and are informing future planning of our Council Housing neighbourhoods                                  |

The tables on the following pages set out progress updates on all the actions in the Action Plan, with the status illustrated as below.

| Key: Action status                                                   |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Action delivery on course                                            |  |
| Action delivery has minor slippage                                   |  |
| Action delivery has major issues - unlikely to be met in target date |  |
| Action completed                                                     |  |
| Action completed and embedded as 'Business as usual' activity        |  |

| Ref                                                      | Action                                                                                                                                                                | Action status | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Lead Member / Head of Service                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>THEME 1: More homes to meet local need and demand</b> |                                                                                                                                                                       |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                  |
| 1.01                                                     | Develop site development briefs for key development sites allocated for housing in the LDP                                                                            |               | Site Development brief programme is on track for completion April 2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | David Smith /Graham Boase                        |
| 1.02                                                     | Develop appropriate Supplementary Planning Guidance                                                                                                                   |               | SPG programme is on track for completion June 2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | David Smith/ Graham Boase                        |
| 1.03                                                     | To develop and publicise a sites prospectus to promote allocated housing sites across the county.                                                                     |               | Sites prospectus completed and published on website. Subsequently updated with additional 'stalled' sites. Document launched and cited as good practice. Developers & RSL's emailed with a link, letter and questionnaire. Prospectus to be updated on a quarterly basis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | David Smith/ Julian Thompson-Hill / Graham Boase |
| 1.04                                                     | Update Local Housing Market Assessment incorporating housing need and demand data. Current assessment was completed in 2015.                                          |               | Working with Corporate Research & Intelligence on updating the LHMA and the work will be tied into the LDP review.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | David Smith /Graham Boase                        |
| 1.05                                                     | Review LDP housing allocations and policies as part of statutory LDP Review                                                                                           |               | Work plan is currently being drafted to ensure this work begins timeously. Work on LDP Review to start in Autumn 2017.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | David Smith /Graham Boase                        |
| 1.06                                                     | Investigate use of reduced commencement period conditions on planning permissions (i.e. shorter than current standard requiring development to start within 5 years). |               | This is being implemented on sites where there have been issues previously, and for any applications for residential development which are not in line with LDP policy (ie on sites which are not allocated or outside development boundaries). Planning conditions have to be reasonable, so can't set a reduced commencement period for every application. In future there is scope to link with the Joint Housing Land Availability Study. All sites to be reviewed and landowners contacted as part of LDP Review | David Smith/ Graham Boase                        |
| 1.07                                                     | Bring forward development on sites with unimplemented planning permission through a                                                                                   |               | Large sites (10 + units) with unimplemented planning permissions have been included in the Sites Prospectus. Further assessment to be undertaken after the completion of this year's Joint Housing Land Availability Study, (JHLAS). All sites to                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | David Smith /Graham Boase                        |

| Ref  | Action                                                                                                                                                                       | Action status | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Lead Member / Head of Service |
|------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|      | clear programme of action                                                                                                                                                    |               | be reviewed and landowners contacted as part of LDP Review.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                               |
| 1.08 | To develop an Infrastructure Plan for Denbighshire                                                                                                                           |               | Initial Infrastructure Plan drafted. Updated Infrastructure Plan will be developed as part of the LDP Review work programme and will inform LDP Review and site assessments.                                                                                                                                                                                                   | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 1.09 | Develop the Council's Empty Homes Delivery Plan, investigate innovative mechanisms for bringing empty homes back into use and work with partners to develop new initiatives. |               | Initial draft Delivery Plan produced and discussed at February 17 Lead Members Housing Strategy Delivery Group meeting. Approval to be sought via delegated decision by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.                                                                                                                                                                           | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 1.10 | Undertake a gypsy & traveller accommodation needs assessment. Support delivery of appropriate accommodation if a need is identified.                                         |               | Accommodation assessment completed and presented to Cabinet 16/2/16. Report approved and sent to WG 25/2/16. Assessment queries and new information from additional interviews undertaken resulted in a change in the assessment report advising of a need for a residential site and a transit site. Report taken to Cabinet 23/1/17 and agreed. Report resubmitted to WG.    | Hugh Irving/ Graham Boase     |
| 1.11 | Remove the requirement for rural buildings to be converted to affordable housing (after economic use is proved unfeasible), in preference for market housing.                |               | SPG amended to require economic & affordable uses to be explored, if there is no interest/feasibility following this, the unit may be sold on the open market for residential use. LDP policy will be reviewed as part of the LDP Review.                                                                                                                                      | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 1.12 | Increase access to training opportunities and employment for local people in the construction / housebuilding sector, through developing                                     |               | IN2 Construction project has trained 4 candidates in construction skills. 1 employed on site and 2 others were offered work. SPG Planning Obligations adopted by Planning Committee 16.11.16 includes requirements for training & employment on development sites through the planning process. On-going work with Job Centre Plus to ensure these requirements are delivered. | David Smith /Graham Boase     |

| Ref                                                   | Action                                                                                                                                                                                         | Action status | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Lead Member / Head of Service                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                       | planning policy to encourage this through development                                                                                                                                          |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                        |
| 1.13                                                  | Ensuring mix of appropriate housing to meet local needs, including development of good quality intermediate and market rented homes. Implement regular case conferences for housing proposals. |               | Input on all relevant planning applications with regards to housing mix. Also case conferences are regularly held to discuss applications prior to being determined to ensure consistency and adherence to policies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | David Smith/<br>Julian Thompson-Hill /<br>Graham Boase |
| <b>THEME 2: Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                        |
| 2.01<br>Page 77                                       | Establish and implement an affordable housing delivery / investment programme to enable resources to be targeted to priority sites and actions                                                 |               | Denbigh & Rhyl prioritised, all land in the area evaluated and discussions held with MAGs. Development Programme Executive Group established & meet on a regular basis to steer Council development. Linked to 2.02 - All potential affordable housing sites with planning permission have been mapped & programme has been developed pulling together Planning Application data, affordable housing and Council schemes. Housing Development Officer & Planning are analysing the information, to see if there is anything DCC can contribute to enable the sites to come forward more quickly.                                                                                                                   | David Smith /Graham Boase/Jamie Groves                 |
| 2.02                                                  | Review both Council and HRA landholdings to determine suitability and availability for affordable housing development and establish a clear programme for delivery                             |               | Analysis of need and options for the development of new homes in the Prestatyn & Meliden, Rhyl, Denbigh and Elwy areas discussed at the MAG meetings and reports will be taken to remaining MAGs before the end of March 2017. Strategic direction outlined in the Service Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Asset Management plan – the latter presented to Cabinet in Feb 2017. Full condition surveys have been commissioned. Denbigh area complete and Rhyl area ongoing. The response to the Corporate Assessment in terms of changes to the Service Asset Management planning process has impacted on the development of the Corporate Asset Management Plan. Updates are being delivered to all MAG's | Julian Thompson-Hill /Jamie Groves                     |
| 2.03                                                  | Following a review of HRA                                                                                                                                                                      |               | Progress is dependent on the review in 2.02 and the locality plans currently being                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Julian Thompson-Hill/                                  |

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|      | landholdings, investigate selling HRA assets in areas where there is little or no housing need. Capital receipts to be used to contribute to the delivery of affordable housing in areas of identified need.                                                                                                                                         |               | developed will identify needs and opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Jamie Groves                                                   |
| 2.04 | Investigate developing a council protocol for the disposal of Council land and property assets to ensure they are first offered to HRA , then if not required by the HRA to sell at below market value to maximise affordable housing delivery, only if not required for affordable housing it should be offered to open market at full market value |               | Strategic direction outlined in the Service Asset Management Plan and the Corporate Asset Management plan. The proposal for a protocol was discussed at Asset Management Group and with Legal. The Asset Management Process ensures that any surplus sites are offered to Housing for development of social/affordable housing based on identified needs prior to being considered for disposal on the open market. Should the sites brought forward not be required, then market forces linked to existing planning obligations to provide affordable homes will dictate reduced market value, in which case further undervalue would be difficult to justify in line with the General Disposals Consent Order (Wales) 2003 (based on needs and outcome). The process is now embedded in the disposal process via the Asset Management Group. | Julian Thompson-Hill /Jamie Groves                             |
| 2.05 | Work with other public sector agencies (including BCUHB, WG, police etc) to review other public landholdings, to determine suitability and availability for affordable housing development                                                                                                                                                           |               | Working with partners to establish suitability for housing development on sites, is established in principle. Each development is assessed on its own merits, with partners being chosen accordingly. This action is now being progressed through the Social Housing Locality Plans project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | David Smith/ Julian Thompson-Hill/ Jamie Groves                |
| 2.06 | To maximise Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding to deliver more affordable housing and establish a development fund within the HRA                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               | Development options for initial tranche of sites and premises underway. Development options for 43-61 Queen Street and 2-16 Aquarium Street in Rhyl endorsed by Housing Programme Executive Group Nov 2016.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | David Smith/ Julian Thompson-Hill/ Jamie Groves/ Barbara Smith |
| 2.07 | Establish a targeted programme                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |               | Draft Affordable Homes Commuted Sums Policy developed and discussed at                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | David Smith/ Graham                                            |

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|         | for spending affordable housing commuted sums , including the possibility of pooling to form a central fund                                                                    |               | February 17 Lead Members Housing Strategy Delivery Group meeting. Approval to be sought via delegated decision by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Boase                                           |
| 2.08    | To maximise use of Social Housing Grant, Housing Finance Grant and other funding available to deliver additional affordable housing.                                           |               | <p>Programme Delivery Plan (PDP) full spend of just over £1m achieved with an additional £1.1m awarded from WG at year end to existing schemes in the programme (2015/16) Additional 55 affordable homes delivered 2015/16</p> <p>PDP Programme in place for 2016/17. Discussions with WG and RSLs in terms of our contribution to delivering WG target of 20,000 affordable homes in Wales (2016-21). Expecting additional funding (March 2017) and new funding such as HFG2 are available from April. More specific funding is expected in the next financial year. On-going objective for DCC</p> | David Smith/ Graham Boase                       |
| Page 79 | To fully investigate utilising a wider range of affordable housing funding & delivery mechanisms, e.g. joint venture, establishing a housing delivery company                  |               | Strategic Planning & Housing Team work closely with the Housing Development Manager to develop a delivery & investment programme using a wider range of funding and delivery mechanisms. Research has been undertaken into potential alternative options. Linked to action 2.02. Encouraging more joint projects with the Council and RSLs in terms of land and the purchase of existing properties. Specific Denbigh sites meetings are looking at options for a number of schemes                                                                                                                  | David Smith /Julian Thompson-Hill /Graham Boase |
| 2.10    | Practical completion of first new homes through Housing Development Programme                                                                                                  |               | <b>Key Outcome 1:</b> Business plan approved by Lead Member & submitted to WG. Includes options of buying former council stock. Planning application submitted for development in Queen Street, Rhyl during December 2016. Proposals to be amended due to the requirement for more extensive demolition than initially envisaged.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves                     |
| 2.11    | Develop a standard Section 106 legal agreement / clauses for securing affordable housing through planning applications. Ensure that this meets mortgage providers requirements |               | S106 agreements have been looked into extensively in conjunction with the legal department & standard clauses for inclusion in S106 agreements have been drafted. These will be published on the website once finalised. More affordable housing development is being secured currently through using the Unilateral Undertaking route. This can help progress development more quickly.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | David Smith/ Graham Boase                       |

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|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |               |                                                                                                                                                         |                               |
| 2.12 | Test a range of methods for calculating financial contributions towards affordable housing, with the aim of reducing the number of calculations currently used.                                                |               | No work undertaken as yet - would link into LDP Review. Work plan for LDP review currently being developed. Work on the Review to start in Autumn 2017. | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 2.13 | Involvement of the Council's Finance, Assets & Housing Service in assessing viability of planning proposals and involvement in negotiations with developer and applicants                                      |               | Finance, Housing & Assets Service are involved with assessment of viability of planning proposals on an ad hoc basis.                                   | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 2.14 | Introduce a mechanism to secure financial contributions for affordable housing following scheme completion, where viability has improved beyond that originally projected ('clawback').                        |               | Legal opinion obtained on this matter have advised that this is not possible                                                                            | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 2.15 | Test a range of approaches to calculating the value of affordable properties, to ensure this is set at an appropriate level.                                                                                   |               | No work undertaken as yet - would link to LDP Review. Work plan for LDP review currently being developed. Work on the Review to start in Autumn 2017.   | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 2.16 | Review the current approach and thresholds for affordable housing requirements in LDP policies relating to affordable housing through the statutory LDP Review process (currently 10% requirement but could be |               | No work undertaken as yet - would link to LDP Review. Work plan for LDP review currently being developed. Work on the Review to start in Autumn 2017.   | David Smith /Graham Boase     |

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|                                                 | increased if viability justified a higher affordable housing contribution)                                                   |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                               |
| 2.17                                            | To ensure good partnership working with Registered Social Landlords                                                          |               | Programme Delivery Plan meetings (for the strategic allocation of Social Housing Grant -SHG) arranged in accordance with PDP submission timescales quarterly. These meetings involve development officers from all our partner RSLs. Bi-annual update meetings have been held with RSL's individually in May 2016 & Nov 2016 and will continue to be held every 6 months. Ad hoc meetings arranged with RSLs as necessary.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 2.18                                            | To identify a wider range of development partners to assist in increasing the supply of affordable housing                   |               | Cartrefi Conwy is now an RSL partner for DCC - approved by WG in May 2016. Officers have worked with North Wales Housing to help them build a business case to extend their remit from Empty Homes only to include new build development, however the business case is currently on hold.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 2.19                                            | To increase applicants registered on the affordable housing register or equivalent. Review current process for registration. |               | DCC Communications campaign drafted for housing delivery to include the promotion of successful affordable housing schemes. Grŵp Cynefin administer the affordable housing register and are taking a fresh approach to simplify the process, together with developing a Marketing Strategy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 2.20                                            | To develop a communications campaign to ensure successful affordable home schemes are fully promoted                         |               | Communications strategy drafted & discussions ongoing with communications team.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| <b>THEME 3: Ensuring safe and healthy homes</b> |                                                                                                                              |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                               |
| 3.01                                            | To ensure Council accommodation is maintained to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard                                     |               | Since we met the standard, we have renewed approximately 400 boilers as part of a planned works programme and intend to upgrade a further 250 this year. We have also renewed a number of roofs, roofline components, external doors and completed an envelope improvement and external wall insulation scheme in Denbigh with phase 2 funding applied for. Also there is a 4 year external enveloping project to replace roofs, rendering, pathways and fencing etc. Anticipated £1.5 M investment this year. Caradoc Rd external envelope scheme complete. Enveloping scheme in Corwen complete. Enveloping scheme in Ruthin commenced. 2017/18 external programme tender exercise imminent. Internal works to approx. 30 homes in Rhyl scheduled for 2017/18. | Barbara Smith /Jamie Groves   |
| 3.02                                            | Private rented sector stock                                                                                                  |               | WG have plans for a Wales -wide Stock Condition Survey, no details as yet but this                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | David Smith/ Graham           |

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|      | condition/issue survey                                                                                                                                                                                            |               | may achieve DCC's aims. More information sought from WG.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Boase                         |
| 3.03 | Support implementation & enforcement of Welsh Governments "Rent Smart" scheme (Landlord Licensing Scheme), including a comprehensive database of all private landlords.                                           |               | Rent Smart Wales has been promoted by Public Protection Team through County Voice, landlord/tenant surgeries, landlord roadshow, local newspapers & radio. Recent training has taken place for DCC officers on Rent Smart Wales Enforcement with additional training due to be carried out this month. So far 92% of known private rented properties in Denbighshire have been registered making us the 2 <sup>nd</sup> most compliant county in Wales.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 3.04 | To develop an Energy Conservation delivery plan and establish a database to prioritise those in fuel poverty                                                                                                      |               | Draft Energy Conservation Delivery Plan agreed by Housing Strategy Delivery Group (July 16) and approval to be sought through delegated decision. Energy Conservation project carried out in Upper Denbigh is now being cited as 'Best Practice'. Energise Wales will be holding a training event in Caledfryn (probably March 2017) to publicise the benefits of energy conservation programmes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 3.05 | To develop a multi-agency private rented sector action plan & toolkit working with partners such as the Health Board to help to improve the standard of the poorest quality housing in the private rented sector. |               | Links to Rhyl Town Centre Plan & Vibrant & Viable Town Centres Plan. Meeting arranged for 27/3/17 to discuss scope and leadership of the project. High profile enforcement continuing for West End of Rhyl with overall conditions improving. Landlord Roadshow has resulted in several new Landlords renting their properties out using the DCC private rented scheme. Any properties on this scheme are subject to Housing Hazards and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) assessment prior to being used by DCC and any hazards found are resolved before renting is permitted. Upper Denbigh Warm Homes project has been completed and cited as good practice.                   | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 3.06 | Continue to implement mandatory HMO licensing & explore potential for future expansion of additional licensing schemes and introduction of selective licensing schemes                                            |               | The mandatory and additional licensing scheme continues in Rhyl. 39 HMO's taken through additional licensing during last year 15/16. Further work being done with other services to identify other HMO's potentially requiring licensing, ie working with Housing Benefit. A further 39 HMO Mandatory and Additional HMO licences have been issued since 1st April 2016 and we currently have 82% of the eligible properties licenced in Denbighshire. The remaining 18% of unlicensed properties are either going through the licencing process (which also includes renewals), have been referred to Planning for investigation, or are being considered for formal action. | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |

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| 3.07                                                    | Use of planning and housing powers, including enforcement regarding new build and unauthorised HMOs & conversion to flats                      |               | Process revised to ensure a more effective, co-ordinated approach. Any HMOs that are identified as potentially being in breach of Planning because they are operating as a HMO are referred to Planning to investigate before they are sent an application for either Additional or Mandatory HMO licensing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 3.08                                                    | Establish the extent to which holiday caravans are being used as permanent residences. Develop a regulatory procedure to take targeted action. |               | Caravan site information is now being shared and monitored across the authority. A conference was organised in March 2016 by DCC inviting the site owners, so best practice and policy could be explained and discussed and next conference will be arranged in May 2017. Following the conference bi-annual meetings have been arranged. Communities Scrutiny Committee (May 2016) approved the principles of the draft Regulatory Procedure. Details of the procedures have been finalised and full audits of targeted sites began in August/Sept 2016. | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| 3.09                                                    | Develop & engage with private rented sector landlords & tenants through alternative methods and routes.                                        |               | Landlord Roadshows have replaced previously held Landlord Forum. More interactive - stalls & information, and will be held throughout the County. Recent Landlord Roadshow was held in Llangollen for the first time. This was a mixture of exhibitors (approx. 20) and 6 presentations given by various external organisations and DCC. Engaged with many new landlords and overall was a very successful event. Next Roadshow to be held in the North of the County in May 2017.                                                                        | David Smith/ Graham Boase     |
| <b>THEME 4: Homes and support for vulnerable people</b> |                                                                                                                                                |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                               |
| 4.01                                                    | To ensure additional extra care facilities are provided in Denbighshire & to maximise potential for specialist housing for vulnerable adults   |               | Grwp Cynefin was selected as the Council's partner to deliver to deliver an extra care scheme at Middle Lane site Denbigh. The proposal is for approximately 50 apartments, including provision for people with dementia; 8 Independent Living Units for people with disabilities; and 19 separate general needs apartments for older people. Scheme submitted for planning permission and to be determined at March Planning Committee. Work underway on progressing proposals for Awelon, Ruthin.                                                       | Bobby Feeley/ Phil Gilroy     |
| 4.02                                                    | Review Supported Independent Living provision and demand                                                                                       |               | A new Supporting People Contract for SIL in place since April 2016 and with approval from Scrutiny the merger of SIL and reablement is underway. The aim is to:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Streamline existing management structures</li> <li>- Reduce overhead management costs</li> <li>- Provide an integrated continuum of support, maximising opportunity to deliver high quality services and potential to deliver/facilitate optimum levels of independence and well-being</li> </ul>                                             | Bobby Feeley/ Phil Gilroy     |

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|      |                                                                                                                     |               | <p>- Deliver a clear career structure, promoting staff motivation, satisfaction and retention.</p> <p>On course to fully implement changes to management structure by 1st April. Work is underway looking at merging operational practice with a view to delivering a continuum of support for citizens, in addition to agreeing measures of success of merging the two services.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                               |
| 4.03 | To finalise a homelessness strategy by December 2017, including ensuring that RSLs also provide for homeless people |               | <p>An extremely comprehensive Homelessness Review has been completed and this was based on consultation with individuals who have sought advice and support from Housing Solutions and a range of key stakeholders. A version of the Review will soon be available on the DCC website so that further consultation can take place. We have identified the key themes which will have to be included in the Homelessness Strategy. A Steering Group has met twice and a framework for the Strategy, which complies with Welsh Government requirements, is currently being prepared. In addition, specific work is underway regarding the needs of young people leaving custody and a major event was held regarding the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds. We should be in a position to consult on the draft Homelessness Strategy later this year – ahead of schedule (the statutory requirement is to complete the strategy by 2018) and it is expected that the final version will be approved and adopted by December 2017.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Hugh Irving / Phil Gilroy     |
| 4.04 | To provide better quality emergency accommodation for those who have been made homeless in the County.              |               | <p><b>Key Outcome 2:</b> Strategic review of accommodation &amp; future needs planned Apr 17- Sep 17. Consultants have been engaged for this. The intention is for the County Council to purchase various properties and eventually some of these will be available to replace the use of B+B. A specific piece of work called 'Positive Pathway for Young People' is also under way in response to the Anna Whalen report, which requires us to identify a better range of accommodation for young people. In the meantime, the use of B+B is monitored in weekly team meetings and we are ensuring that move-on plans are in place. In addition, profiles are being prepared of people who are currently placed in B+B/temporary accommodation so that more suitable provision can be identified for them in future. Detailed information regarding temporary accommodation is included in the Homelessness Review and this will inform our future strategy for addressing accommodation needs. In the meantime, Housing Solutions and Public Protection have much better joint working arrangements in place. For example, Public Protection is consulted before placements are arranged and this ensures that the use of poor standard</p> | Hugh Irving /Phil Gilroy      |

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|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |               | accommodation is prevented. Feb 2017: Housing Solutions and Public Protection have developed and implemented a working protocol which has been created through a Partnership approach and looks practically at property standards. .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                               |
| 4.05 | Provide good quality, well managed temporary accommodation solutions whilst housing needs are being assessed prior to permanent accommodation solutions being found. This includes options such as the Council providing it directly from its own housing stock |               | <b>Key Outcome 2:</b> A comprehensive Homelessness Review has been completed and the key outcomes from this will be addressed in the Homelessness Strategy. The Strategy will identify a range of options for addressing future needs. In the meantime, Housing Solutions Team meetings are taking place weekly and team members are given every encouragement to move people on to permanent accommodation solutions. The team are also liaising with Community Housing with regard to properties that may become available. There has been a corporate multi-disciplinary working group set up specifically looking at needs of homeless young people. Aim to have an integrated service to flexibly meet a range of needs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Hugh Irving / Phil Gilroy     |
| 4.06 | Develop and implement a Private Rented Sector (PRS) tenants accreditation scheme                                                                                                                                                                                |               | <p>We have established a PRS Tenant Accreditation Scheme. This is currently reliant upon SP providers doing the work with prospective tenants and results are patchy. The "Product" is fine - but how it is implemented and verified needs reviewing. In addition to PRS accreditation scheme Housing Solutions are now delivering "Renting Ready" training. This is an accredited course that is recognised across the UK which has been developed by the Homeless Charity CRISIS. Why have two schemes? The Tenant Accreditation Scheme is largely targeted at occupants of Supported Housing - and is a means of us both justifying paying a rent deposit and reassuring prospective landlord that person has necessary skills to manage a tenancy. The Renting Ready Course has similar aims - but its target audience is much wider including households in emergency / temporary homeless accommodation. It is aimed at citizens who have had or may have difficulty maintaining their own tenancy. We work in partnership with Crisis the Homeless Charity to deliver this course. This is a 4 day classroom based course. A series of topics is delivered designed to build confidence and knowledge in renting a home. Some of the things we look at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring housing options</li> <li>• Rights in a tenancy</li> <li>• Landlord responsibilities</li> <li>• Skills to manage money</li> <li>• What to look for in a new place</li> </ul> | Hugh Irving / Phil Gilroy     |

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|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Addressing issues with flatmates or neighbours.</li> </ul> <p>By attending the full series of workshops students can work towards a tenancy qualification to show prospective landlords that they have the required skills and knowledge to manage a successful tenancy. At the present time we offer this course to Supporting People Providers and citizens who access the Housing Solutions service.</p> |                               |
| 4.07 | Investigate options on the formation of a Social Lettings Agency                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |               | Research carried out and report produced. Its purpose is to provide a broad review of the contribution a Social Lettings Agency could make to meeting housing need in Denbighshire.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Hugh Irving /Phil Gilroy      |
| 4.08 | Promote and develop the 'Denbighshire Housing' website & 'Let's Help You' online accommodation finder                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |               | This was launched and a complete overhaul of all Housing Options advice available through DCC websites was undertaken. Denbighshire Housing Website has been upgraded and linked with Community Support Services website which is being overhauled.                                                                                                                                                                                                | Hugh Irving / Phil Gilroy     |
| 4.09 | Develop a portfolio of private rented sector landlords with good quality accommodation to assist people with private rented sector accommodation. Working with Public Protection to ensure that the accommodation meets at least the minimum standards set in Housing Hazards and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) legislation & that landlords meet the "fit and proper" test |               | Public Protection officers now check each property sourced by Housing Solutions for Homelessness Prevention or Lease to ensure it is suitable, safe and healthy. Landlords are also checked. Protocol has been developed and adopted and is being applied.                                                                                                                                                                                         | Hugh Irving / Phil Gilroy     |
| 4.10 | To develop a pre-move programme for adults with complex disabilities to maximise successful placements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |               | New operational procedures drafted and signed off 10th March 2016 at the Operational Housing Group.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Bobby Feeley / Phil Gilroy    |

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| 4.11                                                 | Implement the single access route to housing (SARTH)                                 |               | Full implementation to be effective from April 2017 for allocation of homes but re-assessing applications started in Autumn 2016. Implementation in progress and on track.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves   |
| 4.12                                                 | To monitor and respond to accommodation and support requirements for refugees        |               | First family accommodated in County in September 2016. An Action Plan was put in place to ensure that all their support needs are addressed effectively. The family has settled down well and there continues to be an interagency response to meeting their needs which is overseen by a strategic group. The second family were due to arrive in Denbighshire on 31st January and all arrangements for meeting their needs put in place. We are in the process of identifying further properties so that we can meet the target agreed with Cabinet. | Hugh Irving / Phil Gilroy     |
| <b>THEME 5: Promoting and supporting communities</b> |                                                                                      |               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                               |
| 5.01                                                 | To develop a Tenant Engagement Strategy for Council tenants                          |               | Draft strategy complete and to be used to base consultation. Full implementation delayed due to recruitment of Community Development team in September 2016. The delay to allow for recruitment and induction will enable the team to significantly support the consultation and implementation of an effective strategy. Residents workshop held in February 2017 to consult on draft plan and develop local engagement framework.                                                                                                                    | Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves   |
| 5.02                                                 | Develop a strategic asset management plan for the Council's housing stock            |               | This is being undertaken on an area basis based on emerging development potential – Rhyl & Denbigh initially. Condition surveys in Denbigh area have been completed and surveys have commenced in Rhyl.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Barbara Smith / Jamie Groves  |
| 5.03                                                 | Implement environment toolkit to assist in improving the environment for our tenants |               | This action is complete as tool kit principles are used for developing and prioritising improvement programmes within the Environmental framework.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Barbara Smith / Jamie Groves  |
| 5.04                                                 | Develop a schedule to enhance open space/ play assets within Council stock           |               | 9 priority areas initially identified & proposed works in identified areas have been completed including play equipment and landscape works.2 additional play areas have been identified for refurbishment. Specifications and tender documents are being produced in order to commence works in the new financial year and work programmed for 2017/18. Action now complete as the programme is in progress                                                                                                                                           | Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves   |

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|      |                                                                                                                             |               | and group established to monitor progress and develop future schedule of work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                               |
| 5.05 | To develop an apprenticeship scheme for property maintenance service                                                        |               | 3 apprentices employed 2015/16 and an additional 7 in 2016/17.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Barbara Smith/ Jamie Groves   |
| 5.06 | Continue working with police, registered social landlords & other partners on focused neighbourhood management in West Rhyl |               | Project on-going with Public Protection, Planning, RSLs, NW Police, Streetscene and Waste Teams, Kingdom to ensure refuse, litter etc removed quickly, with enforcement action taken if necessary. Good working arrangements in place with Environmental Services. On-going work educating tenants on fly tipping & anti-social behaviour. Weekly audits / inspections being carried out in hotspots areas of Rhyl and any necessary enforcement action is being taken when required. | David Smith /Graham Boase     |
| 5.07 | Develop individual locality based neighbourhood plans for areas of Council stock                                            |               | <b>Key Outcome 4:</b> Work on neighbourhood plans is complete. Housing Delivery plans are in progress for 3 areas and template agreed for the work continuing on further areas in consultation with MAG's. Local neighbourhood plans are being delivered by Community Development Co-ordinators. Communication on these activities will be developed in Spring 2017.                                                                                                                  | Barbara Smith /Jamie Groves   |

|                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to:</b>       | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b> |
| <b>Date of Meeting:</b> | <b>16 March 2017</b>                  |
| <b>Lead Officer:</b>    | <b>Scrutiny Co-ordinator</b>          |
| <b>Report Author:</b>   | <b>Scrutiny Co-ordinator</b>          |
| <b>Title:</b>           | <b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>        |

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

The report presents Performance Scrutiny Committee with its draft forward work programme for members' consideration.

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

To seek the Committee to review and agree on its programme of future work, and to update members on relevant issues.

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

That the Committee:

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and
- 3.2 receives the findings and the final report of the Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group (Appendix 5) and requests that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) determines whether other budget savings, which formed part of the Freedom and Flexibilities process, merit detailed examination of their impact on residents and if so which scrutiny committee(s) should undertake that work.

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1 Section 7 of Denbighshire County Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, as well as the rules of procedure and debate.
- 4.2 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must set, and regularly review, a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.
- 4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work programme report. The aim of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.

- 4.4 In recent years the Welsh Government (WG) and the Wales Audit Office (WAO) have highlighted the need to strengthen scrutiny's role across local government and public services in Wales, including utilising scrutiny as a means of engaging with residents and service-users. Going forward scrutiny will be expected to engage better and more frequently with the public with a view to securing better decisions which ultimately lead to better outcomes for citizens. In future the WAO will measure scrutiny's effectiveness in fulfilling these expectations.
- 4.5 Having regard to the national vision for scrutiny whilst at the same time focussing on local priorities, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) has recommended that the Council's scrutiny committees should, when deciding on their work programmes, focus on the following key areas:
- budget savings;
  - achievement of the Corporate Plan objectives (with particular emphasis on the their deliverability during a period of financial austerity);
  - any other items agreed by the Scrutiny Committee (or the SCVCG) as high priority (based on the PAPER test criteria – see reverse side of the 'Member Proposal Form' at Appendix 2) and;
  - Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues
- 4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms  
As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above the Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. To assist the process of prioritising reports, if officers are of the view that a subject merits time for discussion on the Committee's business agenda they have to formally request the Committee to consider receiving a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of suggested subjects. No officer proposal form has been received for consideration at the current meeting.
- 4.7 With a view to making better use of scrutiny's time by focussing committees' resources on detailed examination of subjects, adding value through the decision-making process and securing better outcomes for residents, the SCVCG has decided that members, as well as officers, should complete 'scrutiny proposal forms' outlining the reasons why they think a particular subject would benefit from scrutiny's input. A copy of the 'member's proposal form' can be seen at Appendix 2. The reverse side of this form contains a flowchart listing questions which members should consider when proposing an item for scrutiny, and which committees should ask when determining a topic's suitability for inclusion on a scrutiny forward work programme. If, having followed this process, a topic is not deemed suitable for formal examination by a scrutiny committee, alternative channels for sharing the information or examining the matter can be considered e.g. the provision of an 'information report', or if the matter is of a very local nature examination by the relevant Member Area Group (MAG). In future no items will be included on a forward work programme without a 'scrutiny proposal form' being completed and accepted for inclusion by the Committee or the SCVCG. Assistance with their completion is available from the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

#### Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.8 When determining their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of work. For this purpose a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 3.

### **5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group**

Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group met on 28 February 2017. No topic was referred to this Committee for consideration.

### **6. Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group**

- 6.1 Performance Scrutiny Committee, in October 2014, decided to establish a task and finish group to evaluate the actual impact of the Council's budget savings on the authority and on communities in Denbighshire. The Committee was keen to understand whether the impact on residents had been as anticipated or if it had been better or worse than originally thought. It was also keen to understand if other factors or service providers had stepped in to deliver services which the Council was no longer able to provide.
- 6.2 The Task and Finish Group's terms of reference stipulated that the Group should report its findings to Performance Scrutiny Committee in due course. The Group's final meeting was held on 28 February 2017. At that meeting it agreed its final report (copy attached at Appendix 5) and recommended that any Freedoms and Flexibilities budget savings it had not examined their impact, and which scrutiny deem merit consideration, be allocated by the SCVCG to a scrutiny committee for detailed examination.

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

Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its corporate priorities in line with community needs and residents' wishes. Continual development and review of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council to deliver its corporate priorities, improve outcomes for residents whilst also managing austere budget cuts.

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

Services may need to allocate officer time to assist the Committee with the activities identified in the forward work programme, and with any actions that may result following consideration of those items.

9. **What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment? The completed Well-being Impact Assessment report can be downloaded from the [website](#) and should be attached as an appendix to the report**

A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to the purpose or contents of this report. However, Scrutiny's through it work in examining service delivery, policies, procedures and proposals will consider their impact or potential impact on the sustainable development principle and the well-being goals stipulated in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

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

None required for this report. However, the report itself and the consideration of the forward work programme represent a consultation process with the Committee with respect to its programme of future work.

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

No risks have been identified with respect to the consideration of the Committee's forward work programme. However, by regularly reviewing its forward work programme the Committee can ensure that areas of risk are considered and examined as and when they are identified, and recommendations are made with a view to addressing those risks.

**12. Power to make the decision**

Section 7.11 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that scrutiny committees and/or the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group will be responsible for setting their own work programmes, taking into account the wishes of Members of the Committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.

**Contact Officer:**

Scrutiny Coordinator

Tel No: (01824) 712554

e-mail: [rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk)

**Note: Any items entered in italics have not been approved for inclusion at the meeting shown by the Committee. Such reports are listed here for information, pending formal approval.**

| Meeting | Lead Member(s)           | Item (description / title)                                     | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Author                                            | Date Entered   |
|---------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 8 June  | <b>TBA</b>               | 1 Corporate Plan (Q4) 2016/17                                  | To monitor the Council's progress in delivering the Corporate Plan 2012-17                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Ensuring that the Council meets its targets, its Outcome Agreements, delivers its Corporate Plan and the Council's services in line with its aspirations and to the satisfaction of local residents, and maximises the financial incentives available through meeting its Outcome Agreements | Alan Smith/Nicola Kneale                          | April 2016     |
|         | <b>TBA</b>               | 2. Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report                   | To consider the Council's management of general health and safety and fire safety matters                                                                                                                                                                                   | Assurances that the Authority is abiding and conforming with all relevant H&S legislation and therefore mitigate the risk of litigation                                                                                                                                                      | Gerry Lapington                                   | June 2016      |
|         | <b>TBA</b><br>(required) | 3. Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report for 2016/17 | To scrutinise the content of the draft annual report to ensure it provides a fair and clear evaluation of performance in 2016/17 and clearly articulates future plans.                                                                                                      | Identification of any specific performance issues which require further scrutiny by the committee in future                                                                                                                                                                                  | Nicola Stubbins/Mark Southworth                   | June 2016      |
|         | <b>TBA</b>               | 4 Your Voice' complaints performance (Q 4)                     | To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints. The report to include:<br>(i) a comprehensive explanation on why targets have not been met when dealing with specific complaints, reasons for non-compliance, and measures taken to rectify | Identification of areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address weaknesses.                                                                                                                                                                         | Mark Southworth/<br>Ben Chandler/<br>Meinir Blunt | September 2016 |

| Meeting                                        | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title)                                                   | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                               | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                                                                        | Author                             | Date Entered   |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                |                |                                                                              | the failures and to ensure that future complaints will be dealt with within the specified timeframe; and<br>(ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services |                                                                                                                                                                          |                                    |                |
| 13 July                                        | TBA            | 1. Corporate Risk Register                                                   | To consider the latest version of the Council's Corporate Risk Register                                                                                                                                         | Effective monitoring and management of identified risk to reduce risks to residents and the Authority                                                                    | Alan Smith/Nicola Kneale           | December 2015  |
| 28 Sept<br>[GwE representatives to be invited] | TBA            | 1. Provisional External Examinations and Teacher Assessments<br>[Education]  | To review the performance of schools and that of looked after children                                                                                                                                          | Scrutiny of performance leading to recommendations for improvement                                                                                                       | Karen Evans/Julian Molloy          | July 2016      |
|                                                | TBA            | 2. GwE<br>[Education]                                                        | To inform the Committee on GwE's new structure, aims and objectives, and the associated timelines for realising those objectives                                                                                | To ensure that GwE's new objectives and focus are aligned to those of the county and will contribute towards educational attainment and realising pupils' full potential | Karen Evans/Julian Molloy/GwE      | January 2017   |
|                                                | TBA            | 3. Pupil progress from Year 10 to KS4<br><br>[Education]                     | To consider the findings of the study undertaken on Year 10 pupils from choice of subjects to attainment (including projected grades, intervention/support provided and final attainment)                       | Ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential                                                                                                     | Julian Molloy/Karen Evans/GwE      | January 2017   |
|                                                | TBA            | 4. Your Voice' complaints performance (Q 1) including social services annual | To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints. The report to include:                                                                                                          | Identification of areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address                                                                 | Mark Southworth/Ben Chandler/Meini | September 2015 |

| Meeting                                             | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title)                                                                    | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                    | Author                                    | Date Entered   |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----------------|
|                                                     |                | complaints report                                                                             | (i) a comprehensive explanation on why targets have not been met when dealing with specific complaints, reasons for non-compliance, and measures taken to rectify the failures and to ensure that future complaints will be dealt with within the specified timeframe; and<br>(ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services | weaknesses.                                                                                                          | r Blunt                                   |                |
| 7 December                                          |                |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                      |                                           |                |
| January 2018<br>(GwE representatives to be invited) | TBA            | 1. Verified External Examinations and Teacher Assessments [Education]                         | To review the performance of schools and that of looked after children; and GwE's impact on the educational attainment of the County's pupils.<br><br>The report to incorporate GwE's Annual report and information on the 5 year trend in relation to educational attainment in Denbighshire                                                                                     | Scrutiny of performance leading to recommendations for improvement                                                   | Karen Evans/Julian Molloy                 | July 2016      |
|                                                     | TBA            | 2. Corporate Risk Register                                                                    | To consider the latest version of the Council's Corporate Risk Register                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Effective monitoring and management of identified risk to reduce risks to residents and the Authority                | Alan Smith/Nicola Kneale                  | December 2015  |
|                                                     | TBA            | 3 Your Voice' complaints performance (Q 2) including social services annual complaints report | To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints. The report to include:<br>(iii) a comprehensive explanation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Identification of areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address weaknesses. | Mark Southworth/Ben Chandler/Meinir Blunt | September 2015 |

| Meeting | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title) | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Expected Outcomes | Author | Date Entered |
|---------|----------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------|--------------|
|         |                |                            | on why targets have not been met when dealing with specific complaints, reasons for non-compliance, and measures taken to rectify the failures and to ensure that future complaints will be dealt with within the specified timeframe; and<br>(iv) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services |                   |        |              |
|         |                |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                   |        |              |

**Future Issues**

| Item (description / title)                                                                                                                                                                                       | Purpose of report                                                                                                                    | Expected Outcomes                                                                                             | Author      | Date Entered |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Implementation of the Donaldson Report 'Successful Futures' – Independent Review of Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales<br><b>[Education]</b><br><br><b>Dependent upon the legislative timetable</b> | To consider and monitor the plans to implement the agreed measures adopted by WG following the consultation on the review's findings | Better outcomes for learners to equip them with jobs market skills                                            | Karen Evans | April 2015   |
| <b>(Following local authority elections – summer/autumn 2017)</b><br>Update on options appraisals for In-house care services. (Dolwen & Hafan Dê g)<br><br><b>[WIA required]</b>                                 | To consider the results of the analysis undertaken with respect to potential options for future provision of the services            | Formulation of recommendations with respect to the future provision of the services for submission to Cabinet | Phil Gilroy | June 2016    |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                               |             |              |

**Information/Consultation Reports**

| Date                                                        | Item (description / title)                                                                                         | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Author                                    | Date Entered |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Monthly Information Bulletin</b>                         | Your Voice Complaints Procedure                                                                                    | Details of number of complaints received and dealt with for each Service via the 'Your Voice' procedure to inform the information required in the quarterly reports to the Committee                                                                                                         | Mark Southworth/Ben Chandler/Meinir Blunt | June 2014    |
| <b>September 2016 &amp; March 2017</b><br><br>[Information] | Corporate Plan (Q1 & Q3) 2016/17<br><br>To monitor the Council's progress in delivering the Corporate Plan 2012-17 | Ensuring that the Council meets its targets, its Outcome Agreements, delivers its Corporate Plan and the Council's services in line with its aspirations and to the satisfaction of local residents, and maximises the financial incentives available through meeting its Outcome Agreements | Alan Smith/Nicola Kneale                  | April 2016   |

**Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines**

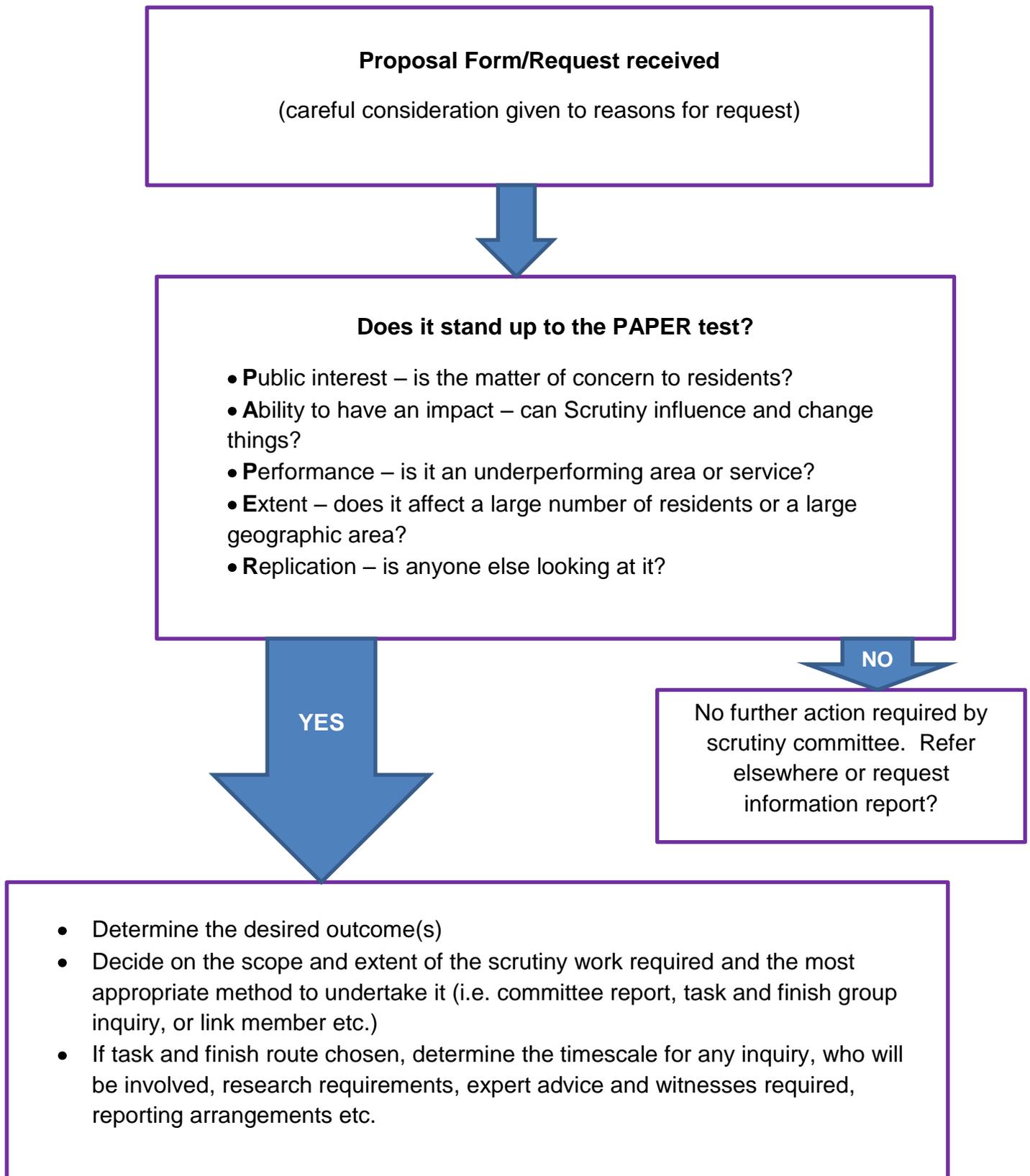
| Meeting | Deadline      | Meeting | Deadline       | Meeting      | Deadline            |
|---------|---------------|---------|----------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 8 June  | <b>25 May</b> | 13 July | <b>29 June</b> | 28 September | <b>14 September</b> |

Performance Scrutiny Work Programme.doc

Updated 08/03/2017 RhE

| <b>Member Proposal Form for Scrutiny Forward Work Programme</b>                                                                                                                        |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>                                                                                                                                                      |               |
| <b>TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION</b>                                                                                                                                                     |               |
| <b>TOPIC</b>                                                                                                                                                                           |               |
| <b>What needs to be scrutinised (and why)?</b>                                                                                                                                         |               |
| <b>Is the matter one of concern to residents/local businesses?</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>YES/NO</b> |
| <b>Can Scrutiny influence and change things?</b><br>(if 'yes' please state how you think scrutiny can influence or change things)                                                      | <b>YES/NO</b> |
| <b>Does the matter relate to an underperforming service or area?</b>                                                                                                                   | <b>YES/NO</b> |
| <b>Does the matter affect a large number of residents or a large geographical area of the County</b><br>(if 'yes' please give an indication of the size of the affected group or area) | <b>YES/NO</b> |
| <b>Is the matter linked to the Council's Corporate priorities</b><br>(if 'yes' please state which priority/priorities)                                                                 | <b>YES/NO</b> |
| <b>To your knowledge is anyone else looking at this matter?</b><br>(If 'yes', please say who is looking at it)                                                                         | <b>YES/NO</b> |
| <b>If the topic is accepted for scrutiny who would you want to invite to attend e.g. Lead Member, officers, external experts, service-users?</b>                                       |               |
| <b>Name of Councillor/Co-opted Member</b>                                                                                                                                              |               |
| <b>Date</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |               |

## Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny



## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting         | Item (description / title) |                                                | Purpose of report                                                                                          | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer          |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>28 March</b> | 1                          | Finance Report                                 | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council                                         | Tbc                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Richard Weigh   |
|                 | 2                          | Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates) Write-Offs | To seek approval to write off irrecoverable business rates debts                                           | Yes                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Richard Weigh   |
|                 | 3                          | Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017 – 20    | To seek approval of Cabinet of Denbighshire County Council's Welsh in Education Strategic plan 2017 – 2020 | Yes                                | Cllr Eryl Williams / Karen Evans / Geraint Davies |
|                 | 4                          | Corporate Plan Performance Report 2016/17 Q3   | To consider progress against the Corporate Plan                                                            | Tbc                                | Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill / Alan Smith            |
|                 | 5                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees                 | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention                                          | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                              |
| <b>25 April</b> | 1                          | Finance Report                                 | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council                                         | Tbc                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Richard Weigh   |
|                 | 2                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees                 | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention                                          | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                              |
|                 |                            |                                                |                                                                                                            |                                    |                                                   |
| <b>6 June</b>   | 1                          | Finance Report                                 | To update Cabinet on the                                                                                   | Tbc                                | Lead Member for Finance,                          |

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting        | Item (description / title) |                                              | Purpose of report                                                  | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer                                |
|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                |                            |                                              | current financial position of the Council                          |                                    | Corporate Plan and Performance / Richard Weigh                          |
|                | 2                          | Corporate Plan Performance Report 2016/17 Q4 | To consider progress against the Corporate Plan                    | Tbc                                | Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance / Alan Smith    |
|                | 3                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees               | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention  | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                                                    |
|                |                            |                                              |                                                                    |                                    |                                                                         |
| <b>18 July</b> | 1                          | Finance Report                               | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc                                | Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance / Richard Weigh |
|                | 2                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees               | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention  | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                                                    |
|                |                            |                                              |                                                                    |                                    |                                                                         |

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

| Meeting | Deadline        | Meeting | Deadline       | Meeting | Deadline      |
|---------|-----------------|---------|----------------|---------|---------------|
|         |                 |         |                |         |               |
| March   | <b>14 March</b> | April   | <b>7 April</b> | June    | <b>22 May</b> |

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Updated 02/03/17 - KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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## Progress with Committee Resolutions

| Date of Meeting      | Item number and title                                             | Resolution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6<br>January<br>2017 | <b>5. UPDATE ON OPTIONS APPRAISALS FOR IN-HOUSE CARE SERVICES</b> | <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> <i>having had regard to the observations made at the meeting and the conclusions of the Well-being Assessment, to recommend to Cabinet that it:</i></p> <p>a) <i>should take account of the Well-being Impact Assessment as part of its considerations;</i></p> <p>b) <i>agrees with the Committee that Options 1 and 3b of Grŵp Cynefin's Feasibility Study are not viable options for the reasons stated in appendices 1 and 5 of the report respectively; and</i></p> <p>c) <i>authorises discussions to commence between local Members, officers, Grŵp Cynefin and the committee of Canolfan Awelon to work through Options 2a, 2b &amp; 3a to take forward the best configuration for the site that meets all parties' needs and provides least disruption for existing residents/tenants, and that these discussions include floor space requirements for the Canolfan Awelon Community Centre</i></p> <p><i>(At a suitable point, this would enable the remaining Awelon Site to be cleared and for work</i></p> | <p>The Committee's recommendations were reported to Cabinet when it discussed the proposals on 24 January 2017. Cabinet approved the recommendations. The minutes of the Cabinet discussion can be found by following the link below:</p> <p><a href="https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/mqAi.aspx?ID=10640&amp;LLL=0">https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/mqAi.aspx?ID=10640&amp;LLL=0</a></p> |

|  |                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                         |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |                                                                            | <p><i>to begin on the extension. The task and finish group were of the view that maximising the number of Extra Care units developed (as set out in Option 2a) would deliver the optimum arrangements for providing Extra Care Housing with Community Facilities on the Awelon site. However, it was acknowledged that further discussions need to take place with the committee for Canolfan Awelon to ensure the final scheme can deliver the community activities they already provide.</i></p> <p><i>This meets the preferred option of Cabinet following discussion in May 2016 and will secure up to 35 additional Extra Care apartments on the site whilst enabling those residents who are currently receiving residential care services to remain on site through the development if that is their wish, as well as continuing to provide community facilities to promote independence and reduce social isolation.)</i></p> |                                                                         |
|  | <p><b>6. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND REVISED CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES</b></p> | <p><b>RESOLVED</b> - <i>subject to the above observations that the new Procurement Strategy and revised Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) had resulted in improved performance of the organisation in relation to procurement activity.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's observations</p> |

|                        |                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        | <b>7. 'YOUR VOICE' COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE (Q2)</b> | <b>RESOLVED-</b> <i>subject to the provision of the requested information that the Council's performance in dealing with Customer Feedback be received.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's comments                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                        | <b>8. CORPORATE PLAN (Q2) 2016/17</b>              | <b>RESOLVED-</b> <i>that subject to the above observations and the provision of the requested information, to receive the report on the Council's overall performance in improving outcomes for citizens and delivering its Corporate Plan.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's observations (e-mail including an information report on school absenteeism rates circulated to all Committee members on 6 January 2017 as per the Committee's request)                               |
| <b>26 January 2017</b> | <b>4. KEY STAGE 4 EXAMINATION RESULTS</b>          | <b>Resolved:</b> <i>subject to the above observations –<br/>(i) to receive the information on the performance of the County's schools and pupils against previous performance and external benchmarks which were currently available;<br/>(ii) that a report detailing GwE's new structure, the anticipated impact and timelines for the realisation of the expected outcomes (including the targets that will be put in place to measure the impacts) be presented to the Committee at the earliest opportunity in the term of the new Council; and<br/>(iii) that a report on the findings of the work to be undertaken measuring pupils progress from choosing their subjects in Year 10 to achieving their results at end of year 11 (including projected grades, intervention/support given and consequential final grades) be presented to</i> | Lead Member, Council and GwE officers advised of the Committee's comments and requests.<br><br>The two requested reports have provisionally been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme (Appendix 1) for the meeting on 28 September 2017 |

|  |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                         |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |                                       | <i>the Committee when available).</i>                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                         |
|  | <b>5. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER</b>     | <b><u>Resolved:</u></b> - <i>subject to the above observations to note the deletions, additions and amendments to the Corporate Risk Register.</i>                                                                        | Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's observations                                                       |
|  | <b>6. BRIDGE MAINTENANCE STRATEGY</b> | <b><u>Resolved:</u></b> - <i>to support the approach being taken by the Service to manage the backlog of works in relation to highway structures assets as per the suggested Highway Structure Backlog Works Project.</i> | Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's support for the proposed approach for managing the backlog of works |

# Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group



## Final Report

28 February 2017

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## Executive Summary

The effects of the global financial crisis of 2007-08 eventually filtered through to local government funding. Between 2011 and 2015 Denbighshire reduced its spending by approximately £20m, mainly through administrative efficiencies without affecting frontline service delivery. Despite this a further £17m worth of savings, had to be made for the period between 2015 and 2017. Inevitably, as administrative costs had already been realised the majority of the £17m worth of additional savings could only be achieved through redesigning services or transferring the delivery of some non-statutory services to other organisations. To facilitate this a comprehensive budget setting process was undertaken, which included the holding of regular budget workshops for all councillors at which non-statutory service areas were examined to see if they could be delivered in an alternative way. This budget process, called 'Freedoms and Flexibilities', was followed by a public consultation called 'Cutting Our Cloth', the purpose of which was to inform residents of the Council's proposals for delivering services in future and seek their views on the proposals.

Soon after the savings proposals were agreed and the budget had been set a decision was taken to commence an evaluation of the impact of achieving those savings on communities in Denbighshire. A Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was established whose objective it was to determine whether the impact of achieving the savings on communities in the county had been as originally assessed during the budget setting process, whether it had been worse than anticipated, or whether any other unforeseen factors had come into play to plug any voids caused by reduced Council funding. Over a 20 month period the 'Cutting Our Cloth' Task and Finish Group held several meetings and examined various pieces of evidence, including residents and service users' views on a range of services which had either seen their funding from the Council reduced or withdrawn. Its detailed report, including its findings in relation to each budget saving examined and final conclusions, is attached.

At the conclusion of its work the Group acknowledges that whilst not all aspects of implementing the savings to services went as planned from outset, it is satisfied that any initial problems experienced were addressed as soon as reasonably possible. Having regard to the scale of the savings which had to be achieved the Group is of the view that in the budget savings it reviewed it could not find evidence of the actual impact on communities being worse than originally anticipated. However, there were a number of examples where the change in service delivery model had actually produced better outcomes for service-users whilst also securing better value for money for the Council.

Based on the evidence reviewed the Group concludes that the thorough process followed for setting the budget for 2015 -16 and 2016 -17 financial years, and the holding of a series of dedicated budget workshops for members, was a prudent and effective method and one it recommends should be used for future budget setting processes.

## **Full report of the Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group**

### **Background**

During 2007 - 08 a global financial crisis unfolded which overtime affected the lives of many individuals in the developed world one way or another.

A consequence of this crisis was a reduction in public service funding from central to local government. This reduction meant that local authorities across Wales had to make sure that maximum benefit was achieved from each pound spent. At the same time as local government was expected to realise savings in service delivery costs additional duties were being placed on local authorities by central government, with an increased emphasis on improving outcomes for residents.

Between 2011 and 2015 Denbighshire County Council cut £20m from its expenditure by removing inefficiencies, bureaucracy and management costs. Throughout this time frontline services were protected wherever possible. Despite achieving these savings the austere global economic climate meant that public spending would be subject to severe cuts for the foreseeable future. As a result Denbighshire County Council had to plan for a further £17m worth of savings for the period between April 2015 and March 2017. Therefore, with the 'easy' less controversial efficiencies already realised, unpopular decisions had to be taken if the Council was to make the additional savings and live within its means.

With a view to achieving this the Council needed to review its activities and focus on what was really important. To do this it had to take the decision that it could no longer deliver the full range of services it had delivered in recent years. Whilst Denbighshire, like other councils, was obliged by law to deliver some services, called 'statutory' services i.e. aspects of social care and education services, there were other services, classed as 'discretionary' services, which authorities could choose whether or not they delivered them and to what extent i.e. music services to schools, benefits advice services.

When the new Council was formed in 2012 it agreed a very ambitious Corporate Plan for its term of office, from 2012 to 2017, comprising of seven corporate priorities. The extent of the financial savings which the Council had to make had the potential to seriously jeopardise its ambition to deliver this Plan. Acknowledging this risk, councillors and officers adopted an approach to ensure that the majority of the Plan could be delivered within the original timeline, with the timescale for only a few elements of the Plan being revised. In order to achieve this the Council decided that it would focus on delivering what it had to deliver as efficiently as possible and to enter into agreements with partners to deliver high quality services on its behalf in areas where it was not able to continue to deliver services itself.

With a view to achieving this a two year budget setting process for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years, called 'Freedom and Flexibilities', was established. As part of this process councillors reviewed all service provision and were asked which discretionary or above statutory-minimum services they thought were important for the Council to deliver itself and which ones it should consider withdrawing from delivering. These decisions were not easy decisions to take as these services were

valued by residents and by the Council. Part of the decision-making process for considering whether to withdraw from delivering some services included exploring potential alternative service delivery methods.

As part of the 'Freedom and Flexibilities' process a communication and engagement exercise with residents was undertaken, this exercise was called 'Cutting Our Cloth'. The objective of the 'Cutting Our Cloth' exercise was to explain to residents why unpopular decisions had to be made, from which areas the Council was proposing to reduce funding or withdraw services, and what the Council could do to support organisations who might be able to take over the provision of some services.

Comprehensive impact assessments had been undertaken on all projects included in phases 1 and 2 of the 'Freedom and Flexibilities' exercise to aid elected members to make informed decisions. The extent of these impact assessments ranged from assessing the impact of each saving or withdrawal of service on communities, partner organisations, staffing skills and levels, health and safety, performance, the Council's reputation, poverty, biodiversity, carbon footprint, and equalities etc. Whilst the impact assessments were an attempt to anticipate and plan for all eventualities it was accepted that there would be unforeseen problems and unintended consequences which would come to light as the budget savings were implemented. For that reason Performance Scrutiny Committee, in October 2014, decided to establish a task and finish group to evaluate the actual impact of the Council's budget savings on the authority and on communities in Denbighshire. The Committee was keen to understand whether the impact on residents had been as anticipated or if it had been better or worse than originally thought. It was also keen to know if other factors or providers had come into play as a result of the reducing availability of Council funds.

### **Membership**

The task and finish group was named the 'Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group'. To ensure that it adopted a holistic approach to assessing the impact of budget decisions on the county's residents its membership was drawn from each of the Council's three scrutiny committees, two representatives from each Committee. Each committee was also asked to appoint substitute representatives to serve on the task and finish group and to ensure when appointing that the Group's membership was as politically and geographically representative of the Council as possible.

As the task and finish group would meet periodically for approximately two years it was inevitable that committees' representatives would change during that period. Listed below are the names of those councillors who served on the Group as members or substitute members at some point during the two year period:

Councillors Huw Hilditch-Roberts (Chair), Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Martyn Holland, Rhys Hughes, Win Mullen-James, Dewi Owens, Arwel Roberts, David Simmons, Joe Welch and the late Richard Davies.

The task and finish group was supported in its work by the Corporate Executive Team (CET), the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and other officers relevant to each inquiry the Group was undertaking. Administrative support was provided by officers from Democratic Services.



## **Terms of Reference**

The sphere of the Group's work was to examine any budget savings included in the Freedoms and Flexibilities/Cutting Our Cloth process, having particular regard to those identified as having either a high or a very high reputational risk associated with them. Its terms of reference permitted the Group to call before it any Lead Cabinet Members, Heads of Services and other relevant officers it required for its review. The main objectives of the Group's work was to:

- examine the impact of the budget cuts on residents and communities;
- identify key messages from its work to feed into the 'Cutting Our Cloth' communication strategy to inform residents and stakeholders of the actual impact of the cuts; and
- identify lessons learnt from the 2015 to 2017 budget setting process and make recommendations for future budget setting processes.

The terms of reference also stipulated that the Group should report its findings to Performance Scrutiny Committee in due course.

## **Number of meetings held**

Between June 2015 and February 2017 the Group held five meetings. Whilst savings from services came into effect on 1 April 2015 the Group could not start assessing any impact immediately as there would not be a sufficient evidence base to substantiate the actual impact of the cuts for a number of months.

## **Selection criteria and methodology for undertaking each review**

When selecting savings or service withdrawals for examination the Group considered the extent of the proposed impact of the saving i.e. geographically; whether it impacted differently on different groups i.e. residents or businesses, staff etc.; whether initially the Council or a service's performance was deteriorating, or whether the number of complaints were increasing substantially.

The way evidence was gathered was tailored to the issue being reviewed (see details of individual reviews which follow).

## **Topics/savings examined**

The first review undertaken by the Group related to **the Transfer of the Services provided the by Council's former Welfare Rights Unit to the Citizens Advice Bureau**. The transfer of this service had drawn considerable negative media interest, particularly in the north of the county. Hence the Group's reason for selecting it as one of the first detailed examinations it would undertake in October 2015, six months following the initial transfer of the service.

This initial examination of the transfer of the services previously provided by the Council's former Welfare Rights Unit (WRU) to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) included reviewing the draft Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and the CAB, the targets set for the delivery of the new service and the quarterly monitoring arrangements for delivering services covered by the SLA. Amongst the evidence provided to the Group was feedback from customer satisfaction surveys.

At the conclusion of this initial review, whilst acknowledging that it was still early on in the transfer process and not all services had yet been transferred to the CAB (but also noting that no formal complaints had been received since the CAB had started providing the advice service) the Group was generally satisfied that there was a robust system in place to monitor the contract with the CAB. It was also content that all performance indicators were demonstrating that the service experience for the customer was a positive one. Assurances were given that the Council would act promptly if any concerns were raised with respect to the quality of the service provision, and that it would within the following six months be analysing which other services over and above the SLA requirements the CAB would be able to deliver.

Targets set within the SLA were monitored and reviewed regularly within the terms of the agreement to ensure that the service was continually improving and adapting to deliver the services users wanted, services aimed at moving people on to better outcomes. To ensure that the new service model continued to deliver a quality service, which adapted to new requirements, the Task and Finish Group decided to undertake a further review of the delivery of the SLA during the summer of 2016.

This review took place in July 2016 when the Group examined a number of documents, including the Contract Service Specification, details of the contract value, Service performance information and a list of all projects the CAB was supporting/facilitating in Denbighshire. Evidence was provided that regular contract and performance monitoring had taken place since the CAB had assumed responsibility for delivering financial advice services to Denbighshire residents. All performance indicators were demonstrating that the service experience for all customers was a positive one. It was also pleasing to understand that no formal complaints had been received in relation to the advice service since it had been provided by the CAB.

Whilst the Council's own Welfare Rights Unit had continued to operate for part of the 2015/16 year, prior to the CAB assuming full responsibility for delivering the financial advice service, the CAB's performance in delivering against the SLA was very positive and was continuing to improve. As an organisation the CAB was attuned to changes to the benefit system and was consequently continuously 'horizon-scanning' with respect to forthcoming welfare changes.

The Group commended the CAB's flexible approach to delivering services for the Council. It was evident that its approach towards delivering its business was to try and ensure the best outcome possible for the resident. Whilst its main office for Denbighshire was in Denbigh it also had offices in Rhyl and Ruthin and offered outreach services in Corwen, Llangollen and Prestatyn, as well as visiting people in their own homes. In Rhyl the CAB had established an outreach service at the One Stop Shop (OSS) in the town's library and contracted some work to the Rhyl Benefits Advice Shop to undertake on its behalf. It was also willing to offer advice during evenings and weekends if necessary. The organisation could also make provision to undertake interviews in private within their own offices, in the county's libraries or in people's own homes.

As an organisation the CAB was continuously exploring opportunities to expand its services to include different kinds of services i.e. at that time they were due to start

offering financial planning information and advice to Denbighshire County Council staff during work time.

The Authority itself had realised unanticipated benefits through having the CAB undertake financial advice services on its behalf, which had assisted it with its work and helped it deliver more holistic services to residents. An example of this was the CAB's expertise in establishing the root of individuals' financial problems, this in turn helped the Council to signpost those individuals to the most appropriate support and benefits available to them to assist them and their families out of adversity.

At the conclusion of this review the Task and Finish Group formed the view that the partnership between Denbighshire County Council and the CAB for the provision of financial advice services was exceeding the original expectations. There had been a positive impact on the community as a more holistic service was now available to residents across the county than had previously been available through the former WRU. In reaching this conclusion the Group acknowledged the contribution of Denbighshire CAB's Chief Executive in ensuring the success of the new service and in making sure that both the CAB and the Council was working effectively together to improve outcomes for residents.

Another service delivery model change which was examined by the Group early on during its deliberations was the partnership agreement between the Council and CIVICA for delivering the **Revenues and Benefits Service**. The Council had chosen this option as its preferred model for delivering revenues and benefits services for the future in a bid to reduce costs whilst safeguarding the employment of staff working in the Service.

During its examination of the impact of the partnership, established in April 2015, evidence was received of the monthly performance monitoring undertaken by the partnership's Operations Board. Since the Service had been transferred over to CIVICA there had not been an increase in the number of complaints received in relation to the Service provided. For the customer, the journey when making a claim remained the same as it had previously when the Council provided the service.

Plans were in the pipeline for significant reconstruction work to be undertaken at Russell House, Rhyl to accommodate CIVICA's plans to deliver an efficient service and to eventually grow its business in the county. Evidence was available at that point in time, in October 2015, that the partnership was already looking after other local authority accounts without any adverse impact on services to Denbighshire residents or the authority itself.

Whilst there had been minor issues with the new telephony system not being fully operational from the beginning, which had impacted on the Service's ability to offer an advanced self-help menu to callers, this had not adversely affected the services it delivered. In future, it was anticipated that more of the Service's facilities would be delivered digitally, at home or in self service centres at One Stop Shops.

Having had regard to all the evidence presented to it the Task and Finish Group was satisfied that the impact of the change in the service delivery model on residents and communities in Denbighshire had been negligible, as the majority of residents would probably have been unaware that the service model had changed - as the services

provided to them remained the same as when they had been delivered by the Council. The impact on staff on the whole had been positive as redundancies had been avoided and their terms and conditions of employment had been maintained. For the Council there had been a positive impact as it had achieved a revenue saving of £220K per annum by entering into a partnership agreement with CIVICA to deliver revenues and benefits services.

Further consideration of the effectiveness of the Council's partnership with CIVICA for delivering Revenues and Benefits Services to residents was considered by Partnerships Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January 2017. The report for that meeting can be viewed by following the link below:

<https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=268&MId=5365&LLL=0>

Service areas where residents are more likely to notice changes in performance or service delivery methods and consequently have a higher element of reputational risks associated with them are those which are visible to all residents and people who visit the county, such as services delivered by the Public Realm team. Hence the Task and Finish Group's decision to examine the **Impact of Streetscene Savings on Communities**.

Streetscene services play an important role in supporting the delivery of a number of the Council's corporate priorities, as improving the physical environment of the county by maintaining clean and tidy streets enhances residents' well-being, helps develop the economy and entices visitors to the county. The impacts of the savings in this Service was examined by the Group in December 2015.

For this particular review the Group contacted all councillors to ask them to bring to their attention any adverse comments reported to them with respect to the Streetscene Service since the £100K savings to its budget had been implemented. They also asked that they inform them if they were aware of any residents or community groups which had started to work together in a bid to keep their neighbourhoods neat and tidy. A similar request for evidence was issued to the public via social media.

A handful of responses were received to both the above requests for evidence

As part of its evidence gathering the Group was advised that the majority of the savings had been achieved by reviewing the Service's Sweeping Fleet and devising alternative ways of delivering the service on the ground. Previously the Sweeping Fleet had operated 9 mechanical street sweepers, a number of which were aging and costly to repair. Sweeper work schedules were set rigidly regardless really of a need for the work to be undertaken, sometimes this led to re-sweeping occurring unnecessarily.

With a view to modernising the Service and making it a more flexible and adaptable, one that could support the delivery of the Council's vision, two of the older sweepers were kept whilst the remaining 7 were replaced with 3 new machines. The charge hands and drivers of these vehicles were empowered to take decisions, based on

their knowledge of their local area on where needed sweeping etc. Councillors had received favourable reports about how this approach was working in their wards.

The Streetscene Service had also adopted more flexible working practices. Some of its staff had been trained to operate different types of equipment across the Service. As a result more staff were now able to drive the sweepers and the machines were working out on the streets for longer periods. This had resulted in a reduction in overtime spending and on the use of agency employees.

No compulsory redundancies had been made, although some individuals had opted for voluntary redundancies, part time working or seasonal contracts rather than work full-time. Staff were happy with the new working pattern and with the new flexible working practices which meant they had time off during the week. All changes had been implemented following discussions and agreement with the trade unions.

The Group acknowledges that there will always be complaints or problems raised in relation to Streetscene services, due to the types of services it delivers. It was therefore pleasing to learn that more joint working with other services was taking place with a view to delivering co-ordinated services. Examples of this include Environmental Enforcement staff highlighting dog fouling hotspot areas to aid prompt cleansing, and the Streetscene's work with the Planning and Public Protection Service to challenge landlords whose tenants are responsible for tipping in alleyways etc.

It was pleasing to understand that there were around 14 groups of volunteers who worked with the Council on litter picking duties in order to keep the county clean and tidy. This form of partnership working was particularly effective as the volunteers know and understand their local areas. The Council's contribution was to provide training, health and safety advice, equipment etc. and collect the litter bags at the end of the litter-pick day.

It was anticipated that regular review of outsourced contracts, working practices and future technological developments would aid the Streetscene Service to deliver further efficiencies and an even more effective service to the public in future.

Having reviewed all the evidence presented to it the Group felt that whilst there was some evidence of occasional delays in service provision this was to be expected as a result of the loss of funding. Nevertheless the service was not failing as there were clear and open communication between residents and the Streetscene Service, and the Service was responding to residents' requests.

Another budget saving that attracted some considerable amount of unfavourable media attention was the decision to withdraw the funding to Gwasanaeth Ysgolion William Mathias Music Service (GYWMMS) who provided a **School Music Service** for the county. On this basis the Task and Finish Group thought that the impact of this particular saving on the county's pupils merited detailed examination. The funding for GYWMMS was withdrawn from April 2015, therefore during the summer of 2016 the Group assessed its consequences.

In late 2014 school music services across Wales were being reviewed as part of local authorities' budget setting processes. In the majority of cases funding for music in schools was cut and therefore a reduced level of provision was available for pupils

interested in extra curricula music tuition. Controversially at the time Denbighshire took a decision to terminate its service level agreement with the GYWMMS, with an undertaking that it would explore potentially viable options for delivering a school music service.

Following the Council's decision a tutor working with the GYWMMS took the opportunity to work with the Council to explore the potential of establishing a new co-operative school music service in Denbighshire. As a result of some detailed financial work, visits to co-operative school music services elsewhere in the UK, and negotiations with individual tutors the new Denbighshire Music Co-operative (DMC) was established. As the Council owned all of the stock of instruments in the County's schools (apart from those owned by individual pupils) it came to an agreement with the DMC to loan the instruments to the co-operative in exchange for it to maintain them for the authority.

During its consideration of the evidence, which included comparative costs details between the previous and the new service, the Task and Finish Group was informed that the agreement was working well. There had been an increase in the number of hours of tuition ordered by schools, this had made it possible for the loan, repair and maintenance of all Denbighshire County Council instruments to be made at no cost to individual pupils. The new Service had received favourable feedback from schools and there were, in July 2016, 46 tutors providing around 400 hours per week of music tuition to pupils in 56 Denbighshire schools, compared to 28 tutors delivering circa 200 hours per week of music tuition in 39 Denbighshire schools in April 2015.

Schools were now liaising directly with DMC to 'buy' in their services and as the majority of transactions were undertaken electronically administrative costs were kept to a minimum. As DMC's tuition charges for schools were now lower than those levied by GYWMMS, even though the tutors were being paid a higher hourly rate than previously, schools were realising better value for their money.

The success of the DMC model was attracting a lot of interest from other local authorities who were looking at alternative cost effective models for delivering school music services.

Confirmation was received that pupils who attend schools in the county's areas of high deprivation should have the same opportunities afforded to them as to those in more affluent areas to access school music services, as schools were able to utilise their Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) monies to buy in music tuition services.

DMC's services were available to all schools in the county. The decision on how many services to purchase would be up to each individual school i.e. some schools may have staff members who could provide the required support for eisteddfodau, school productions etc. whilst others would purchase them from DMC.

The co-operative also provided ensemble services. Since DMC had been established the number of ensembles in the county had actually increased. In addition, it provided opportunities for 16 and 17 year old students to receive paid work in supporting ensembles. Another individual had been given an opportunity to use his designer skills to promote the Service and launch a website. The Group was also pleased to understand that since the co-operative's establishment more pupils

than before were receiving music tuition in the county. There was also a wider choice of music tuition opportunities available to the County's pupils.

Following consideration of all the evidence the Task and Finish Group being aware that the savings required in relation to the school music service had been widely reported in the local press as being detrimental and one which would deprive the county's pupils of opportunities in field of music, concluded that the new model for providing music services to schools had actually resulted in a superior service which offered a wider range of opportunities and experiences to pupils at no extra cost. The Group paid tribute to Council officers, the Manager of DMC and her team of tutors and staff for their vision, diligence and determination in establishing a thriving service model.

### **Public engagement/feedback**

While attempts were made to try and engage with the public as part of the Task and Finish Group's examination of the impact of the budget savings on communities, particularly in relation to the Streetscene service savings, very few residents actually engaged with the process. In total three residents forwarded evidence to the Group for its evaluation of the impact of this saving. The only other examples provided were those submitted by county councillors. Nevertheless, the Group acknowledge that the majority of residents with concerns would contact their local councillor in the first instance.

With respect of feedback from residents or service-users on the effectiveness of new or remodelled services, those were confined to evidence given by services of responses to their own feedback/evaluation requests. County councillors also reported verbally to Group members on their and their constituents' experience of the effectiveness or shortcomings of services.

### **Press statements/correspondence issued**

Early on during the review the Task and Finish Group recognised that its work would take some considerable length of time to undertake, as the effects of savings to service budgets or the establishment of new service models would need a period of time to embed before an accurate appraisal of their long term impact on the community could take place. Due the length of time it would take the Task and Finish Group to undertake its work it decided that it would periodically issue press statements etc. on its findings to date. During the course of its inquiries the following communications were issued at the Group's request:

10 November 2015: Financial Advice Service Deemed a Success (**Appendix 1**)

25 November 2015: e-mail to Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and all councillors (**Appendix 2**)

6 October 2016: Denbighshire Co-operative Success Music to the Ears (**Appendix 3**)

The Group also felt that as well as highlighting to residents examples of how potentially detrimental budget savings had resulted in positive outcomes for communities that it would be only right for it to recognise the efforts of those involved

for their work in securing success. Consequently it wrote to certain individuals and organisations to formally record its gratitude to them.

29 September 2016: Letter to Chief Executive, Denbighshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) (**Appendix 4**)

29 September 2016: Letter to the Director of Denbighshire Music Co-operative (DMC) (**Appendix 5**)

### **Findings/conclusions and the benefits of the process**

This was the first time that a Scrutiny task and finish group had been established in Denbighshire to retrospectively evaluate the impact of significant reductions in Council spending on services to residents. However, due to the severity of the cuts to local government funding in recent years, and for the foreseeable future, Scrutiny was of the view that undertaking a review of the actual impact of selected savings would assist the Council to plan for future budget setting processes.

During the 2015 - 16 and 2016 -17 financial years the Council has successfully achieved the majority of the savings and efficiencies it agreed as part of the Freedoms and Flexibilities/Cutting Our Cloth process. Only a few of the originally agreed budget savings are yet to be fully realised. In the main this is down to additional detailed work being undertaken to mitigate against any significant impact on residents and with a view to securing positive outcomes for service users, for example the on-going work of the separate task and finish group reviewing future delivery of adult in-house social care. This work will continue during the term of the new Council.

The Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group selected a variety of budget savings or new service delivery models to review. Some of these savings or proposed new arrangements had attracted either negative media or member attention when approved, were controversial, entailed new ways of delivering services and working, or had the potential due to their public facing nature of reflecting poorly on the Council if the original assessments of their impact on a wide range of stakeholders had been misjudged.

Now that its work is concluded the Group acknowledges that not all aspects of savings to service budgets went as planned from outset, but any initial problems or pressures on communities were rectified as soon as was reasonably possible. Nevertheless, due to the scale of budget savings involved the Group concludes that in the case of the majority of the budget savings it reviewed the impact on communities has not been as detrimental as originally anticipated. In a number of cases, such as the transfer of the financial advice service to the CAB and the establishment of the cooperative for school music service, the actual outcomes for the service-users have been better than under the previous service. In both these examples residents have benefited from more holistic services which deliver enhanced outcomes for users and at a reduced cost to the Council.

The Group is firmly of the view that the thorough process followed for setting the budget for both above financial years, and the holding of a series of dedicated budget workshops for members, was a prudent and effective method and one which

should be used for future budget setting processes. It is also of the view that future budget savings or service delivery reconfigurations should be reviewed post their implementation through the Scrutiny process.

The Group believes that any future post implementation reviews would benefit from assessing the impact of savings etc. on residents and communities in line with the well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

**Press Release 10 November 2015**

**Financial advice service deemed a success**

Denbighshire County Council says it is delighted with the financial advice service delivered by the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Benefits Advice Shop.

Since April, a number of compliments have been received by both the Council and the CAB, with no formal complaints received.

The CAB carries out a user satisfaction survey to assess how they are performing in relation to their financial advice service, with 100% of respondents stating they were satisfied in the way they were contacted and their case dealt with.

Key headlines:

- 44% were very satisfied with the way they were contacted, 31% extremely satisfied, 25% satisfied.
- 50% were extremely satisfied about the service they received, 43% very satisfied
- 25% said it improved their independence, 6% greatly improved.
- 62% said the service improved their quality of life.

Some examples of feedback:

- “Adviser is one in a million. Could not have done more for me. Much appreciated.
- “I don’t think you could have helped me any more than you did and would definitely come to see you again if I have any problems.
- “We were impressed by the speed of the service we received and by the lady who implemented this for us.
- “The two ladies who visited us to full out the long forms were wonderful. They made the procedure much easier for us and took away the stress of understanding some of the questions. Dad really enjoyed their visit as a social event too. He couldn’t believe that people were willing to give him so much help”.

Councillor Bobby Feeley, Cabinet Lead Member for Health and Well-being, said: “We have been delighted to see compliments coming in about financial advice services.

“Tackling poverty in Denbighshire continues to be important to us and we will continue to monitor the provision of financial advice services, to make sure that the impressive level of service received to date continues.

“The fact that the CAB is providing a quality service is no surprise to us in Denbighshire, as the CAB has been one of the Council’s key partners in assisting people to access the benefits available to them. We will continue to monitor the

success of the scheme, to make sure it delivers the best possible service for the people of Denbighshire”.

**Note to editors:** For further information, please contact the Destination, Marketing and Communications team, on 01824 706222

**e-mail to SLT and all councillors 25 November 2015**

Annwyl Gynghorydd/Dear Councillor,

Fel y gwyddoch mae'r Grŵp Tasg a Gorchwyl 'Torri'r Brethyn' ar hyn o bryd yn adolygu effeithiau'r toriadau cyllidebol ar breswylwyr y Sir ac ar ein cymunedau i weld os yw'r effeithiau fel a ragwelwyd, yn waeth neu efallai hyd yn oed yn well na ddisgwylwyd.

Yng nghyfarfod diwethaf y Grŵp craffwyd ar y trefniadau newydd o ran darparu y gwasanaeth cynghori ariannol (yr hen Uned Hawliau Lles) o dan adain Cyngor ar Bopeth (CAB). Yn dilyn ystyried y dystiolaeth, oedd yn cynnwys canlyniadau holiadur defnyddwyr, roedd y Grŵp:

- Yn hyderus fod system gadarn mewn lle i fonitro'r contract gyda CAB;
- Hyd yn hyn doedd yr un gŵyn wedi ei derbyn ers i'r CAB ddechrau darparu'r gwasanaeth cynghori;
- Hyd yn hyn roedd y dangosyddion perfformiad yn dangos fod y profiad o ddefnyddio'r gwasanaeth yn un cadarnhaol i'r defnyddiwr;
- Wedi derbyn sicrwydd y byddai'r Cyngor yn gweithredu'n ddi-oed pan y cyfyd unrhyw amheuan am safon y gwasanaeth a ddarperid;
- Wedi derbyn cadarnhad y byddai'r Cyngor yn dadansoddi beth y tu hwnt i ofynion y cytundeb gyda CAB roedd y gwasanaeth newydd yn ei gynnig dros y chwe mis nesaf;
- Wedi derbyn cadarnhad y byddai'r targedau o fewn y Cytundeb yn cael eu monitro a'u hadolygu'n rheolaidd trwy gydol oes y cytundeb er mwyn addasu'r gwasanaeth i ddarparu yn ôl gofynion y defnyddwyr;
- Byddai'r Grŵp 'Taclo Tlodi' yn ymchwilio i ffyrdd o addysgu pobl ifanc ar sut i drin a rheoli arian a chyllidebau yn y cartref.

Er mwyn sicrhau fod y gwasanaeth newydd hwn yn dal i ddarparu gwasanaeth safonol ac yn addasu i ofynion newydd mae'r Grŵp Tasg a Gorchwyl wedi penderfynu cynnal adolygiad pellach o'r Gytundeb yn ystod haf 2016.

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As you are aware the 'Cutting Our Cloth' Task and Finish Group is currently reviewing the impact of the budget cuts on the County's residents and its communities, to assess whether the cuts' impact have been as predicted or whether they are actually worse or even not as bad as anticipated.

At its last meeting the Group reviewed the new arrangements with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for providing financial advice service (previously delivered by the Welfare Rights Unit). Having reviewed the evidence, which included feedback from a customer satisfaction questionnaire, the Group was:

- satisfied that there was a robust system in place to monitor the contract with the CAB;
- advised that to date no formal complaints had been received since the CAB had started providing the advice service;
- satisfied that, to date all performance indicators were indicating that the service experience for the customer was a positive one;

- assured that the Council would act promptly if any concerns were raised with respect of the quality of the service provision;
- assured that the Council would be within the next six months analysing what over and above the Service Level Agreement (SLA) requirements with the CAB the new service has been delivering;
- assured that the targets within the SLA would be monitored and reviewed regularly within the term of the agreement to ensure that the service was adapting to deliver what users wanted;
- advised that the 'Tackling Poverty' Working Group would be exploring ways of educating children on money/household management matters.

With a view to making sure that this new service is delivering a quality service which adapts to new requirements the Task and Finish Group also decided to undertake a further review of the SLA during the summer of 2016.

Cofion/Regards,

Rhian

Rhian Evans

Cydlynnydd Archwilio/Scrutiny Coordinator

Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol, AD a Democrataidd/Legal, HR and Democratic Services

Ffôn/Tel: 01824 712554

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## Denbighshire Co-operative success music to the ears

A music co-operative set up to provide an alternative service for schools has been praised by Denbighshire County Council for actually increasing participation and providing a wide choice of tuition for the county's pupils.

The Council announced in late 2014 that it would be cutting the funding provided to Gwasanaeth Ysgolion William Mathias School Music Service, as part of wider cuts introduced to the budget. Following this decision, the Council said it would explore an alternative provision and the Denbighshire Music Co-operative was set up in April 2015.

Over the summer, a Task and Finish Group set up by the Council to examine the impact of cuts has been looking at the music service and was delighted to hear that the co-operative has gone from strength to strength, with more pupils than ever before are now receiving music tuition in the county. Over 2,200 pupils are receiving lessons on a weekly basis on a range of instruments and vocally and the six ensembles in the county are continuing.

Denbighshire continues to loan instruments to the co-operative free of charge.

Councillor Huw Hilditch Roberts, Chair of the Task and Finish Group, said: "We have been looking at some of the bigger cuts introduced to understand their real impact on communities and the music service has been the latest issue under the spotlight.

"At the time the cut was introduced, there was concern that Denbighshire pupils would miss out on school music tuition, but the Council made a commitment to look at providing the service in an alternative way, whilst still making the financial saving.

"The music co-operative set up in 2015 is providing to be really successful and we would like to congratulate the whole team for their hard work, diligence and motivation in making the co-operative work, for the benefit of Denbighshire pupils and for turning that vision into a thriving business.

Councillor Eryl Williams, Cabinet Lead Member for Education, said: "We are delighted that there has been such a positive outcome to this issue which was resolved through such positive discussions between the Council and the music service.

"The setting up of the Co-operative means that so many of our children and young people are able to continue accessing the music lessons, creating a new generation of musical performers in the county.

"The Council has written to the Music Co-operative to congratulate them on their success".

Posted on Thursday 6th October 2016



Eich cyf / Your ref:

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 29 September, 2016

Rhif union / Direct dial: 01824 712554

Appendix  
4



Ms Lesley Powell

Chief Executive,

Denbighshire CAB,

23 High Street,

**DINBYCH/DENBIGH**

LL16 3HY

Dear Ms Powell,

### **Provision of Financial Advice Services**

As you are aware during recent years the Council has, due to central government cuts, had to look very carefully at the services it was providing to Denbighshire's residents. In order to live within its means and deliver a balanced budget, some difficult decisions had to be taken on which services it could afford to continue to deliver. Some of the cuts implemented resulted in a reduction in services whilst other services unfortunately had to be discontinued altogether. Whether it was a cut in service provision or a cessation of a service that was agreed the Council was keen to examine the long term effects of those cuts on residents and service users.

To facilitate detailed examination of the cuts' impact on the community a 'Task and Finish Group' was established. This Task and Finish Group, called the 'Cutting Our Cloth' Task and Finish Group – as Cutting Our Cloth was the name of the public consultation exercise on the Council's proposed budget cuts for the period 2015-17, has been studying the impact of various cuts for some months. During the autumn of 2015 and into 2016 the Group decided to examine the impact of the decision which resulted in the Council ceasing to deliver a Welfare Rights Service and outsourcing its delivery to an external provider.

During its examination of the evidence relating to the above decision it became evident that the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) as the new service provider had worked tirelessly to ensure that the services they were delivering for Denbighshire residents were a success. As an organisation that was attuned to changes to the benefit system it was continuously 'horizon-scanning' with respect to forthcoming

welfare changes. Now that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and the CAB had been in place for 12 months the Authority had a clearer picture of the CAB's performance in delivering against the SLA.

Despite the fact that the Council's own Welfare Rights Unit (Unit) had continued to operate for part of the 2015/16 year, prior to the CAB assuming responsibility for delivering the financial advice service, the CAB's performance in delivering against the SLA was very positive and was continuing to improve during the current financial year. It was extremely pleasing to learn that no formal complaints had been lodged against the CAB for services it delivered for the Council. Other positive aspects of the CAB's work was the outreach service, already established in Rhyl and other areas of the county, the availability of evening and weekend advice sessions and home visits if necessary, and the financial planning information and advice service it was going to offer to Denbighshire County Council staff during work time.

The Task and Finish Group felt that the CAB's holistic approach to examining each individual's personal circumstances ensured that they were provided with the most appropriate support and advice to meet their own and their family's needs. The Group concluded that the service provided by the CAB was meeting and actually exceeding the original expectations. Residents were therefore being provided with a more holistic service which had the potential to refer them to an array of different services and support.

On the basis of their findings the Task and Finish Group have asked me to write to you on their behalf to congratulate you and your officers for your efforts, diligent work and commitment in ensuring the success of the new service and to wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Cynghorydd/Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts

**Cadeirydd y Grŵp Tasg a Gorchwyl**

**Chair of the Task and Finish Group**

**Eich cyf / Your ref:**

**Ein cyf / Our ref:**

**Dyddiad / Date:** 29 September, 2016

**Rhif union / Direct dial:** 01824 712554

Mrs Heather Powell,  
Director, Denbighshire Music Co-operative,  
Unit 1,  
Speddyd Business Park,  
Llandyrnog,  
**DINBYCH/DENBIGH**  
LL16 4LE

Dear Mrs Powell,

### **School Music Service**

As you are aware during recent years the Council has, due to central government cuts, had to look very carefully at the services it was providing to Denbighshire's residents. In order to live within its means and deliver a balanced budget, some difficult decisions had to be taken on which services it could afford to continue to deliver. Some of the cuts implemented resulted in a reduction in services whilst other services unfortunately had to be discontinued altogether. Whether it was a cut in service provision or a cessation of a service that was agreed the Council was keen to examine the long term effects of those cuts on residents and service users.

To facilitate detailed examination of the cuts' impact on the community a 'Task and Finish Group' was established. This Task and Finish Group, called the 'Cutting Our Cloth' Task and Finish Group – as Cutting Our Cloth was the name of the public consultation exercise on the Council's proposed budget cuts for the period 2015-17, has been studying the impact of various cuts for some months. During the summer of 2016 the Group decided to examine the impact on the county's pupils of the Council's decision to withdraw from the Gwasanaeth Ysgolion William Mathias School Music Service (GYWMSMS).

It became apparent during consideration of the evidence relating to the decision to withdraw from the GYWMSMS that this particular decision had actually led to the establishment of a new organisation, the Denbighshire Music Co-operative. Since the establishment of the co-operative more pupils than before had been receiving music tuition in the county. In addition there was now a wider choice of music tuition opportunities available to the County's pupils.

Having reviewed all the evidence the Task and Finish Group concluded that the cut to the school music service, a cut which had been widely reported in the local press as a detrimental cut which would deprive the county's pupils of opportunities in field of music, had actually resulted in positive outcomes for pupils across the county as they now had a wider range of musical opportunities and experiences available to them at no extra cost. In effect they were now receiving a superior service to what had previously been received, a service that was also available and accessible to more pupils than ever before.

In reaching the above conclusion they acknowledged that this success could not have been achieved without your hard work and determination to realise your vision.

On behalf of the Task and Finish Group I, on behalf of the Task and Finish Group, wish to congratulate and thank you and your excellent team for all your hard work, diligence and motivation in making the co-operative work for the benefit of Denbighshire's pupils, and for turning your vision into a thriving service model.

Yours sincerely,

Cynghorydd/Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts

**Cadeirydd y Grŵp Tasg a Gorchwyl**

**Chair of the Task and Finish Group**

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