

To: Members of the Performance
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 11 March 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, 17 MARCH 2022 VIA 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 3 - 14)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 27 January 2022 (copy enclosed).

5 STAFF ABSENCE AND TURNOVER FIGURES FOR DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DURING 2020/21 AND 2021/22 (Pages 15 - 68)

To consider the Absence and Turnover Data Report along with the associated documentation (copies attached) and determine whether any further monitoring of staff absence and turnover rates are required.

6 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 69 - 90)

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.

7 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Arwel Roberts (Chair)

Councillor Hugh Irving (Vice-Chair)

Ellie Chard

Pete Prendergast

Martyn Holland

Peter Scott

Geraint Lloyd-Williams

Andrew Thomas

Bob Murray

David Williams

Paul Penlington

COPIES TO:

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Press and Libraries

Town and Community Councils

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held by video conference on Thursday 27 January 2022 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

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

Cabinet Members – Councillors Bobby Feeley (Lead Member for Well-being and Independence), Huw Hilditch-Roberts, (Lead Member for Education, Children’s Services and Public Engagement), Brian Jones, (Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment), Tony Thomas (Lead Member for Housing and Communities) and Councillor Mark Young (Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities)

Observers – Councillors Meirick Davies, Rhys Thomas, Graham Timms and Emrys Wynne

ALSO PRESENT

Chief Executive (GB), Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services (EJ), Head of Communities and Customers (LG), Head of Highways and Environmental Services (TW), Strategic Planning and Housing Manager (AL), Senior Officer Strategic Planning and Housing (JA), Housing Development Manager (MD), Lead Officer – Community Housing (GD), Operational Manager Community Equipment Service (NJ), Principal Librarian (BH), Principal Catering and Cleaning Manager (HJ), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE) and Committee Administrators (KEJ & SJ [Webcaster])

Public Speakers – Ysgol Dinas Bran Students attended for business item number 7

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor Martyn Holland

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declaration of interests had been raised.

Members were advised that being a school governor did not preclude them from participating in business item number 7 on the meeting’s agenda.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters had been raised.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2021 were submitted.

Matters Arising – The Scrutiny Coordinator referred to an update on issues requested by the Committee at the last meeting, including information on dementia awareness and care training, which had been contained in the Committee’s Information Brief circulated to members earlier in the week.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 be received and approved as a correct record.

5 PROGRESS ON DELIVERING DENBIGHSHIRE'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Councillors Tony Thomas, Lead Member for Housing and Communities and Bobby Feeley, Lead Member for Wellbeing and Independence who had joint responsibility for delivering the Housing and Homelessness Strategy. The Head of Customers and Communities, Strategic Planning and Housing Manager, Senior Officer Strategic Planning and Housing and the Housing Development Manager were also in attendance for this item.

Councillor Thomas introduced the report (previously circulated) on progress made to date in delivering the revised Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020. The Strategy included priority areas for action based on six key themes with progress on the action plan set out in an appendix to the report. Delivery of the action plan was overseen by the Strategic Housing and Homelessness Group (SHHG) together with allocation of the Social Housing Grant to help bring forward affordable housing development. Councillor Thomas highlighted key areas of progress including the launch of the empty homes matching service and work on creating a supply of affordable housing, including energy efficient Passivhaus standard homes with work on site in Denbigh and Prestatyn, together with progress on future planned developments.

Councillor Feeley drew attention to the comprehensive report and the revision of the Strategy to reflect the greater emphasis on addressing homelessness with a theme dedicated to the main concerns and projects in that regard. She was pleased to report that the Housing First project had been rolled out as business as usual and would be funded under existing budgets; work was underway to provide Denbighshire’s first temporary accommodation at Epworth Lodge, Rhyl, and Awel y Dyffryn Extra Care facility in Denbigh would be fully open in February. The Strategy promoted resilience and independence and also supported corporate priorities. Finally she took the opportunity to thank all the officers for their input in the process.

The Strategic Planning and Housing Manager added that, given the Strategy had only been adopted by Council in December 2020, its delivery was still in the early stages. However, most actions were on track for delivery despite a few experiencing minor difficulties with delays largely due to the impact of Covid-19 and issues relating to the Local Development Plan. She also reported upon the work of the SHHG in monitoring progress and welcomed scrutiny of the action plan.

The Chair noted that no major issues had been identified in terms of progress with the action plan. Consequently he asked the Committee to focus on the minor issues identified given that all other actions were on track or had been completed.

The Lead Members and officers responded to questions/comments as follows –

- Tai Teg was the affordable housing register and assurances were provided that it was regularly reviewed and councillors kept informed of any housing available in their areas; there was a link on the Council's website to the relevant webpage
- 168 households were currently presenting as homeless which consisted of 218 individuals and the increase of those threatened with homelessness had largely been due to Welsh Government introducing a moratorium on evictions during the coronavirus pandemic which had since been lifted; significant work was ongoing to support those at risk of homelessness
- the Council only had a duty to house Denbighshire residents and did not provide housing for people from outside the county who presented as homeless – in those cases the Homeless Prevention Team worked with the local authority in whose area they had last resided
- for various reasons there were occasions where local authorities, including Denbighshire, housed homeless people outside of their own county area and questions were raised as to whether there was an imbalance in this regard with Denbighshire's neighbouring authorities, particularly in relation to the use of hotels for temporary accommodation – the Chief Executive advised that further research would be carried out with partner authorities to ascertain the current position and the Chair proposed an information report back to members thereon
- the age range of those presenting as homeless was varied but there was a significant number under the age of 35
- members had previously identified the unauthorised residential occupation of holiday caravans as an issue, hence its inclusion in the action plan, and previous work undertaken in that regard and the involvement of one of the scrutiny committees was also highlighted. To further address the issue required significant resource and a strategic/corporate approach. The Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services advised that his service would likely lead on that work and he was meeting with key officers in the near future with a view to progressing that action as appropriate. He agreed to liaise with the Scrutiny Coordinator to ascertain when the last report on the issue had been submitted to scrutiny and whether a further update or new report was required
- the impact of Covid-19 on progress with the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) had been highlighted in the report and Councillor Mark Young also referred to the impact of the delays associated with Technical Advice Note 15 and Flood Maps which was also beyond the Council's control. However, he provided assurances that the Strategic Planning Group work would continue and the necessary information handed over to the new Council
- any queries regarding empty homes should be directed to the Strategic Planning and Housing Manager in the first instance and Councillor Tony Thomas referred to his willingness to assist and confirmed that he provided a quarterly update to all councillors with details of empty homes in their particular ward areas
- the Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services agreed to ascertain whether occupants of holiday caravans could register that address on the electoral register to vote and report back to the Committee thereon

- the Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services also agreed to look into Councillor Meirick Davies's request for a Community Garden in Trefnant and report back to him directly outside of the meeting
- an update on the development of Llys Awelon Ruthin was provided together with the reasoning behind its delay predominantly due to Covid-19 and other factors including planning conditions, signing of the tender contract and cost increase of building materials. Assurances were provided that despite those issues the development would proceed as originally planned and there would be an uplift in the bid with funding already in place from the Welsh Government in that regard. The development was likely to commence very soon in the New Year.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee –

RESOLVED that, subject to the above observations and the provision of the additional information requested during the course of the discussion to –

- acknowledge the work undertaken to date to implement the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan, along with the progress made thus far with its delivery, and*
- request that a further progress report on the Action Plan's delivery be presented to the Committee during the autumn of 2022.*

6 LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE

Councillor Tony Thomas, Lead Member for Housing and Communities introduced the report by the Principal Librarian (previously circulated) 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.

Councillor Thomas reminded the Committee that library authorities in Wales had a statutory duty to deliver a comprehensive and efficient service to its residents and the report compared Denbighshire's performance against the national standard. He commended the valuable service provided in Denbighshire which had also been heavily impacted by Covid-19 and took the opportunity to thank staff for their excellent service during difficult times, noting staff had been redeployed at an early stage in the pandemic to commence the proactive calling of residents. The performance data for 2020 – 21 included 12 core entitlements which Denbighshire continued to meet, together with 6 quality indicators for which a self-assessment had been carried out and detailed in the report. A number of interesting and informative case studies had also been provided on service activity.

The Head of Communities and Customers highlighted the success of the library service and how service provision had been adapted in line with the changing Covid alert levels and to operate in the modern world, citing the 166% increase in digital downloads during the first lockdown as an illustrative example. She referred to the tremendous work being carried out in the library service which had been reflected in the positive report but recognised the work required going forward to build community capacity and cohesion in which the library service had a key role.

During debate the Committee welcomed the positive report and recognised the importance of the library service to residents' wellbeing and the valuable contribution made within communities. Members provided examples of service provision in their individual ward areas and commended the initiatives and range of services provided, including work with partners, and thanked all the staff involved.

The Lead Member, Head of Communities and Customers and Principal Librarian responded to questions as follows –

- in line with general levels of town centre footfall, library visits had not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels and that situation had been mirrored across Wales; work was being carried out to re-engage with schools and welcome back partner service provision/group activities in libraries to increase attendance; it was also recognised that people needed to rebuild their confidence to re-engage with different services/facilities in their communities
- it was acknowledged that the library service was more than just a building and physical visits, with people using libraries in very different ways as evidenced by the digital access to services including the Order and Collect Service
- the memory bags to support people living with dementia were borrowed in the same way as a library book and had been very popular; funding had also recently been received to start a collection of jigsaws for people living with dementia and it was hoped that they would prove just as popular
- the financial contribution by Rhuddlan Town Council and St. Asaph City Council to their local libraries together with the partnership working and shared vision for libraries working within communities had made those libraries so successful – the Chair suggested there may be merit in progressing that partnership approach to support local libraries in other towns/communities across the county
- whilst there had been a decrease in the take up of the 2021 Summer Reading Challenge it continued to be an extremely successful scheme and Denbighshire continued to perform well and further work had been planned with schools, particularly given the importance of reading to education and wellbeing
- the reduction in staffing levels had been carried out in such a way as to minimise any impact on library users and customer feedback had been closely monitored with no negative feedback; the service would continue to use its resources in the most effective way possible for the benefit of residents
- levels of use in terms of visits and borrowing were slowly increasing and further services were due to reopen the following week, as restrictions eased, and it was difficult to make comparisons pre-pandemic given the changes over the last two years and people's behaviours; all had a responsibility to help to rebuild people's confidence to re-engage within their communities and there was a clear message that the library was a welcoming and safe place to visit.

The Chief Executive had been pleased to hear the positive feedback on the library service and set the future challenge as to what more could be done to embed those excellent facilities to improve the lives of residents. In closing the Chair again paid tribute to the excellent service provided and work of the staff involved in that regard.

The Committee –

RESOLVED that, subject to the above observations –

- (a) *to acknowledge the efforts of the county's libraries to adapt and deliver an excellent service to Denbighshire residents during the Covid-19 pandemic;*
- (b) *to receive and note the information provided on the Library Service's performance in delivering against the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards during 2020/21 along with the update on developments to date during 2021/22, and*
- (c) *to request that a further report on the Service's performance in delivering against the Welsh Public Library Standards during 2021/22 be submitted to the Committee in January 2023.*

At this point (11.17 am) the meeting adjourned for a short break.

7 REDUCTION OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS AND CARBON REDUCTION IN THE SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE

The Chair welcomed all present for this item, including Councillors Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement and Brian Jones, Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment whose portfolios covered the service area and the environment respectively, together with the Head of Highways and Environmental Services and Principal Catering and Cleaning Manager. A warm welcome was also extended to two pupils from Ysgol Dinas Bran's Student Council who would be invited to ask questions on the item.

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts introduced the report by the Principal Catering and Cleaning Manager which provided an update on progress, and the challenges, in relation to reducing single use plastic and carbon within the School Catering Service together with estimated associated costs. In terms of context he advised that the report had been based on the current service provision situation and that implementation of the Welsh Government's decision to provide free school meals to all primary school children would have a significant impact on the service.

The Committee was guided through the report which referenced the following –

- the current model for school catering relied on income from drink sales in secondary schools with drinks generally sold in single-use plastic containers. Options to eradicate the sale of drinks in single-use containers included (1) not selling drinks with pupils bringing their own drinks to school resulting in a £220k pressure, or (2) selling drinks decanted into re-usable containers
- Option 2 had been trialled at Ysgol Glan Clwyd and the difficulties encountered together with the financial impact had been set out in the report, with the service concluding the trial could not be rolled out to all secondary schools given it was too logistically challenging; lack of space in some schools; waste created from non-recyclable plastic drink cups, and it was not financially viable
- the service had made good progress in other areas to reduce single use plastics and had reduced food item packaging purchased and disposed of. However, there was an increase in price for recyclable alternatives and concerns that those

items were not being recycled by students. Where possible the use of plastic cutlery had been stopped and food was served on plates but many schools did not have the dining room capacity to accommodate pupils

- detailed actions taken by the service to deliver the catering function in a low carbon way and future challenges in terms of improving recycling by pupils with a new post to promote behaviour change, and discussions on the potential reduction of red meat on menus which was a sensitive issue.

Councillor Hilditch-Roberts emphasised the commitment of the service to reducing single use plastics and carbon despite the challenges faced with progress in a number of areas. He reiterated the significant financial impact associated with actions identified in the report - £220k per annum for stopping the sale of drinks in secondary schools, and £197k per annum for selling/decanting drinks into reusable cups. That deficit would need to be met by an increase in revenue subsidy, an increase in school meal prices, or by passing the costs on to schools. The expansion of the service to provide free school meals for all primary schools would also increase its carbon footprint. It was noted that the current model treated all schools equally and unless an individual school wished to take a different approach (and fund any budget gap) the consistent model across schools would be retained.

Councillor Brian Jones reported on previous work undertaken with a view to reducing single use plastics leading up to the current report, and he highlighted the need to align financial budgets with climate change priorities and find innovative ways of addressing the issues raised. He welcomed the participation of the two students from Ysgol Dinas Bran and collective working with schools and others to find innovative solutions in order to move the climate change agenda forward.

At this point the Chair invited questions from the Ysgol Dinas Bran students who referred to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and sustainable procurement and questioned why the service was not using positive alternatives to single use plastics in line with the Act and how much extra waste had been generated by single use plastics to match student demand. The students also queried the actual cost associated with the current use of plastics in schools in comparison to eco-friendly alternatives, and challenged the reference in paragraph 10.2 of the report regarding schools' desire for change given the ongoing commitment of Student Councils. In response the Lead Members and officers –

- explained the tight timescales for serving meals across the eight secondary schools together with limited space and dining room capacity which significantly impacted on how the service was delivered whilst also trying to accommodate pupils' preferences and ensuring the service was financially viable
- elaborated on steps taken to reduce single use plastic packaging for sandwiches and pasta and the challenges in using stainless-steel cutlery and plates given the time restrictions on the service and lack of dining capacity in schools together with cutlery not being returned and subsequent cost impact, and in using plastic alternatives such as bamboo and affordability for pupils
- waste generated varied between individual schools with some pupils not recycling any single use plastic and the non-return and inappropriate disposal of utensils etc. (including littering) which were issues beyond the service's control, and there was a need to educate and change behaviours in that regard to ensure that waste

generated as a result of the service was disposed of in the best way. Funding had been secured for a new post to promote behaviour change and work with the catering service and schools would be prioritised

- explained that the reference in paragraph 10.2 that it was not clear schools had a consistent/collective desire to change to a new model had followed a general discussion at a head teacher cluster meeting regarding the sale of drinks, with concerns regarding the withdrawal of pure fruit juice (given the health benefits) and use of cans as an alternative to plastic (given that cans could not be resealed and accidents involving shredded cans on the school field). Ysgol Glan Clwyd (YGC) had been keen to undertake the drinks trial but when it had been rolled out the majority of pupils had not wanted to participate
- the sale of drinks in schools had been recognised as the biggest issue for the service in terms of single use plastics and whilst the simplest way of dealing with the issue was to stop selling drinks in schools, there would be significant implications arising from that action, notwithstanding the budget deficit which must be met, but also in terms of health considerations and potentially other hidden factors, and the matter required a political discussion and consultation with all schools to reach an agreement as to the best way forward
- the expansion of the service as a result of the future requirement to provide a free school meal to all primary pupils would necessarily increase the carbon footprint of the service which also represented a significant challenge.

During a lengthy debate members scrutinised the report in detail and took the opportunity to raise questions and discuss with the Lead Members and officers various aspects of the report. The Chair also permitted follow up questions from the Ysgol Dinas Bran students and non-Committee members. The Committee recognised the challenges faced in terms of balancing the needs of the service and school meal provision against climate and ecological priorities, not least the financial implications and necessary behaviour changes to meet those ambitions.

Main points of debate focused on the following –

- ideally stainless steel cutlery would be used but service provision was restricted by the available space, facilities and seating capacity within schools together with the length of lunchtime, and thousands of stainless steel utensils went missing each year with some being inappropriately disposed of; whilst a bamboo alternative was available there was a significant cost element attached in comparison with plastic cutlery with a mark-up of 10p – 15p for each utensil, and the cost increase having to be passed onto the customer
- it was hoped that the Council could do more in future to work together with schools to improve behaviours to ensure all the material produced from school meals was recycled and to address the problem of littering
- the current catering model focused on a whole school approach and therefore a change in one school had a financial impact on all other schools, for example if the selling of drinks was stopped in one school, the budget deficit as a result of that action would need to be absorbed equally across all schools and therefore all schools would need to agree to such an approach
- it had been hoped that the drinks trial at YGC would have proved successful and subsequently rolled out across all secondary schools but unfortunately that had not been the case with other problems created as a result

- assurances were provided that there was an appetite in all schools to try and address the issue of single use plastics and carbon reduction and whilst progress had been made by the service in areas such as packaging and disposal, in reality the challenges in schools were proving difficult to overcome, and the financial implications of those changes difficult to surmount
- there was some debate on the national picture, given the wider global issue of climate change, and whether the Council should look to the Welsh Government to work with local authorities across Wales and provide the necessary funding to effect a step change, particularly given the financial challenges already facing local government and pressures across schools and other service areas. The Chair proposed an approach to the Welsh Government as a way forward
- the majority of schools staggered dining times and as a result of Covid-19 had also used other areas of the school in addition to the canteen which proved continually challenging
- a refundable deposit for reusable cutlery and drinks containers had been disregarded given the associated administration arising from that process and the potential cross contamination from drinks containers
- some schools did not allow cans and switching from single use plastic containers to cans was still not ideal given that cans were another form of single use container; erecting signage to deter littering etc. did not necessarily stop it
- explained the need to comply with Welsh Government guidance on nutrition and food, and the lack of facilities and counter space in schools to accommodate self-vending together with cross contamination issues arising from reusable containers, and confirmed there had been no difference to income generated from drink sales as a result of school water fountains not being in use
- research had concluded that priorities for catering managers looking to reduce carbon emissions should be switching to low carbon waste disposal methods and reducing the amount of red meat in menus – the latter would require a political discussion as it would have significant implications for the county
- provided assurances that steps had been taken and progress made in reducing single-use plastics and it was agreed that small changes and incremental change could collectively make a significant difference
- the current service model was a whole system approach and treated all schools equally regardless of size, if Ysgol Dinas Bran wished to take a different approach and was prepared to fund the budget gap, it was entitled to do so and the Council would support the school in those endeavours as best it could.

Councillor Graham Timms had been disappointed to hear the Committee's response to look to the Welsh Government and instead felt that the Council should be addressing the issue. He asked whether any work had been carried out to develop and cost a service model which would eradicate single use plastics and reduce carbon which the Council could then fund and implement together with work to educate children in best behaviours. Councillor Hilditch-Roberts cautioned against formulating a service plan at this stage given that the implications arising from the future requirement for the provision of free school meals to all primary pupils was as yet unknown, and he had caveated the report as the current situation which was subject to future uncertainties including potential restructure and investment. The Ysgol Dinas Bran students also recognised the financial reality of the situation but highlighted that climate change was also a reality which need to be addressed. The Chair suggested that the Committee's recommendations to seek support from the

Welsh Government could also include the YGC drinks trial as an illustrative example of the difficulties faced, and suggested that Ysgol Dinas Bran may also wish to contact the Welsh Government directly to express their disappointment regarding the lack of funding to progress matters.

Whilst there was no current solution to address the issues raised, the Head of Service confirmed the commitment to continue that work. In light of the new requirements for free school meal provision the service needed to prioritise its resources on delivering that work over the next eighteen months, and whilst it may take longer to achieve those service goals in reducing carbon and single use plastics, assurances were provided that all were committed to resolving the issue. In bringing the debate to a close the Chair reaffirmed his proposal, seconded by Councillor Ellie Chard and upon being put to the vote the Committee –

RESOLVED *that subject to the above comments, concerns and observations to request that the Cabinet on behalf of the Council write to the Welsh Government seeking it to –*

- (a) work with local authorities across Wales in a bid to reduce and eradicate the practice of using single use plastics and non-recyclable goods in the supply, preparation and serving of school meals, and*
- (b) provide sufficient financial resources to all local authorities to enable them to realise the above objectives, facilitate carbon reduction measures within their School Catering Services whilst securing the delivery of a sustainable school meals service.*

The Chair thanked the students from Ysgol Dinas Bran for their input and challenging questions and also to all members for their contribution to debate, with special mention to Councillor Graham Timms, and to officers for bringing the report and answering questions thereon.

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator 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 –

- the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group had allocated an item to the next meeting on 17 March in relation to Staff Absences and Turnover in Denbighshire during 2020/21 & 2021/22 and its impact on Customer Service and had also decided to reschedule the two education items listed for 17 March to the July meeting to be considered by the new Committee following May's elections
- the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group had previously resolved that no scrutiny committee meetings should be held after the commencement of the pre-election period (18 March) unless urgent business necessitated a meeting being held – therefore the Committee's last scheduled meeting for the current Council term was 17 March

- members were encouraged to submit any proposal forms regarding topics for scrutiny by the new Council directly to the Scrutiny Coordinator.

RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of the items requested during the course of the meeting and the amendments outlined above, the Committee's forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be confirmed.

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The Chair reported upon a meeting with David Wilson, Audit Wales at which Scrutiny's role in examining matters such as staff absences, retention and recruitment were discussed. The Committee would be given an opportunity to fulfil its role in relation to this at its March meeting, and all members were encouraged to attend and provide effective challenge.

Councillor Peter Scott advised that the Flood Risk Management and Riparian Land Ownership Task and Finish Group would be submitting a report to Communities Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2022.

Councillor Hugh Irving represented scrutiny on the Queen's Building Project Board and he reported that the situation remained challenging, and officers were working hard to address ongoing unanticipated problems associated with the project. A report on the detail of the project would be submitted to Cabinet in February.

The Chief Executive praised the level of debate and scrutiny during the meeting and also the contribution of the students from Ysgol Dinas Bran within that process which had provided a greater understanding of the complexities involved.

RESOLVED that the feedback from representatives following their attendance at various meetings on the Committee's behalf be received and noted.

In closing the meeting the Chair thanked the Committee's support officers.

The meeting concluded at 12.50 pm.

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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	17th March 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets
Report author	Gary Williams – Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services Louise Dougal – HR Services Manager
Title	Staff Absences and Turnover in Denbighshire during 2020/21 & 2021/22

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report provides staff absence and turnover data for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide up to date information on the current absence and turnover statistics.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

3.1 considers and discusses the Absence and Turnover data provided, along with the associated documentation; and

3.2 determines if any further monitoring of staff absence and turnover rates are required.

4. Report details

Staff Absence

4.1. Appendix 1 provides a detailed breakdown of Sickness Absence for the current and previous financial years. The Covid Pandemic has had an impact on absence figures. The key data is highlighted overleaf.

4.2. Total Absence Data and comparisons:

Absence – Denbighshire County Council Total					
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	April – Dec 21
Denbighshire	8.4	8.3	8.1	6.5	7.1
Wales	10.4	10.5	11.2	8.4	

4.3. The Council had the lowest absence rate for Welsh local authorities in 2019/2020 and was on a downward trend for absence. In 2020-2021 our sickness rate was considerably lower which was in line with other Welsh authorities mainly due to social distancing measures and working from home.

4.4. In the period April to December 2021, the sickness rate has increased and we are likely to end the year at approximately 9 days lost per employee. This is higher than our normal figure pre pandemic.

4.5. The top 3 reasons for absence have remained consistent over the past 3 years, however the amount of absence which was due to colds and flu in 2019/2020 was 10% whereas this was much lower, under 5%, in 2020/2021. We have the new absence type of Covid which has increased each year. The figures also indicate an increase in Depression / Anxiety. The absence broken down to service areas is as follows, the orange highlighted areas indicate an increase:

Service	19/20 (%)	20/21 (%)	21/22 (%) Apr - Dec
Business Improvement and Modernisation	6.75	4.47	2.93
Community Support Services	12.21	10.87	12.43
Communities & Customers	8.29	8.45	5.39
Education & Children Services	7.66	9.47	9.7
Finance & Property	5.79	6.08	5.54
Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services	9.97	7.43	6.95
Legal, HR & Democratic Services	4.34	6.79	2.46
Planning, Public Protection & Countryside Services	4.37	3.55	5.24

4.6. Absence has increased in the frontline services as highlighted in orange above. It is anticipated that sickness absence will remain at an increased level for the following 2 years due to the removal of social distancing measures, the added illness of Covid and the backlog of treatments and surgeries for staff.

Staff Turnover

4.7. Below is the turnover figure for DCC compared to the Local Authorities in Wales, this is based on the percentage of staff who leave the employment of the Council:

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Denbighshire	11.1	9.3	8.6	9.3	7.5
Wales	11.6	11.4	11.2	10.8	8.2

4.8. Our turnover figure is below average, however, there has been a significant increase in turnover in two of our frontline service areas, i.e. Highways & Environmental Services by approximately 6% and Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services by approximately 4%.

4.9. During 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 the biggest group of leavers were in grade 4 or below positions with the common reason for leaving being resignation due to personal reasons, the next big group of leavers fell within the grade 10 and above group with the common reason for leaving being retirement.

4.10. The biggest group of grade 4 and below are found in Highways and Environmental Services, mainly within our Catering and Cleaning positions.

4.11. In summary, Covid has seen a negative impact on our attendance and turnover figures in our frontline services. Non frontline services have been less effected.

4.12. Attendance figures have increased over the last 9 months and are likely to continue to increase.

4.13. The workforce has been resilient during the pandemic, services have continued to be delivered and staff have been redeployed into new roles to support new council requirements, i.e. track, trace and protect service, supporting the shielding and vulnerable residents with food deliveries, additional support in care.

4.14. There has been no significant impact on service delivery, however some areas are experiencing challenging times in recruitment and retention issues across all service areas which have been identified through the workforce planning activities recently carried out within services.

4.15. Appendix 2 is the draft Corporate Workforce Plan which is being consulted upon with the Corporate Executive Team (CET) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Appendix 3 is a copy of the delivery plan which lists a number of actions to support the recruitment and retention of the workforce.

4.16. The delivery aims of the workforce plan focus on the following areas:

- Leadership & Management
- Recruitment and Retention of Talent
- Enabling High Performing, Engaged and Empowered Workforce
- Develop a Flexible and Agile Workforce
- Support Health & Wellbeing

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

5.1. The workforce is an important asset to the council and together deliver services and corporate priorities. The workforce plan outlines our commitment on how we will enhance and develop our workforce, now and in the future to deliver the best possible service to our residents.

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

6.1. The additional financial costs comes from back filling frontline line posts with temporary staff, i.e. refuse collector, cook. However, the non-financial costs come for the additional pressures on managers, teams and employees in services to carry out additional work and training.

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

7.1. Not applicable

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

8.1. CET and SLT have been consulted on the Corporate Workforce Plan. The final draft version is attached in appendix 2.

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. The main risks associated with high absence levels and increased turnover for the Council are a reduction or disruption to productivity, increased recruitment costs, time spent to train new employees, reduction in employee motivation and morale for other employees and additional workloads for existing staff.

10.2. To address the risks of absence: over the past 2 years absence management has been difficult due to the situation of the pandemic, we have an established policy and procedure in place, an occupational health service to support managers and dedicated HR officers to support early interventions and long term solutions. We also have a number of new tools to support wellbeing in the workplace. Managers with support from HR need to ensure that the policy and procedure is applied consistently across the council.

10.3. To address turnover, recruitment and retention issues across service areas, service workforce plans have been completed and have identified service specific issues, the corporate workforce plan has identified a Recruitment and Retention delivery action plan.

11. Power to make the decision

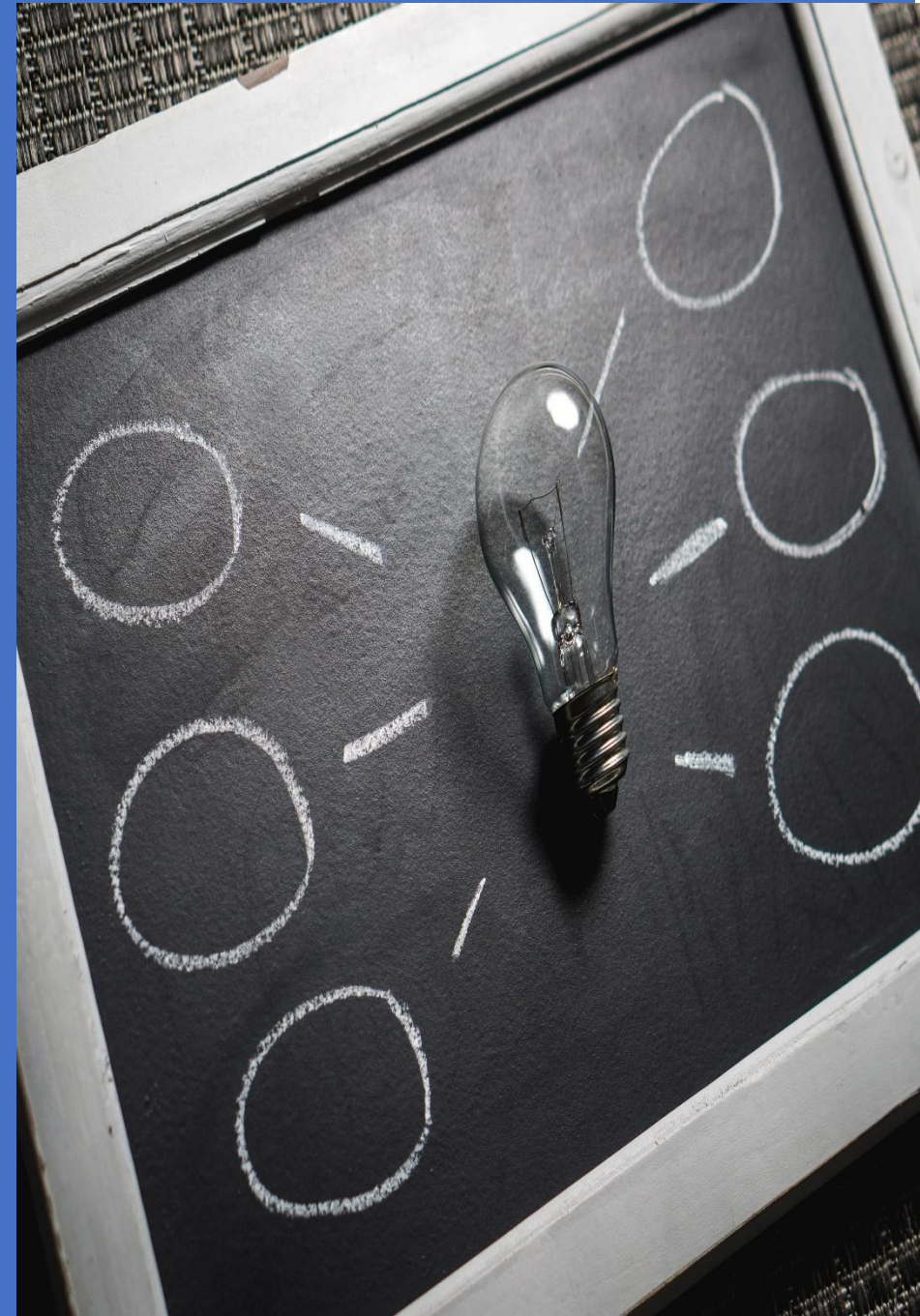
11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

11.2. Section 7.4.2(b) outlines Scrutiny's powers with respect of reviewing and scrutinising the performance of the Council in relation to policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular services areas.

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Scrutiny Report Absence and Turnover



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Absence in Denbighshire County Council

The last 10 years of published WLGA Benchmarking Absence Data for average days lost by employee for sickness absence, Denbighshire County Council (DCC) is consistently below the average sickness absence rate for Welsh Authorities by an average of 1.67 days per year.

DCC had the lowest absence rate for Welsh authorities in 2019/2020 and we were on a downwards trend for absence. In 2020-2021 our sickness rate was considerably lower which was in line with other Welsh authorities due to social distancing measures. In the period April to December 2021, the sickness rate has increased and we are likely to end the year at approximately 9 days lost per employee.

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Absence – Denbighshire County Council Total					
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	April to Dec 2021
Denbighshire	8.4	8.3	8.1	6.5	7.1
Wales	10.4	10.5	11.2	8.4	

Absence - Short, Medium, Long Term

Short term absence was on a downward trend Pre-pandemic. In 2019 – 2020, 24% of sickness absence was due to short term absences and this reduced further to 16% in 2020 – 2021. For the current period of April – December 2021 the data demonstrates that short term absence has increased to 23%.

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

Absence – Long Term, Medium Term, Short Term					
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	April to Dec 2021
Long Term	50%	50%	59%	62%	55%
Medium Term	23%	24%	17%	22%	22%
Short Term	27%	26%	24%	16%	23%

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Long term absence during the Pandemic period of 2020-2021, increased from 59% to 62% of all absences in that period, however the actual days lost during that same period had reduced from 17,634 to 14,515. Short term absences are classed as 1 – 7 days, medium term absences are 8 – 27 days and long term absences are 28 days or more.

Absence – 2019 to 2020		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	17,634	59%
Medium Term	4,903	17%
Short Term	7,166	24%
Total	29,704	100%

Absence – 2020 to 2021		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	14,515	62%
Medium Term	5,013	22%
Short Term	3,709	16%
Total	23,238	100%

Absence – 2021 to 2022 (April to December only)		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	14,071	55%
Medium Term	5,741	22%
Short Term	5,972	23%
Total	25,784	100%

Absence – Sickness reasons

The following tables show the percentage of absence which is attributed to each reason. For example, the amount of absence which was due to colds and flu in 2019/2020 was 10% whereas this was a much lower, under 5% in 2020/2021. However, the top 3 reasons for absence remain the same for each year.

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

2019-2020	
Reason	% of absence
Other Musculo Skeletal	12.5%
Depression / Anxiety	11.4%
Stress - Personal	10.9%
Colds / Flu / Infections	10.2%
Surgery	9.8%
Stomach / Liver / Kidney	8.0%
Stress - Work Related	5.3%
Cancer	4.9%
Chest / Respiratory	4.4%
Stress - Bereavement	3.6%
Not known / Other	3.5%
Ear / Eye / Sinus / Dental	3.4%
Back / Neck	3.3%

2020-2021	
Reason	% of absence
Depression/Anxiety	17.5%
Other Musculo Skeletal	11.6%
Stress - Personal	11.4%
Surgery	7.4%
Covid-19	5.9%
Stomach / Liver / Kidney	5.8%
Cancer	5.2%
Colds / Flu / Infections	4.7%
Stress - Bereavement	4.5%
Back / Neck	4.5%
Stress - Work Related	4.1%
Not Known / Other	4.0%
Ear / Eye / Sinus / Dental	3.2%

2021-2022 (Apr-Dec)	
Reason	% of absence
Depression/Anxiety	13.4%
Stress - Personal	10.7%
Other Musculo Skeletal	10.0%
Covid-19	9.4%
Colds / Flu / Infections	7.5%
Stomach / Liver / Kidney	5.8%
Cancer	5.7%
Surgery	4.8%
Not Known / Other	4.7%
Stress - Work Related	4.4%
Back / Neck	4.1%
Chest / Respiratory	3.9%
Stress - Bereavement	2.9%
Ear / Eye / Sinus / Dental	2.7%

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

Neurological / Headaches / Migraine	3.1%
Heart / Blood Pressure / Circulation	2.7%
Genito-Urinary / Menstrual Problems	1.9%
Skin Related Disorders	0.8%
Diabetes / Thyroid / Endocrine	0.3%
Covid-19	0.1%

Neurological / Headaches / Migraine	3.0%
Heart / Blood Pressure / Circulation	2.8%
Chest / Respiratory	2.4%
Diabetes / Thyroid / Endocrine	1.0%
Genito-Urinary / Menstrual Problems	0.9%
Skin Related Disorders	0.3%

Neurological / Headaches / Migraine	2.6%
Genito-Urinary / Menstrual Problems	2.0%
Heart / Blood Pressure / Circulation	1.7%
Skin Related Disorders	0.8%
Diabetes / Thyroid / Endocrine	0.6%

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Absence – Services

Please note due to the restructure of Services in October 2019 we do not have more than 2 full years' comparison for some services.

NB: The Covid Pandemic has had an impact on absence figures in 2021/2021 and some services have seen a reduction in absence rate which at this time is attributed to social distancing and new ways of working.

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

Service	2017/2018	2018/2019	New Service	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022 (Apr-Dec)
Business Improvement and Modernisation	8.8	4.34	No Change	6.75	4.47	2.93
Community Support Services	15.07	13.78	No Change	12.21	10.87	12.43
Customers, Communications & Marketing	5.13	8.21	Communities & Customers	8.29	8.45	5.39
Education & Children Services	10.76	10.06	No Change	7.66	9.47	9.7
Finance	6.14	2.5	Finance & Property	5.79	6.08	5.54
Highways & Environmental Services	7.39	9.11	Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services	9.97	7.43	6.95
Legal, HR & Democratic Services	5.45	2.79	No Change	4.34	6.79	2.46
Planning & Public Protection	7.79	8.59	Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services	4.37	3.55	5.24

Absence – Instances of Covid related absence

Type	2020-2021	2021-2022 (Apr-Dec)
Covid-19	43	97
Self-Isolation – NWAH	221	242
Shielding	37	n/a

NB: This will include employees who have been required to isolate on more than one occasion and does not include Schools.

Turnover

Please note due to the restructure of Services in October 2019 we do not have more than 2 full years' comparison for some services.

Although likely affected by the pandemic DCC Turnover in 2020/2021 is at a lower rate than the previous 3 years. Turnover in the period Apr-Dec 2021 has begun to increase in comparison with 2020/2021 but it is not at pre-pandemic levels at this time.

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

Service	17/18 (%)	18/19 (%)	New Service	19/20(%)	20/21 (%)	21/22(%)
Business Improvement and Modernisation	10.5	16.6	No Change	15.5	4.9	0.0
Community Support Services	8.4	10.6	No Change	10.6	9.8	8.0
Customers, Communications & Marketing	8.4	9.7	Communities & Customers	5.7	5.6	4.8
Education & Children Services	6.6	8.8	No Change	8.1	6.0	6.7
Finance	4.9	0	Finance & Property	3.0	3.2	3.0
Highways & Environmental Services	9.7	9.5	Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services	4.7	6.7	9.3
Legal, HR & Democratic Services	9.9	4.3	No Change	9.7	6.1	5.1
Planning & Public Protection	11.1	7.0	Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services	6.1	6.4	8.9
DCC (excluding schools)	9.9	9.1		9.3	6.9	7.3

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

The median rate of labour turnover as reported by the CIPD Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2020 is as follows:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2016	2019
13%	12%	10%	14%	16.5%	16%

[Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey | Reports | CIPD](#) NB: This survey is not conducted every year and therefore there are some gaps in years.

Benchmarking data is available for Local Authorities which includes schools and is the percentage of staff who leave the employment of the Local Authority:

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Denbighshire	13.1	11.9	11.1	9.3	8.6	9.3	7.5
Wales	12.9	11.4	11.6	11.4	11.2	10.8	8.2

Top 5 Reasons for Leaving – Positions (not people)

The data demonstrates that for the past three years, 'Resignation' is the most common reason for leaving a position within DCC, followed by 'Retirement' for the past two years. The percentages for involuntary reasons for leaving (Dismissal, Re-Organisation and Redundancy) decreased from 12% to 10.8% last year in 2020-2021. The period April to December for 2021-2022 stands at 6.4% currently. The total leavers to position, stands at 299 for this year 2021-2022 (April – December) and by the year end, will exceed the previous year 2020-2021 at 315.

2019-2020	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
	Resignation	266	62
	End of Fixed Term Contract	55	13
	Retirement	43	10
	Dismissal	32	7
	Redundancy	29	7
2020-2021	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
	Resignation	192	57
	Retirement	59	18
	End of Fixed Term Contract	30	9
	Dismissal	19	6
	Redundancy	15	4
2021-2022 (April – Dec only)	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
	Resignation	234	74
	Retirement	33	10
	End of Fixed Term Contract	13	4
	Re-organisation	10	3
	Dismissal	9	3

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

Leaving Reason by Grade (people not positions)

A total of 145 employees left DCC in the year 2020/2021, with 53.8% of those leavers on Grade 4 or below and 20.6% on Grade 10 or above. Out of the 145 leavers, 42.7% gave the reason as 'Resignation Personal' for their departure with the majority (61.2%) of those on Grade 4 and below. For those employees on a Grade 10 or above, the most common reason for leaving was retirement at 6.9%.

2020-2021			
Grade	Total Leavers in Grade	Reason	No. by Reason
GRADE 1	30	Dismissal	2
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	3
		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	1
		Resignation - Continue Education / Study	1
		Resignation - Ill Health	1
		Resignation - Moved Out of the Area	1
		Resignation - Personal	19
		Resignation - Working Relationships	2
		End of Fixed Term Contract	1
GRADE 2	4	Resignation - Personal	3
GRADE 3	20	Died in Service	2
		Dismissal	3
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	4
		Resignation - Continue Education / Study	1
		Resignation - Moved Out of the Area	2
		Resignation - Personal	6
		Retirement	2

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

GRADE 4	26	Died in Service	2
		Dismissal	1
		End of Fixed Term Contract	2
		Redundancy - Compulsory	2
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	2
		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	1
		Resignation - Moved Out of the Area	1
		Resignation - Personal	10
		Retirement	5
GRADE 5	8	Died in Service	1
		Dismissal	1
		End of Fixed Term Contract	2
		Redundancy - Compulsory	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	1
		Resignation - Did not return from Maternity Leave	1
		Resignation - Personal	1
GRADE 6	10	Dismissal	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	1
		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	1
		Resignation - Personal	6
		Retirement	1
GRADE 7	9	End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	1
		Resignation - Personal	4
		Retirement	3
GRADE 8	4	End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Resignation - Personal	1
		Retirement	2
GRADE 9	16	Redundancy - Compulsory	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	2

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	4
		Resignation - Personal	7
		Retirement	2
GRADE 10	6	Dismissal	1
		Redundancy - Voluntary	1
		Retirement	4
GRADE 11	6	Resignation - Personal	2
		Retirement	4
GRADE 12	1	Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	1
GRADE 13	2	Resignation - Personal	2
GRADE 14	3	Resignation - Personal	1
		Retirement	2

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

A total of 155 employees left DCC in the year 2021/2022 (April to December) with 49.6% of those leavers on Grade 4 or below and 7.7% of those leavers on Grade 10 or above. Out of the 155 leavers, 50.9% gave the reason as 'Resignation Personal' for their departure, with the majority (59.5%) of those being Grade 4 and below. For those employees on a Grade 10 or above, the most common reason for leaving was retirement at 5.2%.

2021-2022 (April – December only)			
Grade	Total Leavers in Grade	Reason	No. by Reason
GRADE 01	32	Died in Service	1
		Redundancy - Compulsory	1
		Resignation - Ill Health	1
		Resignation - Personal	22
		Retirement	7
GRADE 02	10	End of Fixed Term Contract	3
		Resignation - Personal	4
		Retirement	1
		Dismissal	2
GRADE 03	20	End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Other Reason	1
		Redundancy - Compulsory	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	1
		Resignation - Ill Health	1
		Resignation - Personal	11
		Retirement	2
		Dismissal	2
GRADE 04	15	Died in Service	1

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

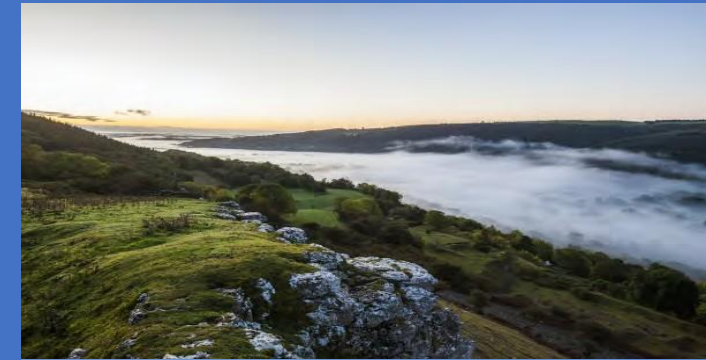
		Redundancy - Compulsory	1
		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	1
		Resignation - Ill Health	1
		Resignation - Personal	10
		Retirement	1
GRADE 05	19	Died in Service	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	4
		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	2
		Resignation - Personal	6
		Retirement	5
		Dismissal	1
GRADE 06	15	Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	3
		Resignation - Ill Health	1
		Resignation - Moved Out of the Area	1
		Resignation - Personal	9
		Dismissal	1
GRADE 07	12	End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	2
		Resignation - Personal	4
		Retirement	3
		TUPE Transfer	1
		Dismissal	1
GRADE 08	11	Died in Service	1
		End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	1
		Resignation - Personal	5
		Retirement	2
		Dismissal	1
GRADE 09	9	Redundancy - Compulsory	1
		Resignation - Another Post Outside DCC	2

Scrutiny Report for Absence and Turnover

		Resignation - Another Post With A Welsh Authority	1
		Resignation - Personal	4
		Retirement	1
GRADE 10	4	Resignation - Personal	1
		Retirement	3
GRADE 11	5	Resignation - Personal	1
		Retirement	4
GRADE 12	1	Resignation - Personal	1
GRADE 13	1	Resignation - Personal	1
SLT2(HOS)	1	Retirement	1

Appendix 2
Denbighshire County Council
Workforce Plan
2022

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Our aim is to create an improved culture, a 'One Council' approach, with strong visible leadership and effective management in order to ensure high levels of customer service for our communities.

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2. Recruitment and Retention of Talent	
3. Enable a High Performing, Engaged and Empowered Workforce	
4. Develop a Flexible and Agile Workforce	
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Why do we need a Workforce Plan?

The council's current Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022 sets out our vision and aspirations for the residents of Denbighshire. We want to be a high performing council that works with residents, businesses, others organisations and its communities to be able to deliver the best possible services within the resources available.

The council has faced unprecedented times since the Covid-19 pandemic began in March 2020 and has maintained the provision of key services during this period. The pandemic has highlighted a number of pressure points, for example, the provision of care, however the pandemic has also presented some opportunities to work in a different way longer term. As a council, we will need to consider the opportunities and what that future workforce will look like.

To achieve this, we need to learn and adapt as a council and also find those creative solutions. The workforce plan outlines our commitment on how we will enhance and develop our workforce, now and in the future to deliver the best possible service to our residents within a changing economic landscape. Workforce planning will enable sustainable organisation performance through better decision making about the future people needs of the council.

The Process:

- The Workforce Plan is set in line with the Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027). This year's plan will see a cross over from the old to the new plan
- Individual Service Workforce Plans will be completed on an annual basis with services and HR Business Partners
- The annual Service Workforce Plan reviews will then form part of the annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan

Denbighshire County Council Corporate Plan Priorities for 2017 - 2022:

1. **Housing**—everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs.
2. **Environment**—Attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity.
3. **Young People**—A place where younger people will want to live and work and have the skills to do so.
4. **Connected Communities**—Communities are connected and have access to goods and services locally, online and through good transport links.
5. **Resilient Communities**—The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience.

The above priorities are coming to a conclusion; the council now are working on a new corporate plan which will be released after the May elections.



The Vision and 5 Key Principles for the Council:

<p>1. Culture Develop our own Denbighshire culture based on our 4 Values:</p>	<p>Pride: We aim to create a sense of pride in working for our organisation Unity: We all work for the same organisation Respect: We aim to treat all people equally and with fairness, understanding that there are views and beliefs that differ from our own Integrity: We manage to manage ourselves to maximise performance, act with high standard of conduct and present a positive image of Denbighshire</p> <p>As a council we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a 'One Council' approach to the way we work • Be transparent, honest and encourage challenge • Maintain a respectful, professional and enjoyable atmosphere
<p>Communities Work with our communities:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Council close to its communities • Recognise the different communities • Build community confidence in the Council
<p>Performance Clear performance expectations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic, open and honest about what we can do as individuals and as the Council • Remain ambitious in our key priority areas • New Corporate Plan agreed post May Election • Every officer to have regular 1:2:1s with their Line Manager • Everyone has clear objectives
<p>4. Member / Officer Relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Member/Staff working relationships critical • Mutual respect and understanding between Officers and Members
<p>5. Staff Support and develop staff:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are our most valuable asset • Covid has changed the way we work; we need a clear vision for how we work in the future • Provide career development opportunities • Staff to feel part of something bigger

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Our Workforce



4178 Employees as at 30th September 2021
(including schools but excluding casual/relief staff)



73% Female and 27% Male



Over 41% of our workforce is over 50 years of age and under 12% are aged under 30 years



The majority of employees work term time and are permanent



4.40% of employees can speak Welsh proficiently at level 5

Our Current Workforce

The council provides numerous facilities and services for the community, for example, education services and schools, waste and recycling, planning, social services, libraries, highway maintenance and environmental health.

The figures below give an overview of staff composition (excluding schools, casual/relief staff) as at 30th September 2021:

- The council employs a total number of 2187 staff which equates to 1838.28 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). There are a total of 2299 positions held within the council
- 65% of employees are Female and 35% are Male
- The turnover of employees is 8.4%, compared to the national average of 15%.
- 44% of positions are part time / term time with 56% being full time
- Attendance figures for the period of April to 31st December 2021 are at 7.94 days lost per employee
- Most employees are aged 40-49 (24%), only 0.3% of employees are aged 16 – 19 years old. 16% of employees are aged 60 and over
- On average we use the full time equivalent of 36 agency staff per month

- There were 480 new starters to positions, with 35.4% of those positions being filled by existing employees within the council. The highest number of starters were from the age group 30 – 39 at 25.2%
- We had 339 leavers to positions with just over half (54%) of those positions being vacated by employees leaving the council. The majority of leavers to positions (28.9%) were in Highways and Environmental Services – Contract Facilities, which include Catering and Cleaning. Community Support Services closely followed with 29.6%, with the majority of position leavers being in Support Services, i.e. Care positions.
- 1.6% of employees disclosed that they had a disability, however 44.5% of employees have either chosen not to disclose this information or have not completed the equality information, which could mean that this figure could be an under estimate
- 1.1% of employees are from a minority group, but again, 44.4% of employees have either chosen not to disclose this information or have not completed the equality questionnaire, which could mean that that this figure could be an under estimate
- Between the period of October 2020 and September 2021, 67% of employees have received at least one formal one to one meeting with their line manager, with 39% of those employees receiving at least 3 one to ones in that period
- 18.75% of employees classify themselves as Welsh speaking and listening level 3 – intermediate and above, with 6.13% of employees being proficient (level 5) in speaking and listening in Welsh. 16.75% of employees have chosen not to specify their Welsh language levels as this data is optional

Opportunities and Challenges ahead

There are a number of significant challenges and opportunities ahead for the council. It is crucial that we have employees who can overcome these obstacles and take advantage of the opportunities in order to maximise the benefits for Denbighshire's residents. The obstacles and challenges include the following:

- **Recruitment and Retention**

There are a number of services within the council which rely on specific skill sets from the workforce, which can be challenging due to shortages within the labour market. In addition to those pressures, as a council we are faced with differences in pay and grading systems between Local Authorities on a regional level and also public versus the private sector pay which can leave some positions vacant or impossible to fill.

- **Post Covid Recovery – New Ways of Working**

Since March 2020, the councils "office based staff" have been instructed to work from home where possible, which has resulted in a significant change in how "office based staff" carry out their roles. This new way of working has created a number of positive benefits to the council and its staff and we want to look at how some of the new working practices can be maintained and embedded in the future.

- **Senior Leadership Structure**

The new Chief Executive has been in post for 6 months. During this time, three positions within SLT have become vacant. These vacancies have provided the opportunity to review the structure to meet and deliver the vision and aims of the new CEO.

- **New Corporate Plan**

The existing plan concludes in 2022. As a council, we are in the process of creating our new Corporate Plan for 2022 – 2027, which will ensure we are making a significant and lasting difference to the people and the communities within Denbighshire.

- **County Council Elections**

Denbighshire has 47 county councillors, representing 30 electoral divisions. In May 2022, the County Council Elections will take place and the Council will need to manage this process and welcome the newly elected members into the Council. Post-election, there will be a training and development programme in place for new members, led by Democratic Services, with a requirement to ensure the workforce is aligned to this training in order to strengthen officer / member relationships.

- **Collaboration and Transformation**

There will be opportunities to do things differently in a more proactive, preventative and transformational way across the council and with other public bodies, sectors and organisations in order to improve service delivery. The workforce will be encouraged to develop new skills whilst maximising on these opportunities.

- **Financial Considerations**

The Council needs to deliver a balanced budget, whilst the recent draft settlement notice from Welsh Government indicates a positive settlement of 9.2%, it is lower than the national average of 9.4%. Welsh Government have advised that there are a number of new responsibilities for the council included in this settlement figure. However, not all of the responsibilities have clear funding consequentials.

- **Other considerations**

Succession planning and skills gaps are a concern in some areas. Our workforce will need to learn new skills with the changing landscape and the requirement to deliver new services, which will impact us both now and in the future. Ensuring attendance management will continue to be a key priority for the council, ensuring we reduce days lost through sickness absence.

Risks and Priorities Analysis

Recruitment and Retention Risks

- Significant recruitment and retention issues in a number of services, which has been identified and placed on the Corporate Risk Register as a major concern.
- Wider pool of competition in terms of employers/employment available due to agile working opportunities
- Shortage of professional and technical staff due to agile working opportunities now available
- Difficulty in recruiting to Welsh essential posts in some departments, impacting service provision
- There are a number of key posts within the council where the knowledge will be lost if current post holder leaves the council
- A number of departments are unable to recruit using traditional methods for certain roles
- Increased need for agency workers and consultancies are required to fill recruitment gaps
- Agency worker costs are increasing

Development of Staff

- Workload and conflicting priorities, often prevent employees engaging with learning or development
- Colleges and Education providers have limited subjects and courses available
- Shortage of aspiring managers in some services
- Limited programmes available for future Managers and Leaders

Succession Planning

- Limited succession planning in service areas
- Grant funding limits the ability to succession plan
- Large pay gap between management and employees in some services
- Large pay gap from senior management to Head of Service level

Resources to Deliver Projects and Legislation

- Lack of resources to deliver funding grants
- Limited resources to implement Welsh Government Legislation in some service areas
- Lack of technical experience may impact strategic project delivery

Workforce Plan Delivery Aims

In order to ensure that we have the workforce in place to deliver the best possible services to our residents, we will be working towards the following workforce plan delivery aims:

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1	Leadership and Management Development
2	Recruitment and Retention of Talent
3	Enable an Engaged, Empowered and High Performing Workforce
4	Develop a Flexible and Agile Workforce
5	Supporting Health and Wellbeing

1 Leadership and Management Development

To achieve organisational success, we recognise that the quality of our leaders and managers within the council is paramount. We want to continue to develop leadership capacity throughout the organisation so that our leaders and managers are supported and equipped to embed the Chief Executive's five principles, whilst facing the challenges ahead and manage the performance of employees in order to achieve the next Corporate Plan. Our aim is to create an improved culture, a 'One Council' approach, with strong visible leadership and effective management in order to ensure high levels of customer service for our communities.

Currently we:

- Offer a range of ILM Leadership and Management qualifications.
- Offer bite-sized online training sessions and e-learning modules on a variety of topics.
- Hold regular employee roadshows with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the council.
- Facilitate a Leadership Conference for SLT, Middle Managers and HR Business Partners.
- Use the one to one form to have open discussions with managers and aspiring managers about their development.

What we need to do:

- Develop a People Strategy to embrace a one council approach and give clear strategic direction for the organisation.
- Review and develop the approaches to Leadership and Management development within the organisation (for all levels)

- Improve our succession planning activity which will help reduce recruitment spending, enabling the council to manage the recruitment in-house.
- Implement the outcomes from the middle managers training needs analysis.
- Continue to refine information sharing, networking and communication across the council.
- Introduce a tailored induction for managers to ensure they have the knowledge to carry out their role well.

2 Recruitment and Retention of Talent

It is important, that as a council we both attract and retain employees who have the required attitude, skills and behaviours to be able to deliver the best outcomes for the residents of Denbighshire.

Currently we:

- Offer a competitive employment package, which helps the council attract and retain employees.
- Promote equality and diversity through the 'Disability Confident' scheme
- Promote a guaranteed interview scheme for Veterans.
- Are known as a voluntary 'national living wage' employer which ensures that our employees are paid the national living wage.
- Use Career Pathways to address workforce deficit and grow our own.
- Operate numerous funded strategies and schemes, which include Kickstart and Work Start.

What we need to do:

- Review the Recruitment Policy and processes for advertising, recruiting, selecting and on-boarding staff to ensure that the council is viewed as an employer of choice within the region and beyond, in order to attract candidates with the right skills and abilities to meet our future workforce needs.

- Work with individual services to address their recruitment and retention issues which have been identified within their service workforce plans.
- Continue to refine the career pathway process and encourage more pathways throughout the council.
- Explore different approaches such as apprenticeship recruitment, graduate placements and traineeships in order to address the workforce gaps through targeted recruitment procedures.
- Continue to implement the Welsh Language Strategy actions for recruitment.
- Continue to work closely with Community Support Services (CSS), investing in a programme of work which will focus on recruitment, succession planning and relieving the pressure that hard to fill vacancies place on services.

3 Enable an Engaged, Empowered and High Performing Workforce

In order to deliver the council's priorities, a high performing and engaged workforce will be essential. We want to foster a 'One Council' culture where good work is recognised, employees are respectful, professional and thrive in an enjoyable environment. Employees will be self-motivated with their values aligned to the goals of the organisation and enthusiastic about achieving the best for residents.

Currently we:

- Recognise the need to invest in the development of our employees in order to enhance their skills and performance.
- Operate an enhanced employee benefits package.
- Ensure employee consultation processes are in place with the recognised trade unions.
- Facilitate consultation and feedback via 'Staff Council' in order to improve service delivery.
- Conduct regular one to one meetings with all staff at all levels to support employee wellbeing and set clear and manageable objectives.
- Improve team performance through the use of away days and team building exercises, aimed at fostering good working relationships.
- Target interventions, such as mediation or coaching for early intervention of interpersonal workplace issues.
- Maintain good working relationships with the Trade Unions on all employment matters.

What we need to do:

- Maintain high standards of professionalism with strong leadership, accountable management and excellent front line customer service.
- Support the career and development aspirations of our workforce, combining business needs with personal career ambitions wherever possible.
- Source varied learning and development opportunities, highlighting these in one central location for all staff in all departments to access.
- Undertake a Training Needs Analysis of Services to ensure that training is targeting the business needs.
- Continue to use the Staff Council Forum as an ongoing method to capture feedback around key topics.
- Improve communication methods for all employees within the council, especially those who don't have access to an email address.
- Explore additional employee benefits which could be added to the current package.

4 Develop a Flexible and Agile Workforce

Our aim is to create a 'One Council' approach, with a workforce that works together and shares organisational knowledge to respond to customer demand. Agile and flexible working will support a culture whereby working across the organisation in different teams and services will be encouraged in order to share the knowledge and expertise which will ultimately improve service delivery.

Currently we:

- Use of a wide range of supportive policies to enable employees to balance work and life commitments.
- Look to implement New Ways of Working through various work streams.
- Make use of effective partnerships and networks to ensure that the public sector works together by targeting shared resources where possible.
- Ensure that employee consultation and the flow of information is enhanced through online access to cabinet and council meetings.
- Utilise team building and team away days.
- Encourage secondment opportunities in order to utilise in-house talent sharing knowledge, skills and expertise within other departments.

What we need to do:

- Further enhance the sharing of knowledge and information throughout the organisation.
- Explore methods to develop staff further and increase mobility, using skills and knowledge in other departments when required.
- Utilise opportunities for employees to work in collaborative networks enhancing service delivery, sharing of information and communication.
- Ensure those developmental and learning opportunities are available for those harder to reach employees on lower grades / part time employees.
- Finalise and review policies and procedures along with improved ICT approaches to facilitate a more agile and flexible way of working.
- Ensure employees have the tools and technology that they need.

5 Supporting Health and Wellbeing

In order to achieve all of the above 4 aims, the health and wellbeing of our workforce is the most important. Wellbeing will contribute to engagement and productivity, therefore we need a healthy workforce, who work in a safe environment within a culture of encouragement.

Currently we:

- Follow a recently revised Attendance at Work Procedure which has an emphasis on early intervention and strong management of sickness.
- Make use of a sickness absence management dashboard which is updated daily.
- Hold regular attendance meetings with managers and Head of Service to discuss individual cases, early intervention and support.
- The council recently signed the Time to Change Pledge, which outlines our commitment to changing the way we think and act about mental health at work.
- Recently implemented a new Mental Health Strategy and an in depth action plan.
- As a council, we have an in-house Occupational Health Department, who support the Attendance at Work Procedure and manage the referrals made by managers.
- Encourage open and honest conversations between managers and employees in regards to mental health and wellbeing in order to access timely support.

- Trained a large proportion of SLT and Middle Managers on Mental Health Awareness.
- The council now have a large number of employees at all levels who are trained in being Mental Health First Aiders.
- Regularly promotes health activities such as annual flu jabs, blood pressure checks and free eye tests.
- Utilise benefits, such as purchasing additional leave and leisure discounts to aid wellbeing.
- Offer an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is available to all employees.

What we need to do:

- Ensure we have a number of wellbeing champions in the council to ensure the workforce are fully supported and an environment where wellbeing champions can support and coach each other.
- Distribute a wellbeing survey to quantify the success of the recent mental health strategy and action plan. The survey results will also assist with any interventions required in the short term.
- Provide additional training to both new and existing managers on attendance management so that they are able to implement the Attendance at Work Procedure and offer early, preventative and on-going support to employees.
- Continue to expand on the employee benefit offer for all employees in order to support wellbeing.

Workforce Plan Responsibility

The Denbighshire County Council Workforce Plan belongs to the whole council and this will need to be embedded throughout the organisation, therefore responsibility is distributed.

The Workforce Plan which is a core business process will form part of the wider HR People Strategy and align changing organisational needs.

Each Service will need to populate the Corporate Delivery Action Plan based on their individual Service Workforce Plans. The Delivery Plan will be monitored by each Head of Service and HR Business Partner on a regular basis to ensure the priorities are clear, gaps and challenges are addressed and any opportunities are maximised.

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Monitoring the Workforce Plan



Regular basis



Head of Service, Senior Managers
and HR Business Partner



Formal Delivery Action plan

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Action		Context	Update	RAG Status	Completion Date
Leadership and Management Development					
1.0	Develop a People Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the culture, standards and expectations of the workforce. Values CEO Principles 			31.12.2022
1.1	Review Leadership Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Strategy Review Leadership and Management Development 			31.03.2023
1Page 63	1.2	Improve our succession planning activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal Plans within the Service Action Plans Increase our own recruitment “pool” Grow our own employees Opportunities to develop and progress 		
	1.3	Implement the outcomes from the middle managers training needs analysis for New Ways of Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upskilling managers for NWOW Manager / Employee Guides Creation of new learning / training (i.e. agile working) 		
	1.4	Review of networking and communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Conferences Cascading of information 1-2-1’s, Team Briefings etc 		
	1.5	Introduce a tailored induction for all new managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting and upskilling new managers on policies / procedures / tools and systems. Creating a “Denbighshire Way” / “One Council” approach 		

Recruitment and Retention of Talent					
2.0	Review Recruitment Policy and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review our Adverts and Application Process Review our On-boarding process Review our benefits and promotion Review our methods of advertising – including social media Review our website 			
2.1	Individual recruitment and retention issues which have been identified within-service workforce plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HOS and HRBP's to address and look at solutions for service issues HRBP's & Recruitment Specialist to explore various solutions, tailored for individual needs. 			
2.2	Review vacancies and promote Career Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all vacant posts as they arise Upskill managers on career pathways Support the creation of pathways within services 			
2.3	Explore different approaches to recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeships Graduate Placements Traineeships 			
2.4	Employee benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current benefits (in line with Mental Health Strategy also) Seek additional benefits Promotion of ALL employee benefits to new and existing staff 			
2.5	Implement Welsh Language Strategy actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HOS to review levels of Welsh standard against job roles Promote Welsh course for different levels 			
2.6	Support CSS in a programme of work to support their workforce recruitment and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the actions agreed in the project plan Continuously amend and add to the project plan 			

Enable a High Performing, Engaged and Empowered Workforce					
3.0	One Council Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of the Council’s Values • Promotion of the CEO’s 5 principles • Promote high standards of professionalism • Promote Strong leadership and accountable management • Promote Excellent Customer Service 			
3.1	Support career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Training discussions at 1-2-1’s • Offer in-house training courses • Support formal external training where applicable 			
3.2	Learning and development opportunities in one central location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access external funding streams • Work with services and partners • Source tailored needs • Equal opportunity for all employees 			
3.3	Encourage Training Needs Analysis with services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support training and development • Identify skills gaps and identify interventions 			
3.4	Promote the Staff Council Forum as an ongoing method to capture feedback around key topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Council to meet quarterly • Encourage Service participation / reps • Encourage 2 ways feedback and communication 			
Develop a Flexible and Agile Workforce					
4.0	Review current Flexible Working Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current policy • Create new version • Create Guidance to accompany policy • Include ICT guides / processes where applicable • Publicise policy on Recruitment website 			
4.1	Ensure employees have the tools and technology that they need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with individual Services to identify potential gaps • Carryout relevant H&S Risk Assessments with employees 			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting the workforce to enable workforce to adapt to the new ways of working 			
Supporting Health and Wellbeing					
5.0	Support Employees health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote mental health and wellbeing tools and support available for employees Promote mental health and well-being website 			
5.1	Identify a number of Wellbeing Champions in DCC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach Staff Council to carry out the Champion roles Ask for volunteers within each Service Ensure Champions complete additional training session Create a networking environment for Champions to meet and feedback experiences 			
5.2	Distribute a Wellbeing Survey for all employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an online survey to assess current position Create another survey in 12months to assess whether interventions/Time to Change Pledge 			31.03.2022
					31.03.2023
5.3	Attendance Management Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Business Partner / Specialist to train new and existing managers on Attendance Management The full range of support is highlighted to managers Data reports and absence dashboard demonstrations will be given 			
Individual Service Action Plans					
BIM					

Communities and Customers					
Education and Children’s Services					
Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services					
Legal , Democratic and HR					

CSS					
Highways and Environmental Services					
Finance and Property					

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	17 March 2022
Lead Officer	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Report author	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Scrutiny Work Programme

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.

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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

Progress on Committee Resolutions

- 4.9 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 has not met since the Committee's last meeting on 27 January, and is not scheduled to meet again until after the local authority elections in May 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 its 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.

Contact Officer:

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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	<i>Cllr. Richard Mainon</i>	1. Staff Absences and Turnover in Denbighshire during 2020/21 & 2021/22	To examine the data on: (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); (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); (iii) Denbighshire's position in relation to staff absences and staff turnover in comparison to other local authorities and public bodies in Wales; (iv) the findings of the recent Workforce Planning exercise; and (v) the effect of COVID-19 on staff absences and turnover during this period and its consequential impact on customer services	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 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.	<i>Gary Williams/Louise Dougal</i>	<i>By SCVCG September 2021 (rescheduled December 2021)</i>
28 April (meeting not being held due to pre-election period)						

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
9 June	TBC: pre-meeting training session for Committee members on Performance & Risk Management (incl. WBFQ Act)					Feb 2022
	TBC	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
	TBC	2. Council Performance Self-Assessment	To present the Council's self-assessment of its 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	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
<i>No further items to be included for the above meeting</i>						
14 July	TBC	1. Curriculum for Wales [Education]	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 (rescheduled by SCVCG Jan 2022)
	TBC	2. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation [Education]	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 (rescheduled by SCVCG Jan 2022)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
	TBC	3. Social Care Market Stability Report	To examine the Regional Market Stability Report based on the Population Needs Assessment as per the requirements of the SSWB Act	To make recommendations in relation to the final version of the document to ensure that there is stability within each of the market sectors to allow sufficient quality provision to meet the future care and support needs of the local population	Ann Lloyd	February 2022
29 September	TBC	1. <i>Provisional External Examinations and Teacher Assessments [Education]</i> (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>	Geraint Davies/GwE	July 2021
	TBC	2. Hafan Deg, Rhyl (tbc) Representatives from KL Care to be invited to attend	<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> (the report to include an updated Well-being Impact Assessment)	<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>	Ann Lloyd/Katie Newe/Ben Chandler	September 2019 (Rescheduled October 2020, January & March 2021 due to COVID-19)
	TBC	3. School Categorisation according to Welsh—medium Provision Education	<i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i>	<i>Identification of potential changes to the Council's education policies and any associated costs and budget implications</i>	Geraint Davies/James Curran	January 2021
	TBC	4. Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008 Education	<i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i>	<i>Identification of potential changes to the Council's learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications</i>	Geraint Davies/Ian Land	January 2021

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
	TBC	3. Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020	The identification of actions that will support and ensure the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities relating to Housing, Environment, Young People and Resilient Communities and ultimately the Corporate Plan	Emlyn Jones/Angela Loftus/Jane Abbott	January 2022
	TBC	4. 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
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

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
	TBC	2. Library Service Standards 2021-22	To consider the results of the WG's annual evaluation of the Council's Library Service and receive information on how the Service has progressed and adapted its service provision during the year	Identification of any slippages in performance in order to formulate recommendations to redress the situation and ensure that the Service delivers the Council's Corporate Plan and its priorities in relation to Young People, Resilient and Connected Communities	<i>Liz Grieve/Bethan Hughes</i>	<i>January 2022</i>

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<i>Dolwen Residential Care Home</i>	<i>To consider the Task and Finish Group's recommendations relating to the future provision of services at Dolwen Residential Care Home, Denbigh</i>	<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>	<i>Task and Finish Group/Phil Gilroy/Abbe Harvey</i>	<i>July 2018 (currently on-hold due to COVID-19)</i>
Post 16 provision at Rhyl College (suggested for scrutiny during service challenge) Date tbc following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions	<i>To examine the post 16 provision at Rhyl College</i>	<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>	Rhyl College (and invite Geraint Davies & John Evans – post 16 officer from DCC)	<i>By SCVCG July 2020</i>

Information/Consultation Reports

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
<p>March 2022 & September 2022</p> <p>[Information]</p>	<p><i>Council Performance Update Q1 & 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>Feb/May/Sept/November each year</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"> (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; (ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services; and (iii) details of complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and the lessons learnt from them. <p>Report to include example(s) of complaints and compliment(s) received.</p> <p><i>Consideration of the information provided will assist the Committee to determine whether any issues merit detailed scrutiny</i></p>	<p>Kevin Roberts/Ann Lloyd</p>	<p>November 2018</p>
<p>Information Report (June 2020 rescheduled to December 2022)</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 & then Jan & Dec 2021 at officers request due to COVID-19 pressures)</p>
<p>Information Report (as soon as available)</p>	<p>Use made of properties, bed & breakfast accommodation and hotels located in Denbighshire by other local</p>	<p>(i) To understand the extent of the use by neighbouring local authorities and those further afield of properties in Denbighshire for housing</p>	<p>Emlyn Jones/Angela Loftus/Jane</p>	<p>January 2022</p>

	<p>authorities to house homeless individuals and families (and Denbighshire County Council's use of properties located out of county for the same purpose)</p>	<p>homeless individuals and families and its potential impact on the Denbighshire's tourist industry and local economy. Also the extent of Denbighshire's use of out of county properties to house its homeless individuals and families and whether it's on a par with other local authorities</p> <p>(ii) To determine whether the county is adversely affected by this practice in comparison to other local authority areas</p>	<p>Abbot/Ann Lloyd/Mark Dixon/Nigel Jones</p>	
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Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

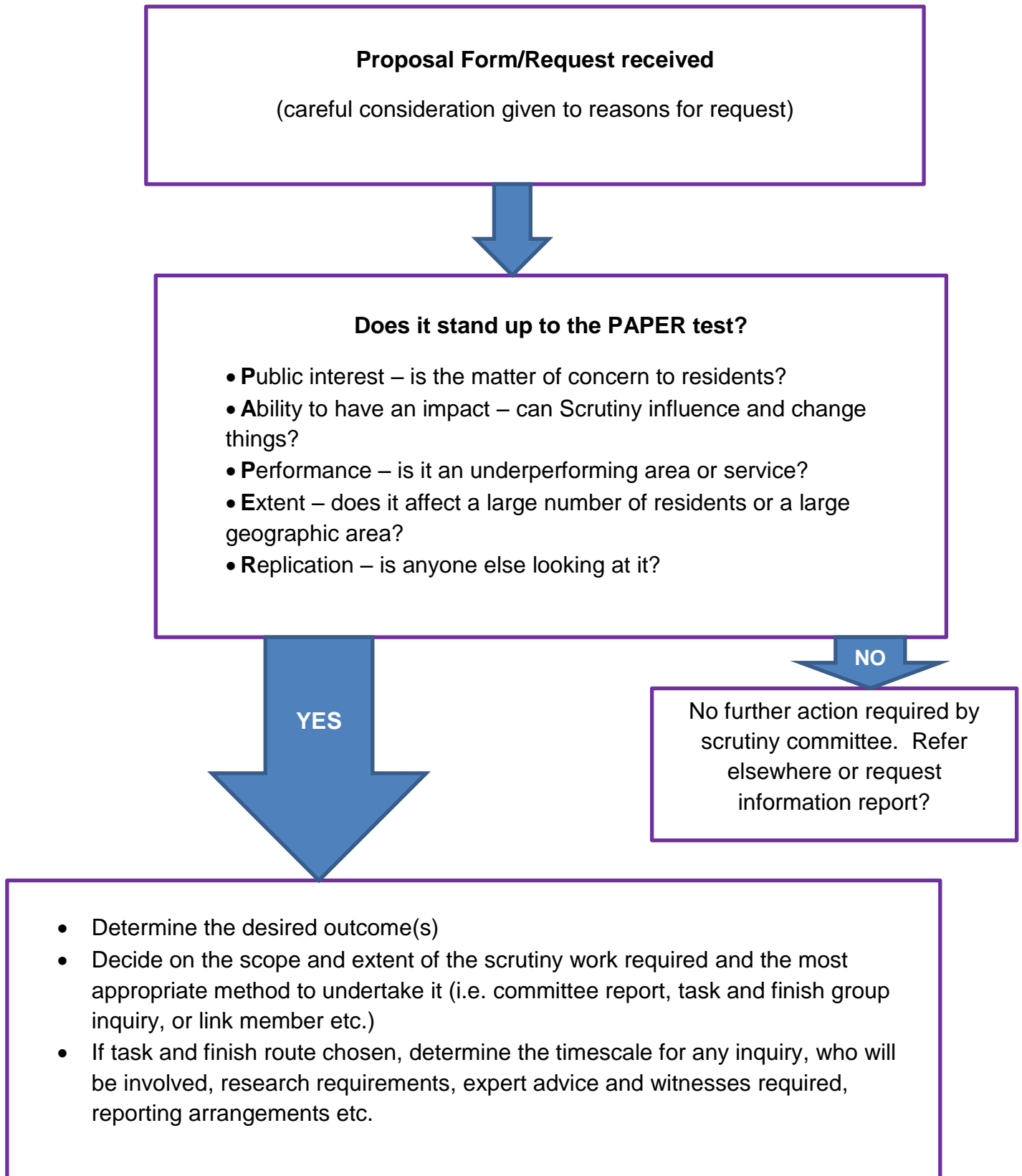
Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
17 March	3 March	9 June	23 May (due to extended B/H)	14 July	30 June

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

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
12 April	1	Updated Business Case for the Household Waste Collection Service Change	To seek Cabinet approval of the updated business case	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 / Lowri Roberts
	3	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
	4	Reactive Maintenance Framework for Schools and Non School Properties	To seek approval for the award of successful contractors onto the Reactive Maintenance Framework for Schools and Non-school buildings	Yes	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / David Lorey / Mark Cassidy
	5	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Councillor Julian Thompson-Hill / Steve Gadd
	6	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
7 June	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
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator
26 July	1	North Wales Consultancy Framework	To seek approval of the Business Case to set up a regional Consultancy Framework to be used by the six North Wales authorities with Denbighshire County Council as the lead authority	Yes	Gary Williams / Tania Silva / Sion Evans
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Steve Gadd
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for	Tbc	Scrutiny Coordinator

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
		Cabinet's attention		

FUTURE ITEMS

22 Nov	Council Performance Update – July to September	To consider the Council's performance in delivering against the council's strategic plan and services	Iolo McGregor
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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>April</i>	29 March	<i>June</i>	20 May	<i>July</i>	12 July

Updated 04/03/2022 - KEJ
Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
27 January 2022	5. PROGRESS ON DELIVERING DENBIGHSHIRE'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY	<p>RESOLVED that, subject to the above observations and the provision of the additional information requested during the course of the discussion to –</p> <p>(a) acknowledge the work undertaken to date to implement the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan, along with the progress made thus far with its delivery, and</p> <p>(b) request that a further progress report on the Action Plan's delivery be presented to the Committee during the autumn of 2022.</p>	<p>Lead Members and officers informed of the Committee's recommendations.</p> <p>The additional information requested has been circulated to Committee members in the 'Information Brief' document.</p> <p>(b) A progress report on the Action Plan's delivery has been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting on 24 November 2022 (see Appendix 1)</p>
	6. LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE	<p>RESOLVED that, subject to the above observations –</p> <p>(a) to acknowledge the efforts of the county's libraries to adapt and deliver an excellent service to Denbighshire residents during the Covid-19 pandemic;</p> <p>(b) to receive and note the information provided on the Library Service's performance in delivering against the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards</p>	<p>Lead Member and Officers advised of the Committee's recommendations.</p>

		<p>during 2020/21 along with the update on developments to date during 2021/22, and</p> <p>(c) to request that a further report on the Service's performance in delivering against the Welsh Public Library Standards during 2021/22 be submitted to the Committee in January 2023.</p>	<p>(c) A report on the Service's performance during 2021/22 has been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for presentation in January 2023 (see Appendix 1).</p>
	<p>7. REDUCTION OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS AND CARBON REDUCTION IN THE SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE</p>	<p>RESOLVED that subject to the above comments, concerns and observations to request that the Cabinet on behalf of the Council write to the Welsh Government seeking it to –</p> <p>(a) work with local authorities across Wales in a bid to reduce and eradicate the practice of using single use plastics and non-recyclable goods in the supply, preparation and serving of school meals, and</p> <p>(b) provide sufficient financial resources to all local authorities to enable them to realise the above objectives, facilitate carbon reduction measures within their School Catering Services whilst securing the delivery of a sustainable school meals service.</p>	<p>Lead Members and officers informed of the Committee's recommendations.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee is scheduled to present a report detailing the Committee's recommendations to Cabinet at its meeting on 15 March 2022. The report (and webcast in due course) can be seen by following link below: https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=281&MIId=6463&LLL=0</p>