

To: Members of the Performance
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 January 2022

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 27 JANUARY 2022 BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**.

Yours sincerely

G. Williams
Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services

AGENDA

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 7 - 14)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2021 (copy enclosed).

10.05 am – 10.10 am

5 PROGRESS ON DELIVERING DENBIGHSHIRE'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY (Pages 15 - 72)

To consider a report by the Senior Officer Strategic Planning and Housing Officer (copy enclosed) on progress made to date in delivering the revised Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020.

10.10 am – 10.40 am

6 LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE (Pages 73 - 94)

To consider a report by the Principal Librarian (copy enclosed) detailing the Council's performance in relation to the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017 – 2020 (extended for 2020 – 2021) and progress in developing libraries as places of individual and community wellbeing and resilience.

10.40 am – 11.10 am

~~~~~ **BREAK** ~~~~~

**7 REDUCTION OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS AND CARBON REDUCTION IN THE SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE** (Pages 95 - 100)

To consider a report by the Principal Catering and Cleaning Manager (copy enclosed) providing an update on progress, and the challenges, in relation to reducing single use plastic and reducing carbon within the School Catering Service.

**11.20 am – 11.50 am**

**8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 101 - 124)

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

**11.50 am – 12.05 pm**

**9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

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

**12.05 pm**

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Councillors**

Arwel Roberts (Chair)

Hugh Irving (Vice-Chair)

Ellie Chard  
Martyn Holland  
Geraint Lloyd-Williams  
Bob Murray  
Paul Penlington

Pete Prendergast  
Peter Scott  
Andrew Thomas  
David Williams

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

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### Code of Conduct for Members

### DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

a \*member/co-opted member of  
*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

**Denbighshire County Council**

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

*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)\**

Signed

Date

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

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## PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held via video conference on Thursday, 25 November 2021 at 10.00 am.

### PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Martyn Holland, Hugh Irving (Vice-Chair), Geraint Lloyd-Williams, Bob Murray, Pete Prendergast, Arwel Roberts (Chair), Peter Scott, Andrew Thomas and David Williams

#### Also in attendance –

Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets for Items 5 and 6

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children’s Services and Public Engagement for Item 7

Councillor Brian Jones, Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment for Item 8

#### Observers –

Councillors Graham Timms, Tony Thomas, Gwyneth Kensler and Meirick Lloyd Davies

### ALSO PRESENT

Nicola Stubbins, Corporate Director: Communities; Emlyn Jones, Head of Planning and Public Protection; Liz Grieve, Head of Customers, Communications and Marketing; Iolo McGregor,, Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader; Mike Jones, Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager; Peter Daniels, Passenger Transport Section Manager; Ffion Angharad, Service Improvement Manager; Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator; Rhodri Tomos-Jones, Committee Administrator; and Sharon Walker, Committee Administrator.

#### 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chief Executive, Graham Boase.

#### 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

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

None.

#### 4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 14 October 2021.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 be received and approved as a correct record.

## **5 CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE, QUARTER 2, 2021 TO 2022**

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Corporate Plan Update, Quarter 2, 2021 to 2022 report (previously circulated).

Information was provided regarding the Council's progress as at the end of quarter 2 (July to September 2021), 2021 to 2022, in delivering the Corporate Plan outcomes.

Regular reporting was an essential monitoring requirement of the Corporate Plan to ensure that the Council exercised its duty to improve. Quarterly performance reports were routinely shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Cabinet and the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

At the end of Corporate Plan period the vast majority of what was hoped to be delivered was expected to be successfully done so. Some projects overran due to impact of covid but would be delivered. It was an ambitious plan. Lessons would be learnt and lead members and officers were starting to look forward to what a new corporate plan might look like for a new council.

Two measures, Connected Communities and Young People, remained as priority for improvement due the fact there had been a reliance on other parties.

In terms of the other projects all of those were at a status of good or higher. The Corporate Plan Board continued to monitor the delivery of the Plan going forward, and to transition into the new Corporate Plan.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader, Iolo McGregor gave a brief overview of the Plan. The last annual performance report which was brought to Scrutiny, introduced new elements due to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which made the current report far more comprehensive.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- It was confirmed that the SARTH register was a concern which could be scrutinised. Also Education and Young People was a concern for which Scrutiny had previously received reports from the Education Department.
- Clarification was requested, regarding Dementia and whether staff were trained to observe any issues residents may have and how would they report the same. The Corporate Director: Communities confirmed she would provide an update to members.
- It was confirmed that 150 rural properties would not be able to access Superfast Broadband and work was continuing with the Digital Officer and BT Openreach to solve this issue. Funding had been secured in conjunction with Cadw and Welsh Government (WG) to employ a second Digital Officer.

- Affordable Housing was to be included within the new Corporate Plan to assess all issues regarding the difference in salaries across the county.
- Project Risks – Welsh language or Welsh culture, had that been considered a risk due to covid? The Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader clarified that if there had been a degradation of Welsh language and culture due to covid then that would be an issue for a Community Risk Register which was monitored by the Public Services Board. He also clarified that work had taken place to update the Conwy and Denbighshire Wellbeing Assessment, in which there were sections that specifically focussed on culture and heritage and he would consult with his colleague to ascertain whether the impact of covid on Welsh language had been reflected in there.
- It was asked whether the journey to carbon zero would be at risk. It was confirmed it was a risk to the Council as it was such a large and very costly programme of work, it was also a very long programme of work. It was reflected on the Corporate Risk Register which was to be presented to the Committee as the next item on the Agenda.

The Committee –

**RESOLVED** *subject to the above observations and having considered the report and any further actions required to respond to any performance related issues highlighted within the report, to receive and confirm the content of the report.*

## **6 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2021**

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, introduced the Corporate Risk Register Review, September 2021 (previously circulated).

The Corporate Risk Register was developed and owned by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) alongside Cabinet. It was formally reviewed twice yearly by Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing. It had also been presented the previous day at the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor Thompson-Hill stated that two new risks had been escalated to the Corporate Risk Register and summarised the Risks within the Register.

Risks 18 and 35 were to be merged going forward and the likelihood score would be increased from D2 to C2 score.

At this juncture the Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader expressed his gratitude to Emma Horan, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer for all her work meeting with Risk Owners and SLT to put together the very comprehensive update.

A recent internal audit review regarding risk management had taken place and recommendations from the audit had been put forward. One of the recommendations had been to include a direction of travel for each of the risks. There was still an amount of work to be done in that regard which would be taken forward in the next review.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- Recruitment and retention of staff – It was confirmed recruitment and retention of staff had become a major issue not just within Denbighshire County Council but across the country. Covid had had a significant impact on staffing. A piece of work was currently being undertaken for each Service to have a Workforce Planning Action Plan which would feed into the Denbighshire Action Plan. There had been issues recruiting in certain Services particularly in Social Care and Domiciliary Care. The Authority would be looking at the ability to create career grade posts to develop in-house talent. In some areas it could take time to train employees which would cause issues in the short term. A report was to be provided early in the New Year.
- A new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Reform Act had placed on the Council a number of additional requirements. There had been delays in receiving detailed guidance which underpinned the new expectations and ways of working which moving forward would require developing policies and procedures. Unfortunately, there would be no additional funding available for undertaking the new requirements and therefore the Risk rating was accurate.
- It was suggested that cyber crime should be highlighted as a risk. Currently it was not listed separately as a risk but included under whether the Council had the capacity to respond to major events, including disruptions caused by adverse weather events etc.. Action: Iolo McGrgeor will ensure that Cyber Crime is discussed with the risk owner during the February review of the register to give it more prevalence.
- Risk 44 – Ash Die Back – this risk was rated highly due to not understanding the scale of the problem. Since it had become a risk, a piece of work had been undertaken to understand better what the council was facing. It had been downgraded due to officer confidence and knowledge that the risk was coming more within the risk appetite. However, a B2 risk was still a critical risk.
- The termination of Civica contract with Denbighshire County Council, was considered a risk. It was confirmed Civica had taken the decision to withdraw from the type of partnership contract they had with Denbighshire and would be on the Finance Service Risk Register, but was also picked up in Risk 13 of the Register.
- The loss of European funding would be covered under a separate Brexit Risk Register which was closely monitored by the Corporate Executive Team (CET). It was expected that the risks within this separate register would be subsumed into the main Corporate Risk Register during the next review in February.
- Risk 47 relating to the powers to establish regional Corporate Joint Committees was of concern to all local authorities across North Wales.

The Committee –

**RESOLVED** having considered the amendments to the Corporate Risk Register (appendix 1), including the status of each risk against the Authority's Risk Appetite

*Statement (appendix 2) and the assurances provided during the discussion, to receive the Corporate Risk Register review of September 2021.*

**At this juncture (11.10 a.m.) there was a 10 minute break.  
The meeting reconvened at 11.20 a.m.**

## **7 C360 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEM UPDATE**

The Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement, Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts introduced the C360 CRM System Update report (previously circulated).

Councillor Hilditch-Roberts provided an overview of the implementation of the C360 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, and its performance relevant to the product specification. The report also outlined council services' use of C360 as a corporate CRM or integrated customer contact solution, and their continued demand for new customer enquiry forms.

Training for the system had taken place at which 90% of staff and 14% of Councillors attended.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- Members received a weekly report but there had been complaints as there were items included on the report which had been closed for over 12 months. Also some items which were reported were not included in the weekly reports councillors received. The issues raised were some of the issues highlighted for addressing going forward, others where items involving contractors. It was clarified that the system should be used rather than contacting the relevant Service directly.
- Some members confirmed they were not technically literate and did admit to struggling with the system and any refresher training would be welcomed.
- If an enquiry is closed, the system does not allow any further access which could cause frustration and that issue would be hopefully amended in the future.
- When an enquiry is closed, there is no further information contained on the report received. An explanation as to the consequence of the enquiry would be useful. Again, this was agreed by officers and would be looked at going forward.

It was:

**RESOLVED** *subject to the above observations and the areas identified for improvement and strengthening to receive the report on the C360 CRM System's implementation and performance.*

## **8 SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN**

The Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment, Councillor Brian Jones, introduced the Sustainable Transport Plan Report (previously circulated).

In 2019 the Council passed a Motion to declare a climate and ecological emergency.

In the current Corporate Plan, the Connected Communities priority included the project “Better enable people to travel to work, education and services”. The scope of the project was very broad which had made it difficult to identify specific interventions that would make a difference, despite further research that had been undertaken.

Following discussion at the Corporate Programme Board in October 2020 and July 2021, it had been decided that because of the issues with the above project and the need to make carbon reduction central to any transport-related projects then focus should be on developing a Sustainable Transport Plan.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- People with disabilities needed to be considered within this plan.
- Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging points – next phase in March/April 2022 was phase 1 and was seen as a learning opportunity and there would be 30 charging points made available in 8 locations which would be a significant increase. Officers would be looking at the usage data to collate information regarding the uptake. This analysis would help inform the planning for future need in relation to EV charging points. There were potentially different delivery models in future also e.g.: if more interest from the private sector in terms of renting the space was also something to be looked at. Members were also made aware that the Welsh Government with Transport for Wales were also looking at the wider network so in terms of longer distance journeys and the trunk road network, they had a project where they would have charging points appropriately spaced along the trunk road network. With regards to charging points in new development properties that was something which would be looked into for the future in partnership with the Planning Service.
- Were there any figures to show changing to electric vehicles saved money and was much better for the environment? Officers confirmed they were not aware of any figures as it was probably too early in the scheme for figures to be obtained.
- Where these active travel measures were going to impact on a community would there be an assurance from officers that the relevant communities would be consulted and receive information and that information could be provided to Member Area Groups (MAGs) for discussion. Officers confirmed that local Members and MAGs would be involved from an early stage.
- Discussions could be initiated with Countryside Services in future with regards to exploring the potential of have EV charging points in car parks managed by them. However, the rural nature of these locations may potentially be a barrier to having sufficient power availability for EV charging points.
- It was emphasised that Active and Sustainable Travel incorporated all modes of travel, not just cars and aspired for integrated travel solutions i.e. walking, cycling, buses, trains and cars

- Planning for sustainable travel solutions was still in its infancy. It was important that local sustainable travel plans, dovetailed with regional and national plans. Transport was a function for which a Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) could be established in order to secure deliverable solutions. All potential solutions would be explored during the coming years.

The Committee –

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) Subject to the above comments and observations on the contents of the draft Sustainable Transport Plan to support the aims and objectives of the delivery of the Sustainable Transport Plan; and*
- (ii) In supporting the Plan confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment in Appendix A as part of its consideration.*

## **9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking Members' review of the Committee's Work Programme and providing an update on relevant issues.

Discussion focused on the following –

- Report on Corporate Plan - SARTH may form part of the report on work programme for 27 January 2022 on the Council's wider Housing Strategy
- Councillor Martyn Holland raised BT issues during this meeting, if the item was to be added to a future meeting, a form would be required to be completed and could be discussed at the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs meeting taking place later that day.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Work Programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

## **10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

None.

**The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.**

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|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to</b>             | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Date of meeting</b>       | <b>27 January 2022</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Lead Members/ Officer</b> | <b>Cllr Tony Thomas (Lead Member for Housing &amp; Communities)/ &amp; Cllr Bobby Feeley (Lead Member for Wellbeing and Independence) /Angela Loftus (Strategic Planning &amp; Housing Manager)</b> |
| <b>Report author</b>         | <b>Jane Abbott (Senior Officer Strategic Planning &amp; Housing)</b>                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Title</b>                 | <b>Progress on delivering Denbighshire’s Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy</b>                                                                                                                    |

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. [Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategy](#) which was adopted by the Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020. A [summary](#) of the strategy is included as **Appendix A** and a table setting out progress on the Action Plan is attached as **Appendix B**.

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

- 2.1. To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Housing & Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Scrutiny note the report, comment accordingly and continue to monitor delivery of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

## 4. Report details

### Background

- 4.1 Denbighshire’s Housing & Homelessness Strategy sets out the Council’s vision and aims for housing in the County for the period 2021-2026. It is an important corporate

document for the Council and provides the framework for all Council housing and homelessness 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 (LDP). The Strategy identifies 6 “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;
- Preventing & ending homelessness in Denbighshire
- Homes and support for vulnerable people;
- Promoting and supporting communities.

4.2 Delivery of the Action Plan is overseen by the Strategic Housing & Homelessness Group (SHHG), which is jointly chaired by the Lead Members Cllrs Tony Thomas and Bobby Feeley who have responsibility for delivering the Housing & Homelessness Strategy. Membership of the Group comprises those Lead Members with responsibility for an area of housing or homelessness within their portfolios, relevant Heads of Service and the Strategic Planning & Housing Manager.

4.3 The Group meets quarterly 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 Local Authorities and is currently around £7 million per annum. This funding is managed locally by the Council.

4.4 The Strategy is accompanied by a 40-point Action Plan. 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 and homelessness. The Strategy is a living document and actions are added as work progresses and others are completed. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy has a five-year lifespan (2021 – 2026) and will need to be reviewed by 2026.

### **Key areas of progress**

4.5 The Action Plan has been monitored at each SHHG meeting although it was recognised that due to the fact the Strategy was newly adopted and there have been restrictions in working practice because of the pandemic, work would be limited at the outset, detailed reviews of the themes began in quarter three. The first three themes have been reviewed. Highlights of what has been achieved from these themes are:

- Record number of housing scheme completions of 439 new homes contributing to the highest annual affordable housing outturn achieved by DCC of 174 affordable units.
- Launch and promotion of the Empty Homes Matching Service, which has generated positive interest.
- A draft approved by Cabinet and submitted to Welsh Government of the Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment.
- DCC have the first time this year accessed Social Housing Grant (SHG) £1.4 million ring-fenced for 2021/22 and access to bid for a share of £7 million SHG funding for 2022/23 & 2023/24
- Work has begun on the first new build Council dwellings, in Prestatyn and Denbigh which are expected to be completed by April 2022.
- Development of draft Council Housing Asset Strategy defining the aspirations for the Authority for development and maintenance including zero carbon commitments
- Reviewed DCC stock portfolio to assess viability for repurposing to meet future housing needs.
- DCC have taken a lead in improving SHG funding monitoring with Welsh Government – simplifying monitoring and reporting and improving analysis of Housing Provision across Wales.
- Detailed information on needs provided for planning applications to assist with decision making.
- Rent Smart Wales has been successfully implemented in Denbighshire
- Inspection of all properties which are identified by the Homelessness team for citizens, prior to tenancies being taken up
- Development of fines policy and procedure for serial non-engagement and non-compliance of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)

- Additional Licensing of HMO's scheme extended to include Prestatyn, Denbigh and Llangollen
- Developed a new Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Strategy which takes into account the changes in permitted borrowing levels and capping to maximise opportunities for housing development and maintenance programmes;
- Developed 30-year business plan incorporating new development and capital maintenance programmes

4.6 Of the 40 actions identified, 9 have been embedded in operational delivery as 'business as usual', 23 actions are on track to be delivered within the set time scales, there is some minor slippage on 8 actions in accordance with the original deadlines set, which is due to the impact of Covid-19. This has restricted the Welsh Housing Quality Standards maintenance programme, for example to outside works or in the case of the replacement Local Development Plan affected consultation and evidence gathering requirements 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 Theme four which deals with homelessness in Denbighshire will be reviewed in detail at the March 2022 SHHG meeting, however some actions are already well on the way to be completed such as:

- The acquisition of a building to provide temporary homelessness accommodation for families in Denbighshire
- Review of the Housing Support Grant to ensure different levels of support are available for a variety of needs.
- Integrating the Housing First programme into the Homelessness Support Pathway

4.8 Theme five – Homes and support for vulnerable people and theme six – Promoting and supporting communities will be reviewed at the June 2022 meeting. Actions already achieved include:

- Awel Y Dyffryn Extra Care facility in Denbigh completed
- 'Own front door' scheme set up on the new build site in Meliden, providing homes for 4 adults

- Tenant Engagement Strategy developed and implemented
- SARTH administration of the partnership reviewed

4.9 The main challenges experienced in delivering the Strategy are connected to the response to Covid-19 crisis. The Local Development Plan will require consultation and consideration of the long term impact of the pandemic on housing requirements. Delays to the LDP will have a knock on effect to other work which is dependent on the LDP & site availability. The decarbonisation of social housing stock in response to climate change, is subject to the allocation of additional grant funding to achieve. The change in methodology by Welsh Government has hampered the development of the new Local Housing Market Assessment.

4.10 It can be seen from the attached action plan that progress is being made on the Housing & Homelessness Strategy and it is supporting the Council's Corporate priorities.

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

5.1. The six themes of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy detailed in **Appendix A** contribute to the following Corporate priorities - housing, environment, young people and resilient communities.

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

6.1. The costs of the projects are closely monitored. All costs will be kept within budget – ours and those of our partners.

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

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Housing and Homelessness Strategy but is not required for this report as it presents an update on progress.

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

8.1. Significant consultation and engagement was undertaken to develop Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and was outlined in the report to Council seeking approval of the Strategy in December 2020.

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

9.1. The full cost implications of any specific proposals that are developed as part of the Strategy will have to be assessed to ensure they are affordable and sustainable.

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

10.1. Ensuring that people are supported to live in homes that meet their needs is a key priority for the Council. A range of mechanisms are in place to monitor progress, including regular reports to the Strategic Housing and Homelessness Group and reports as and when required by Scrutiny.

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

11.1. Local Government Act 2000, Housing Act 1985 (S8), Housing Act 2004 (S8), Local Government Act 2003 (S87), Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

11.2. Scrutiny's powers are detailed in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and in Sections 7.4.1(e) and 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution

# **Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary**

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

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# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Introduction



The Strategy is introduced to you by Councillors Tony Thomas in his role as Lead Member for Housing & Communities and Councillor Bobby Feeley in her role as Lead Member for Well-Being and Independence.

The Housing Strategy was adopted on 1 December 2015 and had a lifespan of five years. It set out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the County during this period.

Over the past five years' different issues have taken prominence and the Strategy has been fully revised to take account of Denbighshire's Corporate Plan, climate and ecological change, homelessness and young people's challenges with housing.

To reflect the greater emphasis on addressing homelessness in this revised Strategy it has also been renamed the Housing & Homelessness Strategy and a theme has been dedicated to the main concerns and projects in relation to homelessness.

The Strategy has two visions:

*'Everyone is supported with pride to live in homes that meet their needs, within the vibrant and sustainable communities Denbighshire aspires to'*

And,

*'End Homelessness in Denbighshire'*

The aims of Strategy are providing more housing to address the housing needs of Denbighshire residents, ensuring that housing is of good quality, supporting people with their housing issues, addressing homelessness and supporting communities.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

These issues have been divided into six themes:

- Theme 1: More Homes to Meet Local Need and Demand
- Theme 2: Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes
- Theme 3: Ensuring Safe and Healthy Homes Theme 4: Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire
- Theme 5: Homes and Support for Vulnerable People
- Theme 6: Promoting and Supporting Communities

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy comprises of:

- The Strategy - which provides the context for the approach and identifies the high level outcomes
- An Action Plan – which will be regularly monitored and updated throughout the lifespan of the Strategy

It is recognised throughout the Strategy that both Housing & Homelessness are the responsibility of a range of departments across the Council. Solutions are often developed with external partners, as well as through the Authority. A partnership approach is embedded into the projects which aim to deliver the Strategy.

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy for Denbighshire has been developed following extensive consultation both within and outside Denbighshire County Council. The Strategy will be closely monitored through the Strategic Housing & Homelessness Monitoring Group and progress updates as required to committee.

Tony Thomas      Bobby Feeley

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Executive Summary

Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategies have been developed around the visions of:

*'Everyone is supported with pride to live in homes that meet their needs, within the vibrant and sustainable communities Denbighshire aspires to'*

And,

*'End Homelessness in Denbighshire'*

Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategies have been blended into one overarching Strategy to reflect the fact that all the issues they seek to address are connected and need to be addressed by sectors across the Council and third sector partners.

To deliver these ambitious visions the overarching Strategy has been devised under six themes, all of which are linked:

1. More Homes to Meet Local Need and Demand
2. Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes
3. Ensuring Safe and Healthy Homes
4. Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire
5. Homes and Support for Vulnerable People
6. Promoting and Supporting Communities

Increasing the housing supply across Wales is an issue Welsh Government are keen to address and have developed the 'Taking Wales Forward, 2016 – 2021' programme this has the ambitious aim of delivering 20,000 affordable homes

Research indicates that Denbighshire, in line with the rest of Wales has a shortage

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

of new build development, affordable homes, homes for older people and homes for vulnerable adults. Denbighshire aims to address this shortfall through a range of measures.

These will include an additional 170 Council homes; 260 affordable homes provided through private developers and Registered Social Landlords; bringing 500 empty properties back into use and providing additional Extra Care housing.

This is reflected in Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2017- 2022 with the priority of 'Ensuring access to good quality housing' and the target of the development of 1000 more homes across the County during the life of the plan.

Welsh Government commissioned an Independent Affordable Housing Review in 2019. This has made recommendations which will considerably affect the delivery and quality of affordable housing in Wales in coming years. This needs to be incorporated in the new Housing & Homelessness Strategy.

Denbighshire declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and is in the process of drafting a zero carbon action plan. One of the key actions of this plan will be the commitment to upgrade Council building assets, such as Council houses and offices to meet the zero carbon pledge commitment by 2030. The climate emergency is a major influence on Council decisions and will also affect the Council's compliance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act

**Theme One: More Homes to Meet Local Need and Demand** addresses the issue of low development rates in Denbighshire, and the need for more housing across the County.

To help stimulate the development market we have introduced site development briefs and a housing development prospectus which provides clarity and general information for developers and investors about allocated housing sites.

We are currently developing a Replacement Local Development Plan which will include land allocations for housing development up to 2033. The new development will lead to a boost in the supply of affordable homes which is addressed in the next theme.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

**Theme Two: Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes**, through this theme we investigate the issue of the limited supply of affordable homes in the county and what initiatives we can take to increase it. Research shows there is a clear need for affordable housing in the county, with 57% of first time buyers and new households being unable to afford to purchase a 2 bedroom house on the open market.<sup>1</sup> Decreasing and stagnant incomes in the county, are a contributing factor to the slow housing market, and underline the importance for more affordable housing to be created.

We have established an affordable housing delivery and investment programme for Denbighshire. This has been developed through the Housing Revenue Account thirty-year business plan and also by taking advantage of other funding sources such as the Innovative Housing Programme of funding and Housing and Health Funding. Working with a range of development partners, both other social landlords and the private sector, and access for Local Authorities to Social Housing Grant from 2021/22 will also open up another stream of funding to develop more affordable housing.

**Theme Three: Ensuring Safe & Healthy Homes**, examines the issue of improving and maintaining the standards of both public and privately owned accommodation, to ensure that residents live in a well maintained and safe home.

Denbighshire has undertaken a large programme of renewals and major works to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standards and will through the work of the Major Repairs Programme, continue to improve. There are also pilot schemes being implemented on renewable energy measures, which will be rolled out to the rest of the housing stock, where possible. The decarbonisation of social housing stock has been made a priority by Welsh Government and needs to be factored and financially accounted for in any housing management plans going forward.

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<sup>1</sup> Denbighshire Local Housing Market Assessment July 2019

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

Denbighshire has also been instrumental in implementing the Landlord Registration Scheme, which will also help to address poor quality housing standards in the private rented sector.

**Theme Four: Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire** there is a need to review the emergency accommodation options for families affected by homelessness. Presently there is a reliance on the private rented sector to provide this accommodation, but the quality, suitability and location varies considerably.

Alternative options to provide this accommodation. This will ensure that people, who are experiencing very difficult situations, are able to access good quality emergency accommodation whilst receiving the most appropriate advice and support.

**Theme Five: Homes and Support for Vulnerable People**, the information available showing the demographics of Denbighshire, reveals there is a considerable need for increased housing options, for the rising older people sector in the county and also for vulnerable adults.

We have committed to providing a further three Extra Care Facilities, working with partners which will address the changing needs of residents. We have also reviewed the existing housing accommodation options; which has ensured that accommodation choices, such as Supported Independent Living schemes have a range of support options, suitable for varying needs.

**Theme six: Promoting and Supporting Communities Denbighshire** aims to be a place where people aspire to live. To achieve this vision, we need to create vibrant and sustainable communities. By redeveloping neighbourhoods and addressing 'eyesore' sites and empty homes, we can give our residents an environment they can be proud of.

We can also help Council residents improve their communities by helping set up neighbourhood groups and activities, to address issues and create community cohesion. For this to be truly sustainable they will need to be people led rather than organisation led.

# **Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary**

Housing and Homelessness related issues are dealt with by various different departments across the Council and Third Sector organisations across the county. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy draws together all the issues and work required to address them, in a more strategic way, maximising resources and outcomes for Denbighshire's residents.

# **Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary**

## **Vision**

Housing is one of the five Corporate Priorities for Denbighshire and is reflected across several departmental business plans.

The vision for the Housing Strategy for Denbighshire was developed through a consultation exercise facilitated by Glyndŵr University in June 2013 with housing partners, third sector organisations and the public. This Vision was reviewed and supported by Councillors at a workshop in January 2020. The Homelessness Strategy vision was developed following a comprehensive review of homelessness across Denbighshire in 2016

The visions are supported through the six themes of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy and the Action Plan to ensure that the County's aspirations are fulfilled.

## **Monitoring & Governance**

The new Housing & Homelessness Strategy will be monitored primarily by the Strategic Housing & Homelessness Group - a Lead Member and Officer Group which meets bi-monthly and enables a more strategic/corporate approach to Homelessness and Housing across the County.

The operational responsibilities for delivering a range of housing issues contained within the Strategy are delivered via the relevant Services, for example, Local Authority Social Housing is developed and maintained by Finance & Property Services and managed by Customers & Communities. Addressing Homelessness is delivered and managed by Community Support Services.

Community Support Services have led on the production of the original Homelessness Strategy and associated Action Plan.

Community Support Services have led on the production of the original Homelessness Strategy and associated Action Plan.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

Homelessness however is a corporate issue best addressed through effective partnership working across all relevant DCC Services and partner organisations.

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy provides the strategic framework for addressing homelessness, and will be the vehicle for agreeing homelessness priorities and monitoring progress against them. This will enable better integration and provide more corporate ownership to the work on homelessness

The Strategic Housing & Homelessness Group will monitor and review progress on the delivery of identified actions through the action plan with regular progress reports to Scrutiny and other committees as necessary.



# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Local Context

### Population and Households

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|             |                                                                                                                    |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 95.3k       | 2018 Mid-year population estimates for Denbighshire                                                                |
| 42,608      | 2026 Mid-year estimate of Denbighshire households                                                                  |
| 1954        | Forecasted increase in households 2015 <sup>2</sup> - 2026                                                         |
| £27,395     | Median household income in Denbighshire in 2019                                                                    |
| £2092       | Decrease in median income since 2007/08                                                                            |
| 21%         | Population in Denbighshire aged 65 and over                                                                        |
| 24%         | Population of Denbighshire with an activity limiting illness or disability                                         |
| 51%<br>from | 327 households threatened with homelessness 2019-20 (Up 111 previous year)                                         |
| 12%         | Areas <sup>3</sup> of Denbighshire classed as being in the top 10 of the worst deprived areas in Wales (WIMD 2019) |

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<sup>2</sup> Earlier Housing Strategy spanned period 2015- 2020

<sup>3</sup> Lower Super Output Areas as defined by Office of National Statistics

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Housing Market

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|      |                                                                                           |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 196  | New properties completed 2018/19 up 15 on 2017/18.                                        |
| 57%  | New households cannot afford a 2-bedroom open market house in Denbighshire.               |
| 371  | Affordable homes provided 2015 – 2020                                                     |
| 69%  | Households in Denbighshire who own their own homes outright or with a mortgage.           |
| 6.4k | Households renting in the private rented sector                                           |
| 5.2k | Households in Denbighshire renting from Registered Social Landlords & the Council in 2011 |

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# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Theme one: More homes to meet local need and demand

### Outcomes

1. An increased supply of new homes of all types and tenures to meet the needs and demands of households and communities in Denbighshire as defined by the two-yearly Local Housing Market Assessment
2. Better use of the housing stock by continuing to target empty homes across the County
3. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are identified and addressed

### Background

1.1. This theme aims to address how to deliver more homes to meet local need and demand. Housing need is largely identified through the statutory Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA). This must be carried out every two years as mandated by The Housing (Wales) Act 2014. This enables the strategic planning of housing development and supply across the County.

Increasing the supply of homes includes all types of accommodation:

- Open market housing and low cost home ownership schemes
- Private, intermediate and social rented accommodation
- Gypsy and Traveller pitches

1.2. All these types of accommodation are supported by government initiatives and targets to help stimulate their supply and ensure good quality housing standards.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Issues & Challenges

- A two-yearly completed Local Housing Market Assessment is a statutory requirement
- 64.5% of the households in Denbighshire are single or couple households with no dependents
- Population profile of older people is increasing; currently 21% of Denbighshire's residents are aged 65 or over
- Decrease in number of new build dwellings since 2007
- Low levels of planning applications for residential development
- Delivering the allocated housing sites within the Local Development Plan
- Decrease in the volume of house sales in the County since 2007 and static house prices
- Promoting Welsh language and culture
- Impact of coronavirus Covid-19
- 780 residential empty properties in Denbighshire (based on April 2018 Council Tax records)
- Difficulty in engaging owners to bring empty homes back into use
- Complexity of legislation and the risk of additional costs to the Council
- The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 makes it mandatory for all Councils to carry out an assessment of Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs and take action on the findings.
- We have regular unauthorised encampments although generally small, indicating there is some need
- We have no authorised sites in the County.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- The Replacement Local Development Plan is currently being progressed, which will provide clarity for developers on the types and volume of house building required across Denbighshire.
- A review of the current development sites in the Local Development Plan has been undertaken, with a particular emphasis on viability and deliverability
- Developing an Infrastructure plan to ensure future development is sustainable and doesn't put undue pressure on existing community resources and organisation
- The statutory requirement for a Local Housing Market Assessment is reviewed and updated every two years, ensuring that projected housing need demands remain informed.
- The Empty Homes Delivery Plan has been adopted and has a project board meeting regularly to ensure progress.
- Developments designed for Older People such as the Extra Care facility in Denbigh are underway, whilst the extension for the existing facility at Ruthin will be progressed shortly.
- A new Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment has been commissioned in accordance with statutory legislation.

## Headline Actions for Theme One

1. Review existing Local Development Plan policies and land allocations to progress a Replacement Local Development Plan to adoption
2. Produce an Infrastructure Plan for Denbighshire and address infrastructure issues
3. Maintain and update a two-yearly Local Housing Market Assessment
4. Undertake an up to date Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment and take action on its findings.
5. Implement the Empty Homes Delivery Plan

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Theme Two: Creating a Supply of Affordable Homes

### Outcomes

1. Improved supply of affordable housing of all types and tenures across the County
2. Working with partners to maximise affordable housing development
3. An increase in applicants on the Affordable Housing Register

### Background

2.1. This theme aims to examine the issues surrounding Affordable Housing and the affordability of the housing market for local residents. Affordable Housing is defined by Denbighshire County Council<sup>4</sup> as housing provided to those who cannot afford general open market housing and is retained as affordable for first and subsequent occupiers.

2.2. Affordable Housing should meet the needs of eligible households, include availability at low enough cost for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.<sup>5</sup>

2.3. Affordable Housing can be divided into three types of housing tenure:

- Social Rented Housing - Affordable Housing for rent which is provided by Local Authorities and Housing Associations with rent being set in accordance with Welsh Government's benchmark rents. This is usually the cheapest available rented housing and has the biggest demand.
- Intermediate Rental Housing – whereby rents are above those of social rented housing but normally no higher than 80% of an open market rent of a comparable property. This kind of housing can be provided by private developers and Social Landlords.

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<sup>4</sup> DCC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance 2014

<sup>5</sup> Welsh Government Planning Technical Advice Note 2 (TAN 2) – Glossary definition

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- Low Cost Affordable Home Ownership - normally Shared Equity schemes, where a proportion of the property is bought by an eligible applicant and a proportion of the equity is retained on behalf of the Local Authority by a Housing Association

2.4. An Independent Affordable Housing Review conducted by Welsh Government in 2018 made 48 recommendations to facilitate affordable housing delivery in Wales. These related to the implementation of improvements in the following eight areas:

1. Housing Need
2. Housing Quality Standards
3. Modern Methods of Construction
4. Rent Policy
5. Local Authorities as Enablers and Builders
6. Public Sector Land
7. Financing Affordable Housing
8. Dowry and Major Repairs

## Issues & Challenges

- Personal income levels have recovered slowly since the credit crunch with many areas still experiencing severe deprivation notably areas in Rhyl and Denbigh
- Significant gap between affordable housing need and supply
- Affordable Housing provision through planning obligation is 10%
- Housing in hamlets and open countryside has to meet affordable housing criteria
- Financial Challenges being faced by the Council and partners
- Low turnover of Council/Housing Association stock
- Welfare Reform changes combined with a changing population profile necessitating a need to build smaller properties.
- Affordable Housing Review implementation
- Lack of financial certainty for Council & Housing Association partners

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- Uncertainty surrounding the Social Housing Grant Programme which is the main funding source for affordable housing
- Increasing costs for building
- Negative perception of affordable housing
- Lack of awareness of different affordable housing schemes
- Complexity of application process

## Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Ensuring that full strategic support is given to Housing Associations applying for different affordable housing funding streams, provided by Welsh Government in addition to Social Housing Grant such as Innovative Housing Fund and Land for Housing
- Negotiating with developers on affordable housing provision, which has meant in some cases additional units to those required under planning obligations have been provided
- New affordable housing commuted sums policy developed and adopted
- Review of Council land holdings
- Buying back former council properties sold under 'Right to Buy' legislation
- Joint ventures with developers and other social landlords are explored on a site by site basis
- Tai Teg Affordable Housing Register has been reviewed and re-launched, with more effective marketing and promotion to raise awareness

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Headline Actions for Theme Two

1. Review of Local Development Plan policies such as affordable housing in rural areas and commuted sums
2. Review the current approach and thresholds for affordable housing requirements in LDP policies
3. Active promotion of the Tai Teg affordable housing register to increase applications, as more applicants will evidence need and demand to developers
4. Publicise successful affordable housing schemes
5. Develop a Council Housing Asset Strategy, which includes a house building and maintenance programme, alongside a carbon zero plan for existing properties.
6. Review existing housing portfolio with emphasis on providing suitable accommodation to the future older person demographic of Denbighshire
7. Practical completion of first new homes through Housing Development Programme



Figure 1: Clwyd Alyn scheme in Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd ©Clwyd Alyn

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Theme Three: Ensuring Safe and Healthy Homes

### Outcomes

1. Council and Housing Association accommodation is maintained to Welsh Housing Quality Standards
2. Decarbonisation of social housing stock
3. All DCC houses to be 'C' rated on the EPC by 2022
4. Improved standards in the Private Rented Sector
5. Accommodation will be of good quality and will be adaptable to residents' needs
6. Targeted financial resources to ensure homes are more energy efficient helping the environment, improving housing quality and targeting fuel poverty
7. Unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans will be reduced
8. Implement & enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector and address fuel poverty

### Background

3.1. This theme aims to address the provision of safe and healthy homes in Denbighshire. This needs to be tackled across all types of accommodation; affordable housing, private rented accommodation and owner occupied homes including mobile home sites.

### Issues & Challenges

- Maintenance of homes to the recommended standards
- Establishing a baseline of required works
- Financing & maintenance of work
- Challenges in developing good relationships with landlords
- Establishing an accurate database of landlords in the County
- Poor quality multi-occupation dwellings

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- Improving the quality of private rented sector stock
- Response to the changing demographic of the County (smaller household size, disabilities and increasing older person profile)
- Large scale regeneration projects such as Rhyl West End
- Capital grant schemes reducing
- Need to introduce more innovative loan schemes
- Publicity of available resources
- Challenges with securing funding to support projects
- No dedicated capital budget
- The reduction of fuel poverty requires funding for energy efficiency measures
- Occupation of holiday caravans as permanent homes
- Some are longstanding and/or include unsuitable accommodation
- Pressure on local public services as they are not being funded through local taxation
- Need to establish a baseline of all the properties affected
- Fuel poverty measures and eligibility for schemes and funding constantly changing
- Enforcement measures and process needs to be adopted
- All DCC houses to be 'C' rated on the EPC by 2022

## Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Solar panels have been fitted to some social landlord properties as part of the upgrade to Welsh Housing Quality Standards
- Successful bids to Welsh Government for developing social housing properties using renewable energy measures
- Efforts are underway to ensure all DCC housing stock is EPC energy rated 'C' by 2022
- All new DCC stock is being built to EPC energy rated 'A'
- Regular Landlord Forum events are held throughout the County

# **Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary**

- Regeneration of the West End of Rhyl has reduced residential density in the area and improved living standards
- A Housing Renewal area has been designated in South West/East Rhyl which allows access to Welsh Government money to upgrade the domestic properties
- Group Repair schemes have been carried out in South West/East Rhyl and Denbigh
- A monitoring process for unauthorised residential occupation of caravans has been set up
- Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) are enforced by DCC

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Headline Actions for Theme Three

1. Welsh Housing Quality Standards are maintained
2. Decarbonisation of social housing stock
3. Develop and adopt a new Housing Revenue Account borrowing strategy
4. Rent Smart Wales landlord licensing scheme is supported
5. Work directly with landlords to improve standards in the Private Rented Sector
6. Implement & enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector
7. Implement additional Licensing for HMO's scheme now extended to Prestatyn, Denbigh & Llangollen
8. Target financial resources to ensure housing will be more energy efficient helping the environment and improving housing quality
9. Unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans will be reduced



Figure 2: Private property improved through Enforcement action

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Theme Four: Preventing & Ending Homelessness in Denbighshire

### Outcomes

1. Independent advice accessible at an early stage to help prevent homelessness
2. Households at risk of homelessness are engaged through partner agencies to prevent and relieve homelessness
3. Young people at risk of becoming homeless identified and engaged
4. Regional self- assessment tool to assist with homelessness options
5. Suitable accommodation options are available to prevent homelessness
6. Those that are declared homeless are provided with appropriate emergency and temporary accommodation
7. Those that are declared homeless are assisted in finding suitable long term accommodation
8. To end entrenched rough sleeping in Denbighshire

### Background

- 4.1. In this theme we concentrate on the homelessness services that are available and what changes need to be taken in light of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, Housing Act (Wales) 2014 and the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016.
- 4.2. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 has placed more emphasis on prevention of homelessness duties for local authorities, to achieve this we need to work in greater partnership with private landlords to source affordable, sustainable accommodation for vulnerable people.
- 4.3. The Act also makes it a statutory requirement for Councils to review the homelessness situation in their area and develop and implement a Homelessness Strategy to address the identified issues by 2018, which is reviewed every four years from 2018 onwards.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- 4.4. Households presenting as homeless has increased in Denbighshire primarily as a result of implementing the provisions of the Housing Act.
- 4.5. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented volume of homelessness presentations and need for accommodation since March 2020.
- 4.6. In response to the Covid-19 crisis Welsh Government has provided funding available to address homelessness. The funding has been available in phases, initially to ensure that people with no home, could safely self-isolate and follow the public health guidance over hygiene and social distancing and have a safe space in which to live.
- 4.7. In August 2020 Welsh Government announced Phase two of its response to the pandemic with an extra £40m made available, to ensure that citizens are provided with safe, secure homes and no one returns to homelessness.
- 4.8. This funding stream is focussed more on finding long term solutions, such as building accommodation and transforming services to enable permanent housing solutions can be found.

## Issues & Challenges

- Making advice available in a variety of formats so it is accessible to all
- Encouraging people to access advice when first threatened with homelessness
- Sourcing suitable premises and partner agencies
- Hard to reach group
- Often sofa surf and make up a substantial proportion of hidden homeless
- Consistency of working practices across County borders
- Sourcing suitable accommodation which meets general and specialised housing needs
- Additional duties placed on local authorities through the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, regarding homeless prevention measures
- Accessing pet friendly accommodation
- Challenge of finding suitable accommodation suitable for large families and single young persons

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- Low income levels particularly in the North of the County
- Increase in personal debt levels
- Lack of confidence in Councils and third party organisations
- Lack of suitable available accommodation

## Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Updating the Corporate website with clear information & signposting for services
- Developing a self-assessment tool to assist people with advice and options
- Piloting moving advice teams into more community based environments
- Funding a post within CAB to help with relevant advice whilst accessing additional services such as debt support and benefit advice
- Engaging a support worker specifically for homeless LGBTQ+ young people
- Rolling out workshops in schools addressing raising awareness around homelessness and available support
- Support workers working with partners to identify & assist young people at risk of homelessness
- Mediation to save tenancies and prevent homelessness wherever possible
- Six months' rent paid in advance for private tenancies to secure accommodation and prevent homelessness
- Scoping work is underway to develop DCC solutions for emergency and temporary accommodation rather than relying on the private sector
- Housing First initiative set up jointly with Conwy CC

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Headline Actions for Theme Four

1. Develop easily accessible information and advice for prevention of homelessness
2. Develop an early intervention and prevention service, involving a wide range of partners to support households at risk of homelessness
3. Develop a homelessness hub with access to wrap-around services through multi-disciplinary interventions for those experiencing homelessness
4. Establish in-house emergency accommodation facilities for homeless citizens
5. Develop a rapid rehousing model for citizens affected by homelessness with appropriate support
6. Review services provided internally & externally through Housing Support Grant (HSG) to ensure a range of support is available
7. Deliver workshops to secondary school aged children on homelessness and available support
8. Identify young people at risk through training of professionals working in their environment
9. Extend Housing First Project
10. Development of the Youth Service digital youth work to promote and engage young people in the issue of Youth Homelessness in Denbighshire.



Figure 3: HWB Youth Homelessness Accommodation & Training Centre, Denbigh

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Theme Five: Homes & Support for Vulnerable People

### Outcomes

1. A range of housing choices for older people
2. A range of housing choices and support placements for vulnerable and young people
3. Vulnerable people are assisted to lead independent lives in appropriate accommodation to meet their needs

### Background

- 5.1. This theme aims to address the issues surrounding vulnerable people, their housing choices and what is needed and offered in housing related support, through the provision of the Supporting People programme.
- 5.2. Vulnerable people can be supported to maintain their accommodation through the Supporting People programme which provides housing related support services to people over the age of 16. Reductions in Supporting People funding have meant that many services have been remodelled to achieve cost savings and target support more effectively, although the range of services available to vulnerable people has been maintained. Supporting People have also been exploring opportunities to deliver cheaper models of low level group support, such as delivering life skills and volunteering courses.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

5.3. The Supporting People programme supports projects such as:

- Domestic Abuse Services
- Mental Health Services
- Young people with support needs
- Substance misuse
- Learning disabilities
- Vulnerable older people
- Families with support needs
- Chronic illnesses

## Issues & Challenges

- There is now more emphasis on people retaining independence by remaining in their own home
- Older people require a greater range of housing options to meet their varied needs
- Supply shortage of Community Living Schemes
- Reactive housing options rather than proactive
- Financial insecurity for supporting organisations and partners
- Need for varied work and care placements for vulnerable adults of all ages
- Welfare Reform challenges such as 'Bedroom Tax' and the roll out of Universal Credit
- Increase in personal debt levels

## Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Market shaping statement to influence the market provision of care home services within the County
- Additional Extra Care facilities being developed in Denbigh, Ruthin and options for elsewhere in the County being investigated
- Falls prevention and wrap around service
- Hub and Spoke support models are being implemented wherever possible

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- Suitable work placements for vulnerable adults are continually sought
- Supporting People programme is regularly reviewed to ensure services provided are still relevant and best value for money
- Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit has provided training to front line staff to try and combat the threat of loan sharks
- Financial Inclusion training has been embedded into support roles
- Discretionary Housing Payments applications are completed with vulnerable people where necessary to maximise their income
- 178 accommodation placements are paid for in a range of projects which provide support and assistance for vulnerable people
- Community based initiatives such as time banking and small scale social enterprise are encouraged to facilitate community cohesion
- Move-on panel established for people leaving supported accommodation and being considered for a social housing tenancy

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Headline Actions for Theme Five

1. Three Extra Care facilities in development or completed by 2022
2. Investigate more 'own front door' schemes for vulnerable people



Figure 4: Awel Y Dyffryn, Denbigh Extra Care units under construction

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Theme Six: Promoting & Supporting Communities

### Outcomes

1. Neighbourhood based activities help people remain safe and independent
2. Sustainable communities are maintained through innovative 'eyesore' site projects
3. Council housing estates are regenerated to help create and sustain desirable neighbourhoods
4. Community initiatives are supported and maintained with partner organisations
5. Creating affordable and sustainable communities

### Background

6.1. The aim of this theme is to consider and examine promoting and supporting sustainable local communities. We will be working with housing and third sector partners to develop communities where people want to live and work and have a sense of ownership by the people who live there.

6.2. Community engagement through neighbourhood based activities is an integral part of revitalising or regenerating an area. When successful it can bring communities together and create a sense of belonging and ownership of an area, which in turn develops more neighbourly communities and reduces anti-social behaviour.

### Issues & Challenges

- Retaining the motivation of residents
- Contacting and involving hard to reach groups such as young people
- Neighbourhood disputes between residents
- Residents taking ownership of projects in their area
- Viability of sustainable schemes
- Challenges in engaging owners of empty dwellings to enable a solution to be found
- Capacity and ability of residents to participate

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

- Achieving commitment from residents and sustaining the projects without external involvement
- Prioritisation of areas to be developed
- Capacity and ability of residents to participate
- Achieving commitment and sustaining the projects
- Lack of affordable accommodation
- Challenging tenants disrupting community cohesion

## Measures to achieve these outcomes include:

- Community Garden/Allotment schemes
- Nature for Health events including trips to places such as Brenig Reservoir and activities like basket weaving, stargazing and bushcraft sessions
- Multi-department tackling of 'Eyesore sites' forms part of the Empty Homes Delivery Plan
- Reviewing the Council estate green space areas to establish what facilities are wanted and needed in the area
- Environmental improvements planned alongside tenants
- West Rhyl Neighbourhood Management Partnership set up to provide a co-ordinated approach to any issues in the area as they develop
- Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) ensures that applications for social housing are dealt with in a consistent manner across the County and meet the housing need of the area
- SARTH also triages applications and provides support and advice to assist people with their housing options
- A review of Denbighshire housing stock is due to take place, to see if the accommodation still meets housing need or should be refocussed and possibly even redeveloped.

# Denbighshire Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2021 – 2026 Summary

## Headline Actions for Theme Six

1. Implement Tenant Engagement strategy
2. Review of SARTH
3. Develop a 5 year rent policy
4. Work with police, registered social landlords & other partners on focused neighbourhood management in West Rhyl

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Denbighshire County Council

# Housing & Homelessness Strategy

Action Plan January 2022

## Introduction

The Housing & Homelessness Strategy and accompanying Action Plan were adopted by the Council in December 2020 and are an amalgamation of all of our actions concerned with housing, homelessness 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 & Homelessness Strategy Delivery Group, jointly chaired by Lead Member Cllr Tony Thomas and Cllr Bobby Feeley. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy is based around 6 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. Preventing & ending homelessness in Denbighshire
5. Homes and support for vulnerable people
6. Promoting and supporting communities

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|  | Major issues - action stalled or will not meet targets    |
|  | Minor Issues - some slippage but actions taken to address |
|  | No issues - action on track                               |
|  | Action now complete or part of Business As Usual work     |



| Theme Title                            | Reference | Action                                                                                        | Justification / Context                                                                                                                                               | Update                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | RAG Status | Completion Date | Lead Member / Head of Service |
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| More homes to meet local need & demand | 1.01      | Review LDP housing allocations and policies as part of statutory LDP Review                   | Current LDP covers the period up to 2021, a review of policies and land use for the County is a statutory requirement.                                                | We are working to progress background technical evidence for Denbighshire's Replacement LDP, but the Covid-19 crisis has impacted decision-making, public engagement and fieldwork. The Delivery Agreement will be revised once we have clarity on the timing of completion of essential evidence (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                               |            | Dec-23          | Mark Young<br>Emlyn Jones     |
| More homes to meet local need & demand | 1.02      | To develop an Infrastructure Plan for Denbighshire                                            | Identification of infrastructure issues and requirements to inform policies and land allocations to enable housing growth and development.                            | Infrastructure Plan will be further developed as part of the work on the replacement LDP and site assessments. A continuous review process required for this. (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |            | Dec-23          | Mark Young<br>Emlyn Jones     |
| More homes to meet local need & demand | 1.03      | Update Local Housing Market Assessment incorporating housing need and demand data.            | Current assessment was completed in 2019. Statutory requirement to provide an updated assessment every 2 years                                                        | Development of new LHMA for 2021 awaiting finalised guidance from WG on evidence and modelling required together with document presentation. (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |            | Jun-22          | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones    |
| More homes to meet local need & demand | 1.04      | Undertake a Gypsy & Traveller accommodation needs assessment and take action on its findings. | Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires an updated Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment to be carried out every 4 years and for any needs identified to be addressed. | New G & T Assessment is being undertaken as part of the background evidence for the LDP. Project Board established to lead on this work. A series of Task and Finish Group meetings were undertaken and Communities Scrutiny authorised starting the GTAA in July 2021. Consultants Opinion Research Services have been commissioned to undertake the GTAA on behalf of DCC. A wide ranging publicity plan has been undertaken including online surveys to County Councils, City, Town and |            | Dec-22          | Mark Young<br>Emlyn Jones     |

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|                                                   |      |                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Community Councils, press releases, social media and work with GT advocacy services. The draft report will be reported to members in November/ December 2021. (Nov 2021). Draft assessment approved by Cabinet & submitted to Welsh Government (Jan 2022)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |        |                           |
| <b>More homes to meet local need &amp; demand</b> | 1.05 | Implement the Empty Homes Delivery Plan                                                               | Better use of existing housing stock by continuing to target empty homes across the County.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Empty Homes matching service was launched in October 2020. A publicity plan is pushing the scheme and currently 15 applicants are signed up. Signposting to the DCC leasing scheme is utilised whenever feasible. This pilot scheme will be reviewed. (Nov 2021)<br>Promote Houses to Homes loan scheme<br>Housing Renewals Strategy under review (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | Dec-26 | Mark Young<br>Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b>      | 2.01 | Review of Local Development Plan policies such as affordable housing in rural areas and commuted sums | To ensure that affordable housing requirements are balanced against viability of site delivery and the amount of affordable housing being delivered by private developers is maximised without impacting overall housing delivery. Requirements for rural affordable housing, and the Council's approach, will also be reconsidered to ensure this supports sustainable rural communities. | This will form part of the Replacement LDP evidence and methodology. Updated development viability assessment will be essential to inform our approach in the Replacement LDP and this will be undertaken once we have more clarity about the economic impact of the Covid19 pandemic. Work will include testing a range of methods for calculating financial contributions towards affordable housing, with the aim of reducing the number of calculations currently used. We will also test a range of approaches to calculating the value of affordable properties, to ensure this is set at an appropriate level. (Nov 2021) |  | Dec-23 | Mark Young<br>Emlyn Jones |

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| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> | 2.02 | Review the current approach and thresholds for affordable housing requirements in LDP policies | To ensure that affordable housing requirements are balanced against viability of site delivery and the amount of affordable housing being delivered by private developers is maximised without impacting overall housing delivery. Requirements for rural affordable housing, and the Council's approach, will also be reconsidered to ensure this supports sustainable rural communities. | This will form part of the Replacement LDP evidence and methodology. Updated development viability assessment will be essential to inform our approach in the Replacement LDP and this will be undertaken once we have more clarity about the economic impact of the Covid19 pandemic. (Nov 2021)                               |  | Dec-23 | Mark Young<br>Emlyn Jones  |
| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> | 2.03 | Promotion of Tai Teg affordable housing register                                               | Tai Teg is the Affordable Housing Register for Denbighshire, ensuring promotion will enable applicants to find suitable accommodation and the list is used in planning application responses as an indication of demand.                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning a series of strategic Press Releases to actively promote the Tai Teg register to promote all types of schemes available Homebuy, Rent to Own, Intermediate Rental & Shared Equity. Currently devising a Tai Teg web page on the DCC website, also looking into targeting employers with Tai Teg information (Nov 2021) |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> | 2.04 | Publicise successful affordable housing schemes with relevant partners                         | Promotion will enable applicants to find suitable accommodation and the list is used in planning application responses as an indication of demand                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Strategic promotion of affordable housing schemes both before and after development to maximise applicants and success stories (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> | 2.05 | Develop & adopt a Council Housing Asset Strategy                                               | Develop an Asset Strategy which includes a development & maintenance programme to include the carbon zero aspirations of the Council                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Draft document agreed. Final document to be progressed through the democratic process. (Feb 2021). Strategy to be presented to SLT & Cabinet Briefing Oct - Nov. (Sept 2021). FWP of SLT oversubscribed. Scheduled for presentation Jan 2022 (Nov 2021)                                                                         |  | Dec-21 | Tony Thomas<br>Steve Gadd  |

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| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> | 2.06 | Review existing housing portfolio with emphasis on providing suitable accommodation to the future older person demographic of Denbighshire | The purpose of this review is to inform the future type of Council Housing needed in Denbighshire                                         | There is on-going review existing DCC stock portfolio including non-housing assets to assess viability for repurposing and suitability to meet the future older person demographic in Denbighshire. A number of projects are underway to ensure assets are used effectively into the future (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Apr-21  | Tony Thomas<br>Steve Gadd |
| <b>Creating a supply of affordable homes</b> | 2.07 | Practical completion of first new homes through Housing Development Programme                                                              | Corporate Priority of 170 homes by April 2022                                                                                             | Work started on site at Tan Y Sgubor in Denbigh and Bodnant in Prestatyn. Planning applications approved for Llys Anwyl , Granite & Next in Rhyl, the former library site in Prestatyn. Tenders received for The Dell apartments in Prestatyn. (Jun 2021)<br>Procurement process started for the appointment of contractors for the conversion of Llys Anwyl in Rhyl and the redevelopment of the former library site in Prestatyn. (Sept 2021)                                                                                                               |  | Apr -22 | Tony Thomas<br>Steve Gadd |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b>     | 3.01 | To ensure Council accommodation is maintained to meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard                                                   | Funding has been given to DCC towards achieving these standards which have to be achieved by December 2020 and maintained after this date | WHQS has been achieved in Denbighshire, stock is now being maintained. Programme of works developed to ensure the standard is maintained. Covid has impacted on the delivery of internal refurbishment (kitchens & bathrooms) which will have an impact on maintaining the standard until measures are eased. External works have been prioritised 20/21 & 21/22 to ensure overall compliance can be restored. WG are producing revised WHQS criteria which may impact on compliance in the longer term. (Sept 2021). Revised WHQS standards awaited. Capital |  | Dec-26  | Tony Thomas<br>Steve Gadd |

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|                                          |      |                                                                    |                                                                                                                        | works progressing to maintain current standard. (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  |         |                            |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b> | 3.02 | Decarbonisation of social housing stock by 2030                    | Climate & Ecological Change Strategy commitment                                                                        | Programmes of work have been developed and implemented to tackle decarbonisation to meet WG targets and Corporate target of zero carbon emissions by 2030. IES systems are being installed to inform the next phase of physical works. However, meeting the decarbonisation targets will be subject to allocation of grant funding. (Sept 2021). 2020/21 schemes complete. Additional WG funding secured for further improvements to 50 houses in Rhyl and installation of further IES. Additional funding applied for with decision anticipated Jan 2022. (Nov 2021) |  | Dec-30  | Tony Thomas<br>Steve Gadd  |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b> | 3.03 | Develop and adopt a new Housing Revenue Account borrowing strategy | Changes in how the Housing Revenue Account can be leveraged need to be taken into account in the 30-year business plan | Devise and adopt a new HRA borrowing Strategy to take into account changes in permitted borrowing levels and capping – 30 year business plan. Research undertaken and proposals are being developed (June 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Sept-21 | Tony Thomas<br>Steve Gadd  |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b> | 3.04 | Support Rent Smart Wales                                           | Set up by Welsh Government to comply with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 with regards to Landlord licensing              | Promote Rent Smart Wales and ensure new and existing landlords have undertaken the training and are licensed through the scheme. Very few properties are not registered any properties inspected for Homelessness Prevention are checked and there is a section on the HMO application form to ensure compliance, so procedures are in place to                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |  | Dec-26  | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |

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|                                          |      |                                                                                             |                                                                                                     | gather information and compliance from new landlords (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |        |                            |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b> | 3.05 | Work directly with landlords to Improve standards in the Private Rented Sector              | Improve communication & engagement with landlords to improve standards in the Private Rented Sector | EPC & Rent Smart Wales data used to inform best locations for targeted work. Increase awareness of energy schemes such as NEST & Arbed. This action was impacted by the need to divert resources due to the pandemic but we are now beginning to move back to business as usual functions but have backlog of work to catch up on. Arbed have their own work plan to target areas of need and access to Rent Smart Wales data. The Landlord Forum has been put on hold for 12 months as the pandemic has meant we could not run them as usual, however previous feedback about moving the venue for the forum around the County and putting it on at different times was well received. (Nov 2021) |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b> | 3.06 | Implement & enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) in the private rented sector | Statutory requirement under Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Sector) England & Wales Act 2015      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Develop a fines policy &amp; procedure</li> <li>· Implement enforcement of applicable fines for serial non- compliance and non-engagement of MEES</li> </ul> This has now been completed and implementation is part of business as usual (June 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | Apr-21 | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b> | 3.07 | Implement Additional Licensing for HMO's scheme now extended                                | Raise standards of properties & their management.                                                   | Additional Licensing of HMO's scheme in force in Rhyl recently extended to include Prestatyn, Denbigh & Llangollen. Inspections for new property applications have now restarted (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |

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|                                                             |      | to Prestatyn, Denbigh & Llangollen                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |        |                         |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b>                    | 3.08 | Target financial resources to ensure housing will be more energy efficient helping the environment and improving housing quality | To improve energy efficiency in housing and reduce fuel poverty                                                                                                                                                              | Rent Smart & EPC data has now been reviewed and DCC is now working with Arbed to develop schemes in East Rhyl & Dyserth (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Ensuring safe &amp; healthy homes</b>                    | 3.09 | Unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans will be reduced                                                          | Many people are living in caravans which do not have planning permission for permanent residency. Some caravans provide poor housing conditions and this will ensure that people are not living in unsuitable accommodation. | There is evidence of people living permanently in substandard holiday caravans in the County, highlighted even more during the pandemic. Not only is this unsuitable accommodation for many of these people but the permanent residential accommodation is unauthorised. A multi-department approach to dealing with the issue is being planned but has been delayed due to Covid restrictions and reallocation of resources. This has been identified as a large project requiring a strategic/corporate approach needing additional resources. (Nov 2021) |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas Emlyn Jones |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.01 | Develop easily accessible information and advice for prevention of homelessness                                                  | Easily accessible information enables citizens to make informed choices regarding their housing situation.                                                                                                                   | Website information has been updated, social media campaign is planned (June 2021). Public Protection are attending in a 'partnership' role. i.e. there may be some issues in HMO's that crop up that Public Protection need to or can deal with (Nov 2022)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  | Apr-21 | Bobby Feeley Ann Lloyd  |

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| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.02 | Develop an early intervention and prevention service, involving a wide range of partners to support households at risk of homelessness      | Housing Act (Wales) 2014 requires Local Authorities to prevent homelessness and ensure access to services to support households at risk of homelessness | Building on best practice to procure early intervention services that provide robust support to households at risk of homelessness e.g. debt advice, Mediation, support to Landlords, etc. Work is ongoing to develop a pilot project and also start a procurement exercise (June 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | Dec-22 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.03 | Develop a homelessness hub with access to wrap-around services through multi-disciplinary interventions for those experiencing homelessness | Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness                                                                                                       | Recruit a multi-disciplinary team to provide wrap-around services to those households experiencing homelessness. To identify and develop an appropriate hub with emergency accommodation on site in which to deliver the multi-disciplinary support.<br>The recruitment of a multi-disciplinary team is likely to start during quarter 1 of 21/22. The hub will be developed and hopefully operational by end of qtr. 3, 21/22 (June 2021)<br>All but 1 of the posts have now been filled and work is ongoing with BCUHB to recruit the final post which is a Substance Misuse/Mental Health Professional (Sept 2021) |  | Dec-22 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.04 | Establish in-house emergency accommodation facilities for homeless citizens                                                                 | Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness                                                                                                       | Architects have been developing Employer's Requirements for a Design & Build conversion of the former care home acquired to provide temporary accommodation in Brighton Road in Rhyl. (Sep 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  | Dec-26 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness</b>                 | 4.05 | Develop a rapid rehousing model for citizens affected by                                                                                    | Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness                                                                                                       | Increase the amount of available accommodation by working with private landlords as well as social landlords to increase housing accommodation options                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | Dec-26 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |

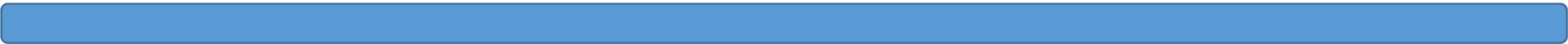
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| <b>in Denbighshire</b>                                      |      | homelessness with appropriate support                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                        | including the Private Rented Sector Leasing Project with Conwy County Council (June 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |         |                           |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.06 | Review services provided internally & externally through Housing Support Grant (HSG) to ensure a range of support is available | Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness                                                                                      | Review support services provided through HSG to ensure that different levels of support are available for a variety of different needs. Work has started on this, but will be phased over next 12 months (Nov 2021)                                                                           |  | June-22 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.07 | Deliver workshops to secondary school aged children on homelessness and available support                                      | To identify children at risk of homelessness at an early stage and ensure that support and guidance is available.                      | To deliver accredited & non-accredited workshops to young people within schools, colleges & youth centre .Work on these will commence when Covid-19 restrictions allow (June 2021)                                                                                                            |  | Mar-26  | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.08 | Identify young people at risk of homelessness through training professionals working in their environment                      | To identify children at risk of homelessness at an early stage, through a range of environments, referring them for applicable support | Offer bespoke youth work interventions to young people who are referred to the service through schools, colleges, self or from other professional bodies/organisations (Police etc.) Work on these will commence when Covid-19 restrictions allow (June 2021)                                 |  | Mar-26  | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.09 | Extend the Housing First project                                                                                               | Welsh Government Phase 3 Plan to end homelessness                                                                                      | To develop a plan on integrating Housing First into the Homelessness Support Pathway following the withdrawal of Welsh Government Trailblazer funding. Alternative funding has been secured for 2021/22 (Feb 2021). Further guidance is being sought from Welsh Government regarding how they |  | Mar-22  | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |

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|                                                             |      |                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                       | envisage Housing First being integrated into the new vision for Homelessness Support (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  |        |                           |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.10 | Development of the Youth Service digital youth work to promote and engage young people in the issue of Youth Homelessness in Denbighshire. | Develop a greater understanding of homelessness, so that young people know when they can access support               | Project developed and delivered across of range of school settings and community projects. Digital resources developed and provided to schools, partners and youth work support staff, with a range of online tools and activities available for young people and parents. New targeted promotional materials with up to date and relevant information of support and support services available, created by Targeted Intervention team, with information and resource packs delivered to young people and families across the County (Sept 2021) |  | Mar-22 | Tony Thomas<br>Liz Grieve |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.11 | Provide good quality, well managed temporary accommodation solutions during the homelessness assessment process                            | Homelessness applicants need good quality well-managed accommodation, for their well-being and health.                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private Rented Sector pilot project is being embarked on with Conwy Council, which will provide temporary accommodation solutions.</li> <li>Work with Community Housing and RSLs to increase the number of properties they provide to the Homelessness Prevention Team, across the County.</li> </ul> Although numbers are still small we are engaging with landlords and going through the sign up process (June 2021)                                                                                    |  | Dec-26 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Preventing &amp; ending Homelessness in Denbighshire</b> | 4.12 | To provide bespoke youth work support to young people engaging with other DCC departments and partners.                                    | To identify young people at risk of homelessness at an early stage and ensure that support and guidance is available. | Bespoke youth work delivered one to one and small groups digitally and face to face including delivery of 6 accredited courses in partnership with Schools and Children's Services. Building Resilience course delivered to year groups 9 10 and 11 across the County engaging 23 young people achieving a Level One Accreditation aimed at reducing the risk                                                                                                                                                                                     |  | Mar-22 | Tony Thomas<br>Liz Grieve |

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|                                                  |      |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                | of homelessness. New post developed in partnership with Homelessness Prevention Services, Children Services and the Youth Services to support further development of homelessness provision, targeted work with young people who are homeless providing support, Independent living skills .and youth work intervention (Sept 2021) |  |        |                           |
| <b>Homes &amp; support for vulnerable people</b> | 5.01 | Three Extra Care facilities in development or completed by 2022                    | Corporate Priority for current Corporate Plan                                                                                                                                                                  | Awel Y Dyffryn, Denbigh – expected handover to GC April 2021. Sept/Oct 2021<br>Planning approved for Llys Awelon extension, Ruthin – tender process due to commence (June 2021)<br>Options for hub & spoke facility in Corwen being explored – feasibility study being prepared (June 2021)                                         |  | Dec-26 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Homes &amp; support for vulnerable people</b> | 5.02 | Investigate more ‘own front door’ schemes for vulnerable people                    | Over 100 vulnerable adults in Denbighshire would benefit from the enablement and support which comes from living in these schemes                                                                              | Working with social landlords to include specialist units on new developments and adapt existing dwellings. 4 units coming forward on Plas Deva development in Meliden (June 2021). Properties will be ready for occupation Feb/March 2022 (Nov 2021)                                                                               |  | Dec-26 | Bobby Feeley<br>Ann Lloyd |
| <b>Homes &amp; support for vulnerable people</b> | 5.03 | Investigate funding options including the SHG/ICF for the Corwen Extra Care Scheme | Corporate priority of increasing Extra Care in Denbighshire                                                                                                                                                    | Sian Lloyd Price is working up the scheme to get it ready to bid for SHG funding if appropriate and available (Nov 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                            |  | Mar-23 | Ann Lloyd<br>Bobby Feeley |
| <b>Promoting &amp; supporting communities</b>    | 6.01 | Implement Tenant Engagement Strategy                                               | It is vital for Denbighshire Housing to work closely with our tenants and households so we understand their needs and aspirations. Feedback and co-production will influence our community investment, service | The Bi-annual survey of all Denbighshire Housing households has been completed. Detailed analysis is underway. The feedback will be reviewed and will help inform next steps and input into the development of an engagement plan for 2021/22. (June 2021). An action plan to respond to the survey is now in                       |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas<br>Liz Grieve |

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|         |                                               |      | development and plans. This is particularly vital due to the impact of Covid-19 on our communities. | place which includes actions to increase engagement. This has been shared with the Tenants Federation. Support has been put in place to support tenants' groups to resume their activity post Covid. (Aug 2021)                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |  |        |                            |
| Page 70 | <b>Promoting &amp; supporting communities</b> | 6.02 | Review SARTH                                                                                        | The regional Allocations Policy has been in operation since 2017 in Denbighshire. It is vital to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose and the regional partners have agreed to review the policy.                                                   | The regional group are monitoring developments since Covid-19 and the potential need for a new approach to the Allocations Policy. An additional review has been commissioned to assess the strength of the council's current approach to providing effective housing options advice and coordination of services to support the prevention of homelessness (June 2021). Further updates are expected from WG regarding Allocations Policy in light of their Rapid Rehousing proposal. The SARTH review findings did not suggest any major structural changes however there are actions which will be discussed with all SARTH partners in Q3 (Aug 2021) |  | Mar-22 | Tony Thomas<br>Liz Grieve  |
|         | <b>Promoting &amp; supporting communities</b> | 6.03 | Develop a 5 year rent policy                                                                        | In 2020, Welsh Government introduced a 5 year Rent Policy which gives certainty for the HRA but also adds additional requirements to ensure the Council considers affordability and value for money when applying the annual rent increase for council homes. | The Cabinet decision on the Rent Increase in 2021 included assessments of Value for Money, Efficiencies and Affordability as part of the annual Council Housing stock business plan and rent increase process. (June 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  | Apr-21 | Tony Thomas<br>Liz Grieve  |
|         | <b>Promoting &amp; supporting communities</b> | 6.04 | Work with police, registered social landlords &                                                     | Complementing the extensive regeneration work which has been carried out in the area with the removal poor quality                                                                                                                                            | Multi agency/service group being relaunched in Oct 2017, new terms of reference and chaired by Emlyn Jones (June 2021)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |  | Dec-26 | Tony Thomas<br>Emlyn Jones |

|  |  |                                                                 |                                            |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | other partners on focused neighbourhood management in West Rhyl | accommodation by supporting the community. |  |  |  |  |
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| <b>Report to</b>             | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>                                              |
| <b>Date of meeting</b>       | <b>27<sup>th</sup> January 2022</b>                                                |
| <b>Lead Member / Officer</b> | <b>Lead Member for Housing and Communities / Head of Communities and Customers</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?**

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

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

2.1. To provide information regarding the Council's performance in relation to the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20 (extended for 20-21) and the progress made in developing libraries as places of individual and community well-being and resilience.

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

3.1. That the Committee considers and comments on the performance against the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in January 2023.

## **4. Report details**

### **4.1. Welsh Public Library Standards**

4.2. 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 Welsh

Government Culture and Sport Division (WGC&S) to measure and assess how authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties.

- 4.3. Library Services submit an Annual Report, noting performance for the previous financial year, following which WGC&S responds with a formal assessment in the autumn.
- 4.4. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, reporting requirements for 2020-21 were reduced to recognise and reflect the limitations and restrictions on service provision during the year. As a result, individual authorities will not receive an Annual Assessment Report as usual. The reporting submitted from each authority has been collated into a narrative national report for Wales (to be published in March 2022) which will reflect how library services provided services in 2020-21 and contributed to the community support and recovery efforts in their area.
- 4.5. This report therefore reflects the data submitted by Denbighshire in relation to 2020-21, on performance against 12 Core Entitlement and 6 Quality indicators.
- 4.6. Denbighshire continues to meet all 12 Core Entitlements.
- 4.7. Authorities were requested to report against 6 quality indicators (QIs), none of which have constituent targets for 2020-21, and no comparative data or assessment is available. There follows self-assessed commentary on each of the 6 QIs.
- 4.8. QI 7: Location of service points  
  
No change
- 4.9. QI 8: Library use (website visits, members, active users, and borrowing levels)  
  
Website visits were 52% lower. Active users were 39% of previous year and borrowing of physical items was at 23% of the level in the previous year. Digital downloads saw a 166% increase due to the switch to digital during the first lockdown when libraries had to close.
- 4.10. QI 9: Up to date and appropriate reading material

53% more individual items were purchased for stock due to a realignment of the resources budget to purchase more resources for children, more digital resources, and to reduce purchasing of newspapers. The overall spending on resources was 7.8% lower than in previous year.

#### 4.11. QI 10: Welsh language resources

No significant change

#### 4.12. QI 13: Staffing levels and qualifications

Staffing levels reduced by 7.3% as vacancies were not filled in order to meet historical budget pressures. 0.9% of staff time was spent in training.

#### 4.13. QI 14: Operational expenditure

Total revenue expenditure was £1,167,437, 5.4% lower than previous year. Capital expenditure was £127,950. Note that these figures reflect the library service functions and do not include expenditure on the One Stop Shop element of the service. Frontline and managerial staff working in our libraries and one stop shops deliver a wide range of additional customer services which are not included within the requirements of the Standards. We report 50% of the total staffing levels and expenditure on staffing under the Library Standards.

4.14. Authorities were asked to report on online digital activity. Denbighshire libraries dealt with 26,428 enquiries for books via Order and Collect. 143 online events or activities were created, which generated 80,272 views.

4.15. Authorities were also required to submit a narrative report in the form of 6 case studies to reflect the service's activity in 2020-21 and a commentary on the service's contribution to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. The narrative report for Denbighshire is attached as Appendix 1.

### **Update on recent developments in 2021-22**

4.16. The service has adapted its service provision in line with the changing Covid Alert Levels during the year. The Order and Collect Service launched in the first lockdown has continued and remains popular with many customers. Autumn 2021 saw the return of some small group activity such as reading groups and craft groups. College classes returned to 3 libraries, and Bookstart rhymetimes

restarted in most libraries. Some of this activity has been affected by the move to Alert Level 2 in late December 2021. All provision is subject to risk assessment and complies with the current rules around the numbers attending and social distancing.

- 4.17. In common with anecdotal evidence from across Welsh library service, and general levels of town centre footfall, service usage has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Partner service provision in libraries and group activity has not yet returned to anything like its previous level which has a clear impact on library visits and usage.
- 4.18. The Digital Transformation project, funded from Welsh Government's Cultural Recovery Fund has been completed. It has created Solo Digital Spaces which provide facilities at all our libraries to enable customers to participate in 1-1 virtual consultations, interviews and meetings in relative privacy. It also enabled us to provide portable devices to enable library staff to work in a more flexible and safe way.
- 4.19. The 2021 Summer Reading Challenge on the theme of Wild World Heroes saw 1710 children participating and re-engaging with their local library in person and online. The challenge also contributed to the Council's Net-Zero Carbon and Biodiversity Strategy by raising children and families interest in the natural world.
- 4.20. A major project to upgrade and improve libraries' public access technology has improved our offer to customers who rely on their local library to get online, and will contribute to the Council's Digital Inclusion project. The service has invested in a new PC management system, all the public PCs and scanners will be renewed, new self-service printing facilities have been introduced, and new services including Wi-Fi printing and online PC booking will be available shortly.
- 4.21. The all-Wales Estyn Allan training programme to develop library staff skills and confidence in creating digital content and activity continued to make an impact on service provision nationally and locally. The project was led by Denbighshire's Principal Librarian on behalf of SCL Cymru (Society of Chief Librarians) and its success was recognised when it was named as Library Team of the Year 2021 by CILIP Cymru Wales.

4.22. The service's activity in Health and Wellbeing has continued to be a particular focus. Progress has been made in raising awareness of the Reading Well Books on Prescription scheme for children. Work continued on the Reading Well: Books on Prescription mental health collaborative project with Conwy, funded by the Healthier Wales Transformation programme, which was redesigned to focus on reaching potential beneficiaries directly rather than via GP surgeries. The Age Connects Community Navigators have embedded the scheme into the toolbox of options for social prescribing to support people dealing with mental health challenges.

4.23. Libraries have continued to deliver on their role as community focal point for services, offering face-to-face customer service for the Council's services, and a safe place within the community for people to visit and interact. Since September 2021, libraries have also been a key community distribution point for lateral flow test (LFT) kits and saw a huge surge in demand from mid-December following the new Welsh Government messaging around self-testing.

4.24. Development in the near future include a major national campaign promoting the benefits of reading, books and libraries to children and young people's wellbeing, funded by the Welsh Government's Winter of Wellbeing initiative; and engagement with schools on a project to help children learn empathy skills via characters in books.

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

5.1. The Library Service is a statutory responsibility of the Authority, and its service delivery contributes to a number of corporate priorities such as fostering community resilience, service modernisation, digital inclusion, literacy, lifelong learning and community engagement.

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

6.1. The transformation of libraries into community focal points for services enables 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 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 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?**

8.1. Performance Scrutiny Committee in March 2021 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2019-20. There have been no further consultations regarding this particular report.

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

9.1. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

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

10.1. Not applicable

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

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution stipulates that scrutiny may "review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas."

## Denbighshire Narrative 2020-21

### 1. Case Studies

The impact which the library has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. Describe the use made of the service, and the difference that use made to the individual or group concerned. Up to six case studies may be provided (indicative length: 500 words each), two of which can be digital. However, the digital case studies are not compulsory.

Please indicate if permission for the Welsh Government to re-use and/or publish the case studies has been obtained or not: Yes - obtained / No – not obtained

Case Study 1:

#### **Order and Collect: a new library offer for the pandemic**

In June 2020 we created and launched a new Order and Collect service to enable customers to once again borrow books and audiobooks from their local library. Customers could choose their own books via the online catalogue, or they could ask staff to choose books for them, placing their order via an online form or by phoning their local library. The vast majority of customer chose to use the phone – as for many people forced to stay home to shield, it was an opportunity to have a chat and reduce their isolation. When the books were ready for collection we contacted the customer to arrange an appointment to come and collect from the library door, or we arranged a home delivery for people unable to come to the library.

Feedback on the service has been overwhelmingly positive and it has made a significant impact on how people were able to cope with lockdown, shielding and a general anxiety about going back into community facilities:

*“I just wanted to say how wonderful it is that even though it is closed the library is doing an Order and Collect service. I’ve been so alone, my family live abroad and all I have are books. It’s wonderful to see the friendly faces of the staff, but most of all the books. It’s like having friends returning from a long trip, and the gift is the stories locked up inside them. The library is an essential service for a lonely man living in uncertain times.”*

*“I just wanted to extend a big thanks of gratitude to the Library and their wonderful Click and Collect service, as someone who was self-isolating this has been a wonderful highlight to very long days. It’s lovely that the Library is just a phone call away and they’ll try their very best to get the books I would like to read and even throw in a book I would never think about reading - big thank you to whomever chooses the random crime book for me, you’ve never let me down yet.”*

One feature of Order and Collect which was particularly popular was staff choosing books for readers, or including an additional 'surprise' book in a bag of books chosen by the customer. It opened up many people's reading experience, introducing them to new authors and genres, and added value to the core service offer:

"I don't know who is choosing the children's books, but they are doing a better job than I do. We were rolling on the floor laughing at the last ones."

"Thank you to Rhyl Library for continuing its service to the locals, and thank you to the person who has been picking my books out for me, always great picks"

"You have been so kind and considerate in ensuring I can still access the facilities of the library, despite not knowing the technique of on-line ordering books! As you can see, I'm still sailing on the Ark! Your recent choice of six books for me was amazing. Despite being a library member for almost 60 years (Denbigh then Ruthin) I hadn't read these!"

"Thank you for this unexpected extra book. I really enjoyed it and it has introduced me to a new author. Nice idea!"

For one customer, the Order and Collect service, and the re-opening of inter-authority lending later in the year meant that she was able to continue in her freelance work even when there was no physical access to their local library:

*I would like to thank Denbighshire County Council Library for its excellent service since March 2020 throughout the coronavirus pandemic. During this time, I have been able to reserve and obtain books from various libraries across North Wales for both my work and for pleasure. I have been able to collect them in a safe and efficient way at Ruthin Library.*

*During this period, I have needed books covering a wide range of subjects for research use in my freelance work. This has included delivering lectures online via zoom for tourist guides who operate tours in Wales. In addition, I have used books to assist in the production of virtual tours (for all ages) and educational resources for primary children for a national organisation which is being put on a website. The virtual tours work will help to raise the profile of the Denbighshire area and encourage people to visit the area.*

*It would have been much harder to carry out this work without access to the wealth of books I was able to borrow from the Library Service. Many thanks for all your hard work in carrying out this service in challenging conditions.*

Setting up a new service within three weeks, whilst also having to work in a new way to ensure staff safety, demonstrates the flexibility of libraries and staff, and their commitment to providing core services to local people in challenging times. The value of having access to books and reading for so many people should not be underestimated.

*"Being able to access so many books has helped to keep us sane. Thank you. Diolch"*

Case Study 2:

### **Skills for the new future: Estyn Allan**

With the increased importance of digital provision during the pandemic, and the recognition that digital would be more central to the future library offer across Wales, Denbighshire's Principal Librarian devised and lead on the delivery of a major collaborative training project for Welsh library staff.

When the Welsh Government's Cultural Recovery Fund was announced in September, SCL Cymru agreed that a collaborative bid would enable all 22 authorities to benefit from its impact, and it was agreed that digital skills development was critical for the short and long-term resilience of services, to retain audience for services and to attract new audiences, particular those for whom digital is their preferred sphere.

Called Estyn Allan ('Reaching Out'), the project aimed to develop frontline library staff skills in creating and producing digital library activities such as storytimes, reading groups, author events, and social media promotion. Each authority nominated 1 or 2 members of staff to become their key trainees to participate in the full programme, and other staff were also able to join some training activities.

The project also wanted to ensure that all the learning impact stayed within the library sector in Wales, so the project co-ordinator was seconded from Swansea Libraries, and the project steering group was made up of SCL members. The training programme was created and delivered within a 3-month window thanks to the energy and commitment of the co-ordinator, trainees and steering group, aided by the Jan-March 2021 lockdown as staff were able to focus on their training while libraries were closed.

Training included reader development in a digital context, video creation and editing, podcasting, and getting the best out of social media, and was provided by experts in their field with provision in both languages. Trainees were also given funding to purchase filming and recording equipment and software for their services.

One aim of the project was to create a peer support network amongst the trainees which was facilitated through a closed Facebook group, small groups work on activities and the co-ordinator's support and encouragement.

By the end of March 2021, 33 key trainees had benefitted from the full programme of 26 training sessions, and a further 48 staff had attended some training activity with a total attendance of 534 attendances. Many trainees had started to put their new skills, knowledge and confidence into practice before the end of the training programme, and the CRF funding enabled the project to buy in the time of a wide range of authors from Wales to participate in digital events and interviews. This work will continue into 21-22 when the content created will be published on digital platforms such as the Welsh Libraries website, authorities' own social media accounts and the Summer Reading Challenge website.

All the trainees across Wales were asked about the impact of the programme on them.

When asked to rate their confidence to participate in online activities as part of their role, the average score rose by 10% from 6.92 (out of 10) before the training to 7.6 afterwards. Rating their digital and technical skills, in particular their confidence to create online content such as video and images, the average score rose by 34% from 5.75 to 7.73.

Denbighshire nominated two staff as key trainees and we asked them what impact the Estyn Allan training project has had on them:

*“Being part of the Estyn Allan project has been an excellent experience which has benefitted both my personal and professional development. Through participation in online sessions with industry professionals I have been able to gain specialist skills and knowledge relating to the use of digital equipment for marketing and content creation. As a result, my digital confidence levels have increased significantly and I have applied this new learning through the creation of new online media content for Denbighshire Libraries as well as working to enhance the social media presence of the same. Working as part of the Estyn Allan Team has opened up new links between Denbighshire Libraries and others across Wales and allowed the sharing of ideas and resources on a scale which would otherwise not have been possible. Going forward, I hope to share my learning with my colleagues in Denbighshire and strive towards further enhancing my digital skills. “*

*“As someone who has a long-established interest in digital media and its use in the library service, I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to take part in the Estyn Allan project. I felt that the courses were engaging in building an understanding on how we can utilise digital media to enhance the library experience. In particular, the video editing training helped my understanding in how to use filming equipment and editing software confidently to create new and exciting content for the library. I have been fortunate enough to contribute to the Welsh libraries podcast, #BywDarllen, that was created as a result of the project. The podcast shines a spotlight on Welsh literature through author interviews and discussions with library staff members across Wales. This podcast has been a brilliant chance to demonstrate the research, editing, and marketing skills developed from the course. In doing so, we have also been able to establish a new communicative medium for the library to engage with our existing audience, but also reach out to a new audience. I am thankful to have had these opportunities to use my skills in digital media, and will look to use those skills to help staff members to develop their own understanding of the digital library experience. “*

Case Study 3:

### **Opening up the world of digital reading**

The growth in the use of digital library resources (ebooks, eaudiobooks, and digital magazines and newspapers) has been seen for several years – but it was greatly accelerated by the lockdown in March 2020 as people sought access to reading material when library building had to close.

Total downloads of digital material increased by 166% in 20-21, with Borrowbox (ebooks and eaudiobooks in English and Welsh) increased by 94%, and e-zines by 55%. This was supported by Welsh Government’s investment in additional content in Welsh Libraries’

Borrowbox offer, and we also purchased some additional stock to meet demand for heavily-requested titles. We enabled people to join online and access the resources without having to come into the library.

For one customer living with ME, using Borrowbox has made a positive impact on her life as she has access to downloadable eaudiobooks, and can also support her son's reading development:

*"This is the most fantastic App! I have M.E. No longer able to read but I can listen to these books. So many choices of books too! Really simple to use, syncs well across tablet and phone and it's free with library. There's also super easy option to reserve a book and it will email when u can add it! I've listened to the book my son was reading at school so we could talk about it. Thank you for making a bookworm happy again!! :-)"*

With libraries unable to offer access to printed newspapers due to closure and safety concerns once re-opened, we decided to invest in a new online newspapers offer, Press Reader which gives daily access to over 7000 titles from across the world. This has built up a steady use over the year, with 37,671 issue opens.

We went to talk to one particular customer about the impact it has had on his life whilst shielding and beyond:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mKH6YhTD0Ls>

*"A great innovation for me. I can just get up in the morning, make a coffee, turn on and read whatever newspaper I like".*

## Case Study 4:

### **Bookstart switch to digital**

From the week of the lockdown when library buildings had to close, Denbighshire Bookstart moved its regular rhymetime activity online. The Bookstart team, working from home, produced a live bilingual Rhymetime on Facebook every week (average views 664), and recorded and published online rhyme and story videos (average views 1079). They were also invited to record a video for Booktrust Cymru's website to encourage new parents to share songs, rhymes and books with their babies.

The live sessions enabled families to continue to engage with the team and the service – sending in requests for birthday greetings and favourite rhymes each week, creating a direct personal engagement with each session. Sessions are bilingual and make use of Makaton signing so that children and families can develop their Welsh and signing skills at the same time. The sessions brought a sense of normality and routine to many families. Hundreds of families are watching both live and on catch-up later.

The team also produced 50 online rhyme and story videos in Welsh and English which have been viewed a total of 37,559 times. The videos have followed a variety of themes and included rhymes from the lambing shed, songs on a real red tractor, sing-a-long songs with the guitar and quiet bedtime songs. They also include a series of guidance videos for new parents under the brand Siarad Babi/Baby Talk. Videos are either bilingual or in Welsh or English, and make extensive use of Makaton signing. The team were invited to record a bilingual video for Booktrust Cymru's website to encourage new parents to share songs, rhymes and books with their babies, and presented at a BookTrust Cymru webinar for early years professionals to share good practice in reaching new families during the pandemic.

The back catalogue of videos on the Denbighshire Bookstart YouTube channel continues to be used by a wide range of families and early years providers and schools. Since its launch in July 2015 the content has been viewed 1,034,579 times.

The following stories from the team demonstrate the impact of attending rhymetimes and how families have embraced our virtual offer in order to keep 'attending' as they recognise the benefits to their children.

#### **Story 1**

We first met mum B at the Mother & Baby support unit at Rhyl. She was young with a baby girl N, had lost her own mum and her dad wasn't able to support her. We introduced her to Bookstart and the importance of sharing stories and songs and this would help to give her baby the best start. Later she joined us with her baby and her friends for rhymetime in the library.

Time passed, and our next meeting with B's toddler was again in the library but this time with a foster parent. Mum was having regular contact and eventually N was returned and they moved to another town. Mum and N regularly attended rhymetime in the library and both really enjoyed the sessions and always borrowed books. Sadly, things changed and N was living with the same foster parents on a long term placement.

Recently Mum contacted us through our Facebook page, she has a new baby boy and wanted to let us know and to enquire about any baby groups in view of the current restrictions. We suggested she go to the library and collect a Bookstart pack and join the baby as a library member and to join us on Facebook for our online baby sessions.

We were delighted that she had contacted us – she had valued our support and input at difficult times when she was a young mum. She is at a different stage in her life now and has the confidence to contact us, and clearly wants to give her baby boy the best start.

## **Story 2**

N used to attend Bookstart rhymetimes over 10 years ago with her then younger daughter. She enjoyed sessions so much that on many occasions several other family members would come along with her on a family outing. N has now become a Grandmother and wanted her grandson O to have the same experiences at 'Book Club' as they call us, as she knows it makes a difference. Baby O's mum was very young, reserved and unsure when we first met her. She really didn't 'get it'.

N, Mum S and Baby O became regulars at baby rhymetime, in fact most weeks attending 2 sessions. Over time Mum S started to relax and grow in confidence and we were delighted when she started joining in with the songs. Every week they would borrow library books and it was very obvious that mum was reading and singing to baby O at home. They became one of the best collectors of Book Crawl certificates. During storytime baby O would concentrate and stay focused for the whole story. He did not take his eyes off us! Although N and mum S enjoyed coming to the library together, Mum S would now happily speak to new families at sessions and ask for Baby O's favourite songs. On World Book Day she was so excited that she'd found a T shirt of his favourite book 'That's not my Car'.

As we are currently unable to offer rhymetimes in the library, Mum S has still been engaging, from the first 'Live' session tuning in and commenting on Facebook weekly to say how much O is enjoying the sessions and all the videos that we post.

## **Story 3**

J has been a friend of Bookstart since she was toddler. J is now nearly 15yrs old and has a severe learning and physical disability. From an early age J loved our songs and rhymes and despite having no speech would clearly display joy when we sang her favourite songs.

Over the years her family have kept in touch and would keep us updated with her progress. We would see her on visits the local special school whilst doing outreach sessions and on library visits with the school. We would always have to sing her favourite Green frog song. When we created our YouTube channel it became a big hit with J and her family - they would tell us J loved watching our videos.

During the current pandemic, J's family tell us that our videos and weekly 'live' online sessions have made a real difference to them and to J. They frequently send in requests and ask for a 'shout out'. Sadly, J has not returned to school in September and her family tell us that more than ever our sessions are extra special and give J something to look forward to each week.

## **Summary**

The aim was to keep as much activity going for families as possible during the pandemic when normal rhymetime activity and contact in libraries has not been allowed. The staff team had to learn new skills very quickly and have shown great flexibility, creativity and commitment in switching their provision to virtual at a time of great personal stress.

The team's work was recognised in 'Making a Difference: Libraries, Lockdown and Looking Ahead', a report by Carnegie Trust UK into UK public library services exploring their role supporting individuals and communities during lockdown and the barriers they faced during this time. It also explores their role in supporting the recovery.

<https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/making-a-difference-libraries-lockdown-and-looking-ahead/> (p10)

Many comments from parents on social media show that the activity during the pandemic has been greatly valued and enjoyed by families, has contributed to children's development, and has helped parents during this challenging period. In the words of one parent:

"Thank you for helping bring a bit of normality to our little ones' lives"

Case study 5:

### **Memory bags to support people living with dementia**

Following the launch of the Reading Well for Dementia Scheme in 2019 we decided that we would like to expand the services that we can offer to people living locally with dementia and their carers, and we looked at what other libraries around the UK had to offer.

We were particularly interested in reminiscence collections and produced a prototype Memory Bag, which we shared at an event to launch Dementia Aware Denbighshire. The bag and the concept were of great interest to practitioners and carers and led to us forming a partnership with Denbighshire Community Arts and Life Story Network to secure funding from the Dementia Aware Community Led Grant Programme 2019-20 and Welsh Church Act funding.

As part of the development of the bags we attended some sessions with potential users, for example the Rhuddlan Music Memories Group and a community arts group in Corwen, to gather feedback on what items would engage people. We decided on 8 themes, basing them around the 'Pictures to Share' books, which are designed specifically for people living with dementia and are part of the Reading Well scheme.

The themes are – At The Seaside; Childhood Days; In the Garden; Memories of Music; Shopping; World of Work; Travelling; Leisure Time. The bilingual 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau' book in the same series was included in every bag. Using the feedback we had received we purchased a variety of contents, selecting items that stimulate the senses and promote reminiscence and discussion.

The bags also include a Creative Wellbeing Activity Toolkit, designed by local artist Jude Wood on behalf of Denbighshire Community Arts, that contains ideas for creative activities for people living with dementia, their families and carers.

The Memory bags are borrowed in the same way as any library books and are ideally suited for use in one to one situations by family members and carers, or by practitioners in small groups.

A local specialist Admiral Nurse working in St Kentigern's Hospice posted this tweet and went on to explain how she had used our Memory Bags and was inspired to create her own memory boxes:



*“At the Hospice we are supporting people with dementia for occasional respite or symptom control and end of life care as it is a life limiting illness. We had a selection of books as well as memory bags. We used them to support 2 people who we had in for respite. The transport one was of particular interest to one person. Staff sat down in the lounge area and introduced different pieces whether a book, postcard etc they encouraged the person to talk about driving lessons, tests, type of car they had. What would have been there dream car. There was also a*

*magazine in that bag too I think with different shop fronts and fashions which enabled conversation. It had quite a calming effect and engaged the person for about 20-30 minutes.*

*The books especially the Welsh one was really good for the other person and they sang and read the words with us explaining the meaning.*

*Knowing what a valuable resource they were I have applied for a grant to have a few similar boxes here which has been supported by the Rhyl Rotarians.”*

Following a press release we also received enquiries from further afield, for example, an Occupational Therapy student studying at Cardiff University asked for advice on how we went about the project, and someone from a health care library in Devon also got in touch with a similar query.

We are currently hoping that we can expand the number of memory bags we have available, and exploring other options, such as a jigsaw library, and when restrictions ease we are hoping to have reminiscence groups meeting in our libraries.

Case study 6:

### **Proactive Calls**

Within two weeks of the first lockdown, Denbighshire County Council set up a proactive calling service to support residents who were required to shield.

With library buildings closed, the team of library staff were the first cohort of staff to be redeployed to provide the new service. This was also a recognition of their skills set in talking with people to discover their needs and then to identify the most appropriate place to refer them for further support. They are also highly experienced in engaging with people – and for many shielding residents the calls were their first opportunity to have a chat with someone outside their household.

Library managers helped to set up the new service and were involved with adapting the national script to meet local circumstances, creating a database to record residents' details and responses, setting up staff to work from home or closed library buildings, organising call teams and supporting more complex cases.

The frontline staff used the script to steer their conversations with residents, skilfully adapting their language and tone to the call recipient's situation.

The Library team also worked in close collaboration with colleagues from other services and the third sector to keep updated about the support in each community in the county.

The vast majority of residents were delighted to be contacted by the council, and even if they had no immediate support needs, they were grateful that they had been contacted and enjoyed the chat. For some residents, the calls were a lifeline and enabled them to receive support that they had not realised was available to them – these included referrals for the WG food parcels, support from the Red Cross for emergency food and medicines, and access to home delivery services from pharmacies and local shops and volunteers. If residents wanted, staff would call them back every two weeks to keep in touch and support any change of circumstances.

Some of the calls were distressing for staff to handle as they tried to support residents with complex needs, and there were a small number of hostile responses at a time of great stress and anxiety for everyone.

As library services were permitted to restart in June 2021, the library staff team returned to their normal roles, with shielding staff remaining working from home on the proactive calls. When the firebreak lockdown was announced in October, an additional round of calls was made to the residents who had been supported previously, to check in on their welfare and refer as needed. During the Jan-March 2021 lockdown, library staff again made contact with residents on the database – to check in on their welfare, to have a chat, and also to make them aware of the range of services libraries were able to offer them at the time.

Many residents sent unsolicited feedback about the Proactive Calls which demonstrated the value they placed on receiving the calls, and the positive impact it had on them, both practically and emotionally:

*Mr Evans wanted to say that he is highly delighted with the phone calls that [library staff] had done during the shielding period. Said a very polite lady, informative and made follow up calls on a regular basis to him.*

*"Very appreciative of the wellbeing phone call received on 28/10. It has restored my faith in the local authority and is a lovely gesture"*

*"Just wanted to say how wonderful it is to be called up during the second Lockdown to see if I'm ok for shopping, it was lovely to speak to a young man earlier today from a Library I think, he did say his name but I've forgotten it! What a caring Council we have.*

*I called [resident] as part of the proactive calling for shielding customers. She told me how grateful she was for my call and for the previous calls she'd had, "No one usually bothers with us so it was a really nice gesture for you to ring me, I really appreciate it". She also gave praise to the library staff for always getting a bag of books for her.*

The contribution of the Denbighshire Libraries team to the local Covid response was recognised in the Carnegie UK Trust's report *Making a Difference: Libraries, Lockdown and Looking Ahead* (p20)

<https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/making-a-difference-libraries-lockdown-and-looking-ahead/>

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## **Contribution to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals**

**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).**

### **Better Mental Health**

Reading in itself is beneficial to mental health and the local library within the community provides the access to a vast range of reading experiences for all tastes, in physical and digital formats. During pandemic year we created a new Order and Collect service to give access to physical books, broadened our home delivery service, increased our range of digital resources and benefitted from Welsh Government's additional investment in eresources for Borrowbox. We also launched a new digital newspapers offer. Two of our regular reading groups switched to online meetings.

The Reading Well for Children scheme was launched in Wales in October 2020, providing access to a collection of books selected by experts and children, to help children feel better and to deal with their emotions and things that happen around them. Our ability to roll out the programme has been delayed due to the pandemic but plans have been made for a local steering group in 21-22. Access to the full range of Reading Well scheme books was provided via the Order and Collect service.

We launched a new collection of Memory Bags created by librarians to support people living with dementia and their carers, funded via the Dementia Aware Denbighshire programme (see Case Study 5).

The project funded by the BCUHB Mental Health Strategy transformation funds to embed Reading Well into Primary care practice, working in partnership with Conwy Libraries and Public Health Wales, was suspended in lockdown, and was reshaped to reach potential beneficiaries as services started to re-open.

### **Skills and Employability**

Most of our usual activity in this area had to be suspended during pandemic year as Covid rules prevented indoor group activity and saw libraries offering a reduced range of services. Access to public PCs was reintroduced in August 2020 enabling job seekers to use the facilities. Volunteering in libraries was also not possible due to social distancing rules, and the usual learning opportunities provided by partner agencies was also suspended.

### **Digital**

We were able to resume our offer of free physical access to computers, broadband and Wi-Fi internet connection, and access to scanning and printing in August 2020 (by appointment) but providing help and support to use a computer, to get online and access websites, and to develop basic digital skills, was severely limited due to social distancing rules.

Libraries are a key partner in Denbighshire County Council's Digital Exclusion project which aims to identify how the council can reduce digital exclusion. In 20-21 we focussed on staff skills and planning for implementing a Digital Transformation project funded by the Cultural Recovery Fund in early 21-22.

Our range of resources was extended (see above) and library customers new to the services were helped and supported by staff to learn new skills to access and enjoy the resources. We enabled people to join online and access the resources without having to come into the library and 857 people joined the library online during the year.

Library staff have increased their digital skills during pandemic year. All staff were set up to be able to work from home or at safe workstations in closed library building during the first lockdown in order to provide the Proactive Calls service (see Case Study 6). Staff were also encouraged to complete a range of e-learning modules and digital skills online modules during the year. Two members of staff were key trainees in the Estyn Allan project (see Case Study 2) and developed advanced skills in creating digital online library activities. This collaborative project across all Wales' public library services was led on behalf of SCL Cymru by Denbighshire's Principal Librarian.

### **Early Years & Literacy**

Our Bookstart activity switched to online in the first week of lockdown and continued to provide a highly valued digital service to families all year (see Case Study 4). These activities help to develop young children's language, learning and social skills and have a significant impact on parental mental health, and on parents' skills and confidence as their child's first educators. They introduce many families to the Welsh language, and many families go on to choose Welsh-medium childcare or education as a result of their early experiences in the library. The gifting of Bookstart bags was switched to collection from the library when Health Visiting clinics and home visits were suspended.

The Summer Reading Challenge was offered in 2020 via our Order and Collect service. For the first time children could also participate online, and a brand new Welsh language website was launched by the Reading Agency with WG funding. The challenge is a key activity in supporting the development of children's reading skills and enthusiasm.

### **Support for wellbeing and social care**

After a short period off the road in the first lockdown, the Home Library Service resumed in June 2020 and provides a personalised service to individuals who cannot access their local library due to disability, illness or caring responsibilities. The monthly home visits are eagerly awaited, providing not only a range of books to read but social interaction and a gateway to other council services for people who are socially isolated.

Regular in-person library activities with partners to support community wellbeing had to be suspended this year. We continued to provide a digital assistance service for online Blue Badge applications.

## **Cymraeg**

We continue to be a key provider of access to Welsh language books and resources within local communities. The online Bookstart/Dechrau Da provision continued to introduce many families to Welsh, two Welsh language reading groups were hosted digitally, and the range of Welsh resources was extended.

## **Community Resilience**

Denbighshire's vision for libraries is that they are the beating hearts of their communities, where local people can access services in their local community; a shared, trusted and welcoming facility with friendly knowledgeable staff.

Even during period of closure of our building we continued to provide highly valued services to our communities. The Proactive Call Service staffed by the library team, supported people who were shielding (see Case Study 6), we introduced an order and collect service and expanded our home delivery offer to ensure people still had access to physical books, and extended and improved our digital resources offer.

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## 2. Future Direction

**Please provide a short statement about the future direction and plans for the library service (indicative length 200 words).**

Libraries are key to the delivery Denbighshire's Corporate Plan, and the Library Strategy 2019-22 sets a clear direction for the service. Activities and developments which will contribute include:

- Further developing the Health and Wellbeing offer and strategic collaboration with Public Health Wales and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board services to embed libraries' contribution to health strategic plans outcomes, particularly mental health, with a focus on the rollout of the Reading Well for Children scheme into the health and education sector.
- A focus on staff's digital skills to support library users, improve digital inclusion and deliver a range of digital services.
- A review of the van delivery service to better fit current business needs and identify savings.
- Exploring the potential of new digital technology and enhancing the service's digital offer including a tendering process for a PC management system.
- Deliver the Solo Digital Spaces project at all libraries to create private spaces for people to participate in online meetings and interviews, working with partners to reduce digital exclusion.
- Further developing library facilities as flexible, adaptable and safe spaces to facilitate the delivery of 1:1 and small group support services and to enable people to engage socially with each other

At the time of writing (July 2021), all libraries have re-opened offering open access browsing and borrowing, order and collect, and by appointment access to computers and printing, some study space, and One Stop Shop services and the Home Library Service is delivering. Some 1-1 and small group activity was recently re-introduced but social distancing rules mean that numbers are very restricted.

Ongoing budget pressures within the service, and council-wide will also impact on future development.

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|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to</b>             | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Date of meeting</b>       | <b>27<sup>th</sup> January 2022</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Lead Member / Officer</b> | <b>Cllr Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement / Cllr Brian Jones, Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment / Tony Ward, Head of Highways and Environmental Services</b> |
| <b>Report author</b>         | <b>Hayley Jones, Principal Catering and Cleaning Manager</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Title</b>                 | <b>Reduction of single use plastics and carbon reduction in the School Meals Service</b>                                                                                                                                                 |

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

- 1.1 This report is about progress/challenges with reducing single use plastic and carbon in School Catering, in line with the Council's aim to become net carbon zero by 2030.

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

- 2.1 To provide Members with an update on progress, and the challenges, in relation to reducing single use plastic and reducing carbon within the School Catering Service.

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

- 3.1 That Members consider the report, and provide feedback as deemed appropriate.

## **4. Report details**

### **The current business model for the Catering Service**

- 4.1 The current business model for School Catering in Denbighshire relies on the income generated from the sales of drinks in secondary schools. The average annual (net) income generated from the sale of drinks is around £220,000.
- 4.2 Drinks are generally sold in single-use plastic containers, although cans and tetra pack drinks are also available. An average of almost 500,000 drinks are sold each year, which clearly generates a lot of single-use plastic. There are two main ways in which the sale of drinks in single-use containers could be eradicated:
- 4.2.1 By not selling drinks in our schools, with pupils bringing their own drinks to school, resulting in a c.£220,000 revenue pressure for the service; or
- 4.2.2 By selling drinks that are decanted into re-usable containers (as per the trial, discussed below).

### **Reduction of single use plastic: trial at Ysgol Glan Clwyd (YGC)**

- 4.3 The Service trialled a new method of selling drinks in reusable cups in YGC from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021 to 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2021. The service stopped selling drinks in single use plastic bottles during the trial.
- 4.4 Net income from the sale of drinks at YGC reduced by approximately £506 per week, (c.£20,000 pro rata) during the period of the trial, compared to the same period in 2019. We can therefore assume that rolling this system out across all secondary schools (if this were possible) may result in a net income loss of c.£129,000 per year.
- 4.5 To facilitate the trial, YGC purchased 1,000 reusable drink cups. As cups were not being returned, YGC purchased a further 1,000 cups in October 2021. The total cost to the school was £2,160, with only 250 of the 2,000 cups remaining at end of the 14-week trial period. The estimated cost of reusable cups (if this system was rolled out across all secondary schools) would be c.£37,000 per year.
- 4.6 Furthermore, the trial required an increase in staffing of 1.5 hours per day to decant and set up drinks ready for the lunch time service. This came at a cost of c.£1,652 for the trial and would equate to c.£30,000 per year across all secondary schools.

4.7 The service has concluded that the trial cannot currently be rolled out across all secondary schools. It is too logistically challenging to operate; some schools have insufficient surface space to mount the drinks machines that were used in the trial (which require a water feed); it creates a significant amount of waste in terms of non-recyclable plastic drink cups; and it is not financially viable (given the current business model). The anticipated total cost of rolling out this model across all secondary schools is c.£197,000 per year.

### **Progress made in reducing single-use plastic**

- 4.8 The Catering service has reviewed all food items that are required to be packaged and reduced the amount of packaging purchased and disposed.
- 4.9 The service has stopped purchasing single use plastic sandwich wedges and sauce pots and has moved to cardboard sandwich and pasta containers. There is an increase in price for these items, and the service remains concerned that recyclable items are not being recycled by students. There has been a reduction in size and availability of serviettes, and reduction in pre-packing of food items. An alternative for salads and fruit salads that is not price prohibitive to pupils is being sought.
- 4.10 Where possible, the use of plastic cutlery has been stopped, but this is not always possible due to pupils taking more expensive stainless-steel cutlery from dining areas and disposing of them in a variety of ways.
- 4.11 The service serves food on plates wherever possible. However, in some schools, the service is serving 550 pupils a wide selection of food and drinks during a 30 to 50-minute lunchtime. Pupils can't be expected to sit in the dining room with a plate, knife and fork as many schools don't have dining room capacity.

### **Carbon reduction in the Catering Service**

4.12 The service has been actively looking at how it can deliver the catering function in a low carbon way in order to contribute to the Council's carbon ambitions. Some of the things that the Catering Service have already done include:

- Energy efficiency of kitchens: we continue to look at equipment efficiency as and when it needs replacing, and staff given guidance to only have equipment switched on when it is required.

- Procurement: food miles have been reduced by receiving orders weekly, and fortnightly where possible.
- All recyclable material (including food) used by the service in the process of producing school meals is recycled.
- Service model: generally, meals are produced within each school, with only two schools currently receiving meals transported daily from a hub kitchen.

4.13 However, there are further issues to be considered. Research, led by the University of Edinburgh, concluded that the priorities for catering managers looking to reduce carbon emissions should be a) switching to low carbon waste disposal methods; and b) reducing the amount of red meat in menus.

4.14 Recycling by pupils needs to improve, with food and packed lunch waste needing to be separated to ensure it is treated in the most carbon-advantageous manner. A whole school approach is required, as this cannot be achieved by the catering service alone. Funding has been secured from the Net Carbon Zero Programme for a Carbon Reduction Officer: Waste (0.4FTE from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022). The post will promote behaviour change “internally” to optimise waste diversion and reduce waste, and one of the priorities will be to work with the catering service and schools.

4.15 Reducing the amount of red meat in menus is likely to be a sensitive issue, given the significant farming community in the county. Meat free days have been introduced in other local authorities in the region, but this has resulted in adverse publicity.

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

5.1. This contributes to the Council’s aim of reducing single use plastic and becoming net carbon zero by 2030.

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

6.1. Stopping the sale of drinks in secondary schools would cost c.£220,000 per annum. Selling/decanting drinks into re-usable cups would cost c.£197,000 per annum. This deficit would need to be covered by an increase in DCC revenue subsidy; an increase in school meal prices; or by passing the costs on to schools. Any further

amendments to our procurement strategy, e.g. to insist that supplies delivery goods using Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, would likely come at an additional cost.

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

7.1. No Well-being Impact Assessment has currently been undertaken for this, as no decision is currently being sought.

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

8.1. Some discussions have taken place with schools regarding the issue of stopping the sale of drinks in single-use containers, and the cost implications of doing so. Additional consultation would be required before any such changes were made.

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

9.1. This report provides an update on progress and, as stated in 6.1, the estimated cost associated with reducing single use plastic and reducing carbon within the School Catering Service.

9.2. The Medium Term Financial Plan includes investment for the Carbon Zero Project and recognises that DCC financial budgets will need to align with the Council's climate and ecological priorities when projects and interventions are developed and implemented. Any increased cost from interventions noted in this report would need to be covered by an increase in DCC revenue budget; an increase in school meal prices; or by passing the costs on to schools.

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

10.1. The announcement by Welsh Government re. the provision of Free School Meals (FSM) for all primary pupils will have a significant impact on the service. It is estimated that the take up of FSM will increase from 48% to 77% in primary schools. This expansion in service provision will necessarily increase the carbon footprint of the school catering service.

10.2. The current business model for the catering service is a whole system approach, and all schools are treated equally, regardless of size. Unless an individual school wished to take a different approach (and was prepared to fund the budget gap), we would need to retain a consistent model across all Denbighshire schools. It is not clear that schools have a consistent/collective desire to change to a new model.

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

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2. Section 7.4.1 of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's powers with respect of policy development and review.

|                        |                                           |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report to</b>       | <b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>     |
| <b>Date of meeting</b> | <b>27 January 2022</b>                    |
| <b>Lead Officer</b>    | <b>Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator</b> |
| <b>Report author</b>   | <b>Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator</b> |
| <b>Title</b>           | <b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>            |

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

The report seeks Performance Scrutiny Committee to review its draft forward work programme. In doing so the Committee is asked to reflect on the implications of the focus on business critical operations during the emergency phase of the COVID -19 pandemic and the programmes of work underway or being planned under the recovery phase, whilst also having regard to items of business already on its forward work programme prior to the pandemic.

## **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 determines whether any key messages or themes from the current meeting should be publicised via the press and/or social media.

## 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 Audit Wales (AW) 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. From now on 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. AW 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) 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 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);

- Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues; and
- Supporting the Council's recovery work in relation to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on Council services, the local economy and the county's communities

#### 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 forms have 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 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). No items should 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.

4.8 Staff Absences and Turnover in Denbighshire during 2020/21 & 2021/22 and its impact on Customer Service

The above report was originally scheduled for presentation to the Committee at the current meeting. However, in response to a request from officers the Chair permitted its presentation to be deferred until the Committee's next meeting on 17 March 2022 (see Appendix 1 attached). The basis for the request to defer was that the Service was keen to include aspects of the Corporate Workforce Plan data in the report, which would include information on sickness absence during the winter months. This particular data would not be available until later in January 2022.

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.9 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.

Progress on Committee Resolutions

- 4.10 A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

## **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 25 November 2021. No items were referred for this Committee's consideration. The Group's next scheduled meeting is on 20 January 2022. Any items raised at that meeting which have implications for this Committee's work will be reported verbally at the meeting on 27 January 2022.

## **6. 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 and resource pressures.

## **7. 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.

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

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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

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

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 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.

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**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                                               |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17 March | <b>Cllr. Huw Hilditch-Roberts</b>                                         | 1. Curriculum for Wales<br><b>[Education]</b>                                                               | To detail the progress made to date towards the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales along with the support provided by the local education authority and GwE to schools, education staff and governing bodies in readiness for the delivery of the new curriculum from September 2022 | Assurances that all educational establishments and staff are fully equipped and trained to deliver the new curriculum, identification of any gaps or risks associated with the provision and solutions to address them, ahead of its implementation with a view to ensuring that children and young people in Denbighshire realise their full potential in line with the Council's Corporate Plan | Geraint Davies/James Brown/GwE                | June 2021                                                  |
|          | <b>Cllr. Huw Hilditch-Roberts</b>                                         | 2. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation<br><b>[Education]</b>                                     | To examine the Council's compliance with the statutory requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018                                                                                                                                                     | To reduce the risk of the Authority not complying with any of the requirements of the Act and to ensure that every pupil and student in the County is given the required support and opportunities to realise their full potential                                                                                                                                                                | Geraint Davies/Mari Gaskell/Joseph Earl       | June 2021                                                  |
|          | <b><i>Cllr, Julian Thompson-Hill &amp; Cllr. Huw Hilditch-Roberts</i></b> | 3. Staff Absences and Turnover in Denbighshire during 2020/21 & 2021/22 and its impact on Customer Services | To examine the data on:<br>(i) staff absences per Council service during 2020/21 and the first three quarters of 2021/22 in comparison to previous years (including data on short and long-term absences);                                                                                       | An assessment of the Council's resilience in dealing with the impact of a pandemic on its staffing resources and the effectiveness of its contingency planning in relation to staff retention and recruitment and how that                                                                                                                                                                        | <i>Gary Williams/Louise Dougal/Liz Grieve</i> | <i>By SCVCG September 2021 (rescheduled December 2021)</i> |

| Meeting                                                      | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title) |                                                 | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                   | Author          | Date Entered  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
|                                                              |                |                            |                                                 | (ii) staff turnover per service during 2020/21 and the first three quarters of 2021/22 in comparison to previous years along with the number of staff resignations in each pay grade band (and the reasons for the resignations);<br>(iii) Denbighshire's position in relation to staff absences and staff turnover in comparison to other local authorities and public bodies in Wales;<br>(iv) the findings of the recent Workforce Planning exercise; and<br>(v) the effect of COVID-19 on staff absences and turnover during this period and its consequential impact on customer services | supported the customer experience during difficult times with a view to ensuring that lessons are learnt to further improve the Council's resilience to meet future pressures and unplanned events. |                 |               |
| 28 April (meeting not being held due to pre-election period) |                |                            |                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                 |               |
| 9 June                                                       | <b>TBC</b>     | 1.                         | Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report | To scrutinise the content of the draft annual report to ensure it provides a fair and clear evaluation of performance and clearly articulates future plans                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Identification of any specific performance issues which require further scrutiny by the committee in future                                                                                         | Nicola Stubbins | July 2021     |
|                                                              | <b>TBC</b>     | 2.                         | Council Performance Self-Assessment             | To present the Council's self-assessment of its performance in                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny                                                                                                                               | Iolo McGregor   | December 2021 |

| Meeting      | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title)                                                                            | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Author                                   | Date Entered                                                                                   |
|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |                |                                                                                                       | delivering against the Council's strategic plan and services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                          |                                                                                                |
|              | <b>TBC</b>     | 3. Corporate Risk Register (Feb Review)                                                               | To consider the latest version of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and risk appetite statement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Effective monitoring and management of identified risk to reduce risks to residents and the Authority                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Iolo McGregor/Emma Horan                 | December 2021                                                                                  |
| 14 July      | <b>TBC</b>     | 1. Cefndy Healthcare & Options Appraisal for future business delivery                                 | To consider an options appraisal for future delivery of the company's business                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Formulate recommendations in relation to a future business model that will support the delivery of the Council's priority relating to Resilient Communities                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Ann Lloyd/Nick Bowles                    | October 2021                                                                                   |
| 29 September | <b>TBC</b>     | 1. <i>Provisional External Examinations and Teacher Assessments [Education]</i><br><br>(tbc)          | <i>To review the performance of schools and that of looked after children</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <i>Scrutiny of performance leading to recommendations for improvement</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>Geraint Davies/GwE</i>                | July 2021                                                                                      |
|              | <b>TBC</b>     | 2. <i>Hafan Deg, Rhyl</i><br>(tbc)<br><br><b>Representatives from KL Care to be invited to attend</b> | <i>To monitor the effectiveness of the transfer of the facility and services to an external provider and the provider's progress in growing and expanding the services available at the centre, including the lessons learnt from COVID-19 and the new services commissioned as a result of the pandemic</i><br><br><i>(the report to include an updated Well-being Impact Assessment)</i> | <i>To evaluate the impact of the transfer of the facility and services on all stakeholders and to assess whether the services provided at Hafan Deg are in line with the contract specification, support the Council's vision for adult social care and the five ways to well-being and the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014</i> | <i>Ann Lloyd/Katie Newe/Ben Chandler</i> | <i>September 2019<br/>(Rescheduled October 2020, January &amp; March 2021 due to COVID-19)</i> |

| Meeting      | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title)                    | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Expected Outcomes                                                                                     | Author                   | Date Entered  |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 24 November  | TBC            | 1. Council Performance Update (July – Sept)   | To present details of the Council's performance in delivering against the Council's strategic plan and services                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny                                 | Iolo McGregor            | December 2021 |
|              | TBC            | 2. Corporate Risk Register (Sept Review)      | To consider the latest version of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and risk appetite statement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Effective monitoring and management of identified risk to reduce risks to residents and the Authority | Iolo McGregor/Emma Horan | December 2021 |
| January 2023 | TBC            | 1. Verified External Examinations [Education] | <p>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.</p> <p>The report to include actual figures in addition to percentages along with school absenteeism and exclusion data.</p> <p>The report to incorporate GwE's Annual report and information on the 5 year trend in relation to educational attainment in Denbighshire</p> | Scrutiny of performance leading to recommendations for improvement                                    | Geraint Davies/GwE       | July 2021     |

## Future Issues

| Item (description / title)                                                                                                                                 | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                            | Expected Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Author                                                                                      | Date Entered                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><i>School Categorisation according to Welsh—medium Provision</i></p> <p><i>tbc (late 2021/early 2022) dependent upon WG</i></p> <p><b>Education</b></p> | <p><i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i></p>                | <p><i>Identification of potential changes to the Council's education policies and any associated costs and budget implications</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><i>Geraint Davies/James Curran</i></p>                                                   | <p><i>January 2021</i></p>                                  |
| <p><i>Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008</i></p> <p><i>tbc (late 2021/early 2022) dependent upon WG</i></p> <p><b>Education</b></p>                       | <p><i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i></p> | <p><i>Identification of potential changes to the Council's learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><i>Geraint Davies/Ian Land</i></p>                                                       | <p><i>January 2021</i></p>                                  |
| <p><i>Dolwen Residential Care Home</i></p>                                                                                                                 | <p><i>To consider the Task and Finish Group's recommendations relating to the future provision of services at Dolwen Residential Care Home, Denbigh</i></p>  | <p><i>Pre-decision scrutiny of the task and finish group's findings and the formulation of recommendations for presentation to Cabinet with respect of the future provision of services at Dolwen with a view to ensuring that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs and are able to live independent and resilient lives</i></p> | <p><i>Task and Finish Group/Phil Gilroy/Abbe Harvey</i></p>                                 | <p><i>July 2018 (currently on-hold due to COVID-19)</i></p> |
| <p>Post 16 provision at Rhyl College (suggested for scrutiny during service challenge)</p> <p>Date tbc following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions</p>   | <p><i>To examine the post 16 provision at Rhyl College</i></p>                                                                                               | <p><i>The development of an effective working relationship between the College and the Council to secure the delivery of courses required to support the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and improve the future prospects of the area's students</i></p>                                                                                         | <p>Rhyl College (and invite Geraint Davies &amp; John Evans – post 16 officer from DCC)</p> | <p><i>By SCVCG July 2020</i></p>                            |
|                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                             |                                                             |

Information/Consultation Reports

| Date                                                                      | Item (description / title)                                                                                                                                                                             | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Author                                  | Date Entered                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>March 2022 &amp; September 2022</b></p> <p>[Information]</p>        | <p><i>Council Performance Update Q1 &amp; Q3</i></p>                                                                                                                                                   | <p><i>To present details of the Council's performance in delivering against the Council's strategic plan and services</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p>Iolo McGregor/Heidi Barton-Price</p> | <p>September 2018</p>                                                             |
| <p><b>Feb/May/Sept/November each year</b></p> <p>[Information]</p>        | <p>Quarterly 'Your Voice' complaints performance to include social services complaints</p>                                                                                                             | <p>To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints and identify areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address weaknesses. The report to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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;</li> <li>(ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services; and</li> <li>(iii) details of complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and the lessons learnt from them.</li> </ul> <p>Report to include example(s) of complaints and compliment(s) received.</p> <p><b><i>Consideration of the information provided will assist the Committee to determine whether any issues merit detailed scrutiny</i></b></p> | <p>Kevin Roberts/Ann Lloyd</p>          | <p>November 2018</p>                                                              |
| <p>Information Report <b>(June 2020 rescheduled to December 2022)</b></p> | <p>Housing Services – Review of the effectiveness of the new working model for Housing Officers and the development of new ways of working with residents from the lessons learnt through COVID-19</p> | <p>To review the effectiveness and impact of the new Housing Officer model in delivering personal advice and support to tenants, particularly those who reside in older people's schemes</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Geoff Davies</p>                     | <p>March 2019 (rescheduled May 2019 &amp; then Jan &amp; Dec 2021 at officers</p> |

|  |  |  |  |                                    |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  | request due to COVID-19 pressures) |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------------------|

**Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines**

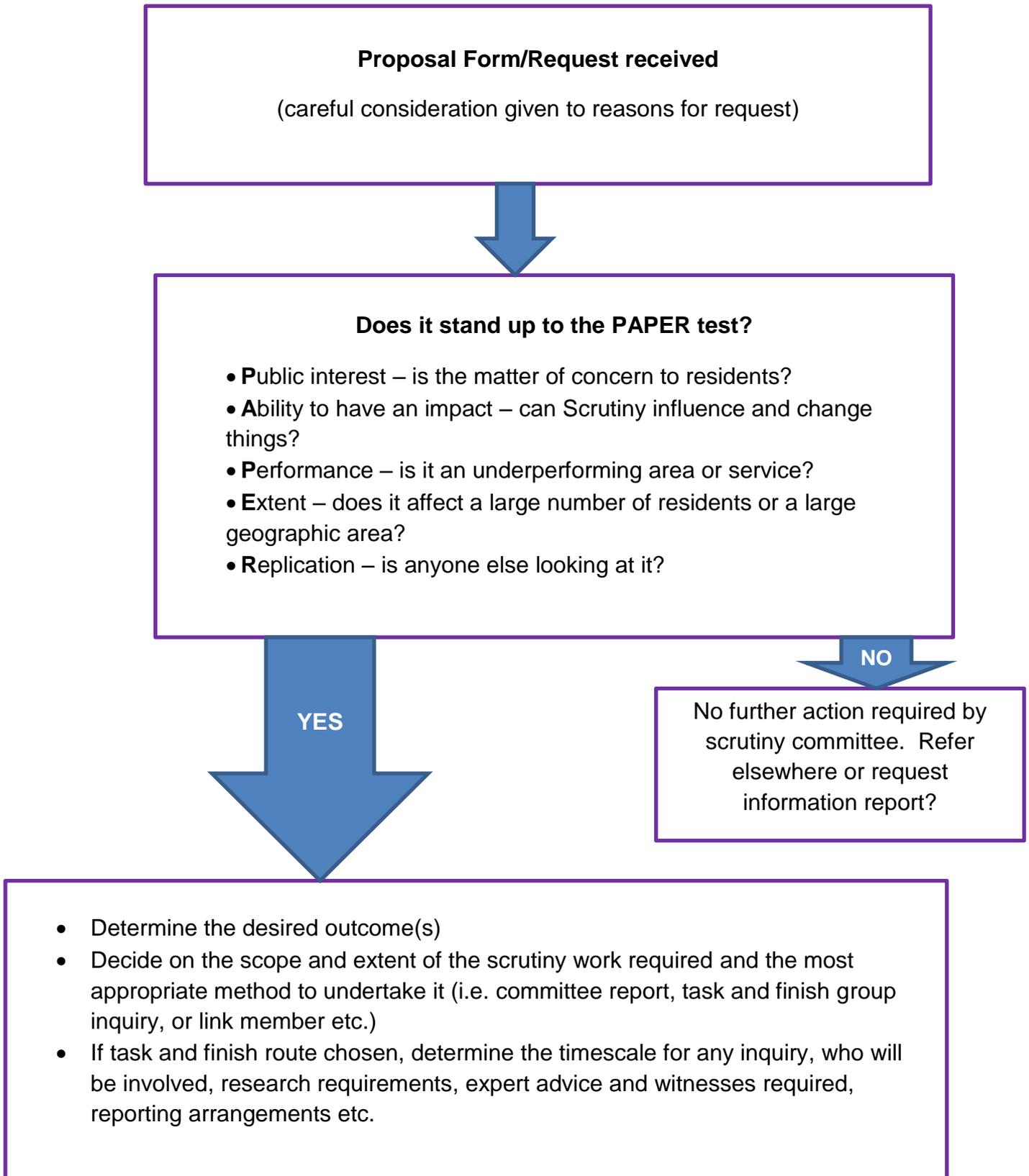
| Meeting | Deadline                            | Meeting | Deadline       | Meeting      | Deadline     |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 9 June  | <b>23 May (due to extended B/H)</b> | 14 July | <b>30 June</b> | 29 September | 15 September |

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| <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>15 Feb</b> | 1                          | Regional Memory Assessment Service Invitation Tender                                                                                                    | To seek final approval of the tender award                                                                    | Yes                                | Councillor Bobby Feeley / Catrin Roberts / Catrin Perry                                                |
|               | 2                          | Queens Market Phase 1 – award construction contract                                                                                                     | To seek approval to award a contract for the delivery of Phase 1 of the Queens Building Rhyl                  | Yes                                | Councillor Hugh Evans / Russell Vaughan                                                                |
|               | 3                          | Contract Award - Renovation of terraced houses at 2-16 Aquarium Street in Rhyl                                                                          | To award a construction contract for housing development                                                      | Yes                                | Councillors Tony Thomas and Julian Thompson-Hill / Mark Dixon                                          |
|               | 4                          | Proposed scheme of delegated decision making for land acquisition (freehold and leasehold) for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes | A decision is required on whether or not to introduce the new scheme of delegated decision making as proposed | Yes                                | Councillor Brian Jones / Tony Thomas and Julian Thompson-Hill / Andrew Cutts / Alan Smith / Steve Gadd |
|               | 5                          | Recommendations of the Strategic Investment Group                                                                                                       | To seek support of projects identified for inclusion in the 2022/23 Capital Plan.                             | Tbc                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Steve Gadd / Richard Humphries                                       |
|               | 6                          | Housing Support Programme Strategy                                                                                                                      | To seek approval of the Strategy.                                                                             | Yes                                | Councillor Bobby Feeley / Ann Lloyd / Claire Owens / Nigel Jones                                       |
|               | 7                          | Finance Report                                                                                                                                          | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council                                            | Tbc                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Steve Gadd                                                           |

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting                                     | Item (description / title) |                                                                                                                        | Purpose of report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer                         |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                             | 8                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees                                                                                         | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                                             |
| <b>15 March (rescheduled from 22 March)</b> | 1                          | Contract Award approval for Phase 2 Construction Works – DCC Waste Transfer Station to support new Waste Service Model | To award the contract for Phase 2 construction works                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Yes                                | Councillor Brian Jones / Tony Ward / Peter Clayton               |
|                                             | 2                          | Contract Award approval for new Waste Fleet to support new Waste Service Model                                         | To award the contract for the new Waste Fleet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Yes                                | Councillor Brian Jones / Tony Ward / Chris Brown / Joanne Taylor |
|                                             | 3                          | Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archives Project                                                                     | To request Cabinet's authorisation in respect of Denbighshire County Council's proportion of the match funding contribution to the project, and authorisation to enter into a contract with Flintshire County Council relative to the future collaborative service arrangements, both of which are subject to the Heritage | Yes                                | Councillor Tony Thomas / Craig Berry / Alan Smith                |

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting         | Item (description / title) |                                     | Purpose of report                                                                                                            | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer     |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
|                 |                            |                                     | Lottery Fund's acceptance of the recent grant submission                                                                     |                                    |                                              |
|                 | 4                          | Finance Report                      | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council                                                           | Tbc                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Steve Gadd |
|                 | 5                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees      | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention                                                            | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                         |
| <b>26 April</b> |                            |                                     |                                                                                                                              |                                    |                                              |
|                 | 1                          | Finance Report                      | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council                                                           | Tbc                                | Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Steve Gadd |
|                 | 2                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees      | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention                                                            | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                         |
| <b>7 June</b>   |                            |                                     |                                                                                                                              |                                    |                                              |
|                 | 1                          | Council Performance Self-Assessment | To consider the Council's self-assessment of its performance in delivering against the council's strategic plan and services | Tbc                                | Iolo McGregor                                |
|                 | 2                          | Finance Report                      | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council                                                           | Tbc                                | Steve Gadd                                   |

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting | Item (description / title) |                                | Purpose of report                                                 | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer |
|---------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|         | 3                          | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc                                | Scrutiny Coordinator                     |
|         |                            |                                |                                                                   |                                    |                                          |

## FUTURE ITEMS

|               |                                                |                                                                                                       |               |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>22 Nov</b> | Council Performance Update – July to September | To consider the Council's performance in delivering against the council's strategic plan and services | Iolo McGregor |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

| <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Deadline</i>  | <i>Meeting</i>  | <i>Deadline</i>   | <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Deadline</i> |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>January</i> | <b>4 January</b> | <i>February</i> | <b>1 February</b> | <i>March</i>   | <b>8 March</b>  |

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## Progress with Committee Resolutions

| Date of Meeting  | Item number and title                                        | Resolution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Progress                                                                             |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25 November 2021 | 5. CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE, QUARTER 2 2021 TO 2022             | <i><b>RESOLVED</b> subject to the above observations and having considered the report and any further actions required to respond to any performance related issues highlighted within the report, to receive and confirm the content of the report.</i>                                                                                                                                                | Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's comments and recommendation     |
|                  | 6. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 2021            | <i><b>RESOLVED</b> having considered the amendments to the Corporate Risk Register (appendix 1), including the status of each risk against the Authority's Risk Appetite Statement (appendix 2) and the assurances provided during the discussion, to receive the Corporate Risk Register review of September 2021.</i>                                                                                 | Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's observations and recommendation  |
|                  | 7. C360 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEM UPDATE | <i><b>RESOLVED</b> subject to the above observations and the areas identified for improvement and strengthening to receive the report on the C360 CRM System's implementation and performance.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's comments and recommendation     |
|                  | 8. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLAN                                | <i><b>RESOLVED:</b><br/>(i) Subject to the above comments and observations on the contents of the draft Sustainable Transport Plan to support the aims and objectives of the delivery of the Sustainable Transport Plan; and<br/>(ii) In supporting the Plan confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment in Appendix A as part of its consideration</i> | Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's observations and recommendations |

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