

To: Members of the Communities
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 1 December 2023

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2023** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**.

Yours sincerely

G. Williams
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Pages 3 - 4)

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 (Pages 5 - 16)

To receive the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 19 October 2023 (copy enclosed)

5 HOUSING RENT INCREASE AND BUDGETS 2024 / 25 (Pages 17 - 34)

To consider a report by the Lead Officer: Community Housing (copy attached) on the process for determining the recommendation on the level of weekly rent increase for Community Housing tenants.

6 RHYL REGENERATION PROGRAMME AND GOVERNANCE (Pages 35 - 40)

To consider a report by the Corporate Director: Environment and Economy (copy attached) examining the effectiveness of the Programme Board's work in delivering the regeneration programme to date.

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 41 - 60)

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.

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Huw Williams (Chair)

Michelle Blakeley-Walker
James Elson
Jon Harland
Carol Holliday
Alan James

Councillor Karen Anne Edwards (Vice-Chair)

Brian Jones
Delyth Jones
Merfyn Parry
Cheryl Williams

COPIES TO:

All Councillors for information
Press and Libraries
Town and Community Councils

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

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

Denbighshire County Council

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

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)**

Signed

Date

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

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COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE on Thursday, 19 October 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Karen Edwards (Vice-Chair), James Elson, Jon Harland, Carol Holliday, Alan James, Brian Jones, Delyth Jones, Merfyn Parry, Cheryl Williams and Huw Williams (Chair).

Lead Member – Lead Member for Local Development and Planning, Councillor Win Mullen-James was in attendance at the Committee's invitation for agenda item 7.

Lead Member – Lead Member of Environment and Transport, Councillor Barry Mellor was in attendance at the Committee's invitation for agenda items 5 & 6.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (GW), Councillor and Chair of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Task and Finish Group (PS), Corporate Director: Economy and Environment (TW), Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services (EJ), Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager (MJ), Project Manager: Corporate Programme Office (KM), Strategic Planning and Housing Manager (AL), Project Manager (RV), Scrutiny Co-Ordinator (RE) and Senior Committee Administrator (KJ) and Committee Administrator (NH)

Observers: Councillors Jeanette Chamberlain- Jones, Bobby Feeley, Huw Hilditch-Roberts and Andrea Tomlin.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Michelle Blakeley-Walker.

Councillor Brian Jones had notified the Chair that, due to a prior appointment, he would be unable to attend the meeting from the outset but would be joining later.

Prior to proceeding with the agenda's business the Chair advised members that, in response to a request from the Lead Member for Environment and Transport, he would be varying the order of business on the agenda to enable both of the Lead Member's reports to be considered on a consecutive basis. Therefore, business item 7, 'Waste Service Remodelling Project Update' would be dealt with as item 6 with the 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment' item becoming business item 7. He thanked officers in attendance for accommodating the changes to the business schedule.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following councillors declared personal interests:

Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts – Business item 5, ‘Review of Car Park Tariffs’ (as a business owner/operator in two towns in Denbighshire.

Councillors Alan James and Merfyn Parry – Business item 7, ‘Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment’ as both were members, Councillor James also being the Vice-Chair, of the Task and Finish Group whose report would be presented to the Committee under this particular business item.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items of an urgent nature had been raised with the Chair or the Scrutiny coordinator prior to the commencement of the meeting.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 September 2023 were submitted. The Committee:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

Matters arising

Page 8, ‘Minutes’ - the Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised that the membership of the Flood Risk Management Task and Finish Group had recently been finalised and that arrangements had been made for it to hold its inaugural meeting on 23 November 2023.

5 REVIEW OF CAR PARK TARIFFS

The Lead Member for Highways and the Environment introduced a report (previously circulated) on the proposed changes to the Council’s Car Park Tariffs Policy and associated tariff structures.

The Lead Member highlighted the well documented pressures on the Council’s budget and explained that the proposed increases in parking charges was an avenue to bring monies into the Council.

The purpose of the report was to explain the proposed tariff increases for Council car parks; changes to car park charging periods, and the potential introduction of charges in some car parks that were currently free.

The Head of Planning, Public Protect and Countryside Services reiterated that the proposed changes to car parking tariffs were part of a Corporate decision on savings and were a way of bringing income into the Council. The proposals also including reviewing payment options available in car parks and also a revision of the hours in which the Council would be asking for payment.

The Council’s car parking tariffs had not been reviewed since 2016 therefore, as a Service it was felt reasonable to review them at this time due to the current financial

climate. It was also stated that the proposed car parking tariff changes would be a positive contribution to the Council's financial situation.

The decision to impose the proposed changes to car parking tariffs would ultimately under delegated powers be the decision on the Head of Service however, it was stated that officers would work closely with Members to gain their thoughts and to engage with the public. Another part of the process would be for officers to work with the Communications Team to develop an Engagement Plan for various groups who would be most affected by the changes.

It was proposed to continue to offer various free parking initiatives. These included free parking after 3pm in all town centre pay and display car parks from late November until the 31 December every year. The small areas of free, short stay parking that were present in some pay and display car parks would also remain. Finally, the Council would continue to provide 5 free parking days each year for every City, Town and Community where pay and display car park facilities were in operation.

A Well-being Impact Assessment (WBIA) was attached to the report for members' consideration.

The Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager (TPRSM) guided Members through the key points of the report as follows –

- Car park tariffs were previously reviewed in 2016.
- In considering the tariff increases the Council considered the tariffs charged by other North Wales County Councils and the amount of inflation from 2016 to 2023, including an allowance for `future proofing` ahead of continuing high levels of inflation.
- Car Park charges currently applied from 8am until 5pm. It was proposed that the Council extend this period, so that charges applied from 8am until 11pm.
- It was proposed to increase parking permits costs as detailed in appendix D (attached to the report).
- The proposal included the removal of the 30-minute tariff, Denbighshire County Council were currently the only Council who offered this tariff.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report and questions were invited from members.

Members queried the maintenance of car parks as was agreed at the time of the last review of the tariffs in 2016. Members raised concerns about the general appearance of the car parks in their ward areas.

The Head of Planning, Public Protect and Countryside Services stated that there was an investment plan in place, with a revised investment plan currently being compiled for the 5-year period from 2024 to 2029. They would be happy to present this to the Committee at a future meeting. There were many examples of where

investments in car parks had been made including the installation of payment machines which included paying by card, cash and contactless. There had been a £2 million investment in car parks to date.

Members questioned that the report did not give any details on overnight parking charges and stated that this would be beneficial for motor home owners. The Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services acknowledged that there was an increase in demand for overnight parking for motor home owners and consideration would be given to this.

Members questioned the frequency of the review of car park tariffs and queried if 7 years was the standard review cycle. The TPRSM stated that at the last review in 2016 the tariffs were increased significantly and therefore it was agreed that there would not be a review for a number of years following this, as there were costs associated with implementing an increase in charges i.e. the reprogramming of all pay and display machines. However, due to current inflation rates there was a need to review tariffs more frequently.

Members expressed concerns regarding the removal of the 30 minute tariff stating that the public took advantage of this tariff when visiting local high streets. The TPRSM stated that the 30 minute tariff was debated during the proposal process and the removal of the tariff was agreed. There was free short stay parking on all high streets in Denbighshire. It was also stated that data collected indicated that there was not a large proportion of the public who used the 30 minute tariff.

Members referred to the Well-being Impact Assessment and referred to a survey conducted on the effect of parking fees on local businesses on the high street and requested further detail on this. The Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services stated that they wanted to engage and have conversations with local businesses on the high street to explain to them why the Council was proposing to increase parking tariffs and how best to promote the free parking spaces and initiatives that were in place.

Members questioned if it would be possible, if introducing charging after 5pm, for the tariff from 5pm onwards to be at a lower rate. It was felt that the introduction of a blanket tariff for day and evening could adversely affect community groups and events etc. The TPRSM stated that currently there were no plans to decrease the tariffs after 5pm however, this could be considered.

Members queried the electrical car charging ports and questioned who had paid for them. Members continued to question if when an electric car was using the charging ports, if they also had to pay for parking and who received the money from this. In response the TPRSM informed the Committee that there were currently two projects in place. Firstly, 8 car parks across the county were instated with electrical car charging ports, and these were funded by a grant from the UK Government and Denbighshire capital funding. The daily management of the car parks with charging ports was undertaken by the contracted company. The income generated from the

charging ports was split between the contracted company and the Council. The second project which was mainly in Council office car parks and also included some public car parks was funded by a Welsh Government grant and Denbighshire received the income from these. It was stated that users of the electric charging ports paid for parking and the use of the ports separately.

Members questioned if there would be an increase in the number of parking enforcement officers in line with the increase in the hours parking charges would apply. The TPRSM stated that there would be a need to extend parking enforcement work, the details of how this would be managed were currently being refined.

Members commented on the impact that the free after 3pm parking had on local high streets and queried if there was any data on the impact of it. The Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services stated that there was no current data available on this however, there had been feedback received from businesses which had been positive.

The Chair thanked officers for their report and members for a comprehensive debate. At the conclusion of the discussion officers agreed to explore further the following suggestions put forward by members during the discussion:

- the introduction of discounted/cheaper tariffs for evening parking (i.e. between 5pm and 11pm so as not to disadvantage or discourage people from attending community groups/events)
- the potential of keeping the free 30 minutes parking or introducing a lower tariff for up to 30 minutes
- the potential of having free car parking all day on Saturdays on the run up to Christmas rather than the current practice of after 3pm every day
- to discuss the proposed tariffs for individual car parks with each Member Area Group (MAG) prior to their introduction.

The Chair requested that the draft Denbighshire Car Park Investment Plan be submitted to the Committee before implementation and requested further information on the income and expenditure of car parks be sent to all Committee Members following the meeting.

The TPRSM stated that £1.3 million in income was generated from car parks in Denbighshire to the Council and agreed to circulate an information report to the Committee following the meeting.

At the conclusion of an in-depth discussion the Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) ***subject to further consideration being given to the issues raised and suggestions made during the discussion, to support the proposed***

- increase to parking tariffs and the other proposed changes detailed in the report; and*
- (ii) to request that the draft Denbighshire Car Park Investment Plan 2024-29 be presented to the Committee for consideration in early 2024 prior to approval and adoption.**

At this juncture the order of business was varied by the approval of the Chair, with business item 7, 'Update for Waste Service Remodelling Project' becoming agenda item 6.

6 WASTE SERVICE REMODELLING PROJECT UPDATE

The Lead Member for Highways and the Environment introduced an update report (previously circulated) on the roll out of the new Waste Service Remodelling Project.

The report was to inform the Communities Scrutiny Committee of the current progress of the project and to highlight the risk around the timely approval of the operational permit required for the new Denbigh Waste Transfer Scheme.

The Project's Corporate Executive Team (CET) lead officer explained to Members that the new Waste Service was the biggest operational change delivered by the Council for many years and had been many years in planning to get to this stage.

The new service would include recycled waste being collected weekly in separated containers and residual household waste being collected monthly.

The main issue currently was obtaining the operational permit which required to be granted by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), without this permit the Waste Transfer Station could not operate. It was expected that the permit would be granted in Spring 2024. The Council had submitted the application form for the permit for the Denbigh Waste Transfer Depot in January 2023 however, there had been a delay with NRW issuing permits due to a back log. This had now been resolved, the process which was expected to take up to 4 months to complete was now underway and weekly positive discussions were continuing with NRW. Any concerns raised during these meetings would be escalated immediately to Lead Member and CET Lead Officer level.

The new Waste Service Remodelling Service had a planned roll out from June 2024 with the depot being completed by December 2023.

Going forward there was a focus on recruiting staff and delivering the new containers to all households in the county.

The Project Team would be attending all MAG meetings in February/ March 2024 to give further detail on the roll out of the Project in their areas.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and the Project Executive Lead Officer for their update and questions were welcomed from Members.

Members stated that a recent visit to the new Denbigh waste depot was very beneficial and requested another visit prior to the roll out of the service.

Members queried the change to electric wagons under the new service and questioned who was responsible for the cost of them. The Project Executive lead officer stated that the new service required a whole new fleet of wagons to deal with the kerbside sort containers within the new Recycling Service. However, current residual waste vehicles would still be suitable for delivering that service as the service model was not changing, only the frequency of service provision. Whilst more electric vehicles had been introduced into the fleet, the fleet was not entirely electric as there was a need to ensure robustness for all refuse collection rounds in the county.

Members registered their concerns regarding the potential backlash of complaints from the public that were anticipated and stated that this was not highlighted enough within the report. The Project Executive lead officer assured members that there was an understanding that residents would have some concerns about the change. In the New Year (January 2024) planned communications would be rolled out 6 months before the implementation. Other authorities who already had transitioned to the new model Waste Recycling Service had stated that there were concerns at the start of the roll out. However, once residents understood the new system residents preferred it.

Members questioned the total cost of the roll out of the project. The Project Executive lead officer stated that the Project was costing circa £22 million. Due to the current financial climate predicted costs had increased. £12 million of funding had been given from Welsh Government, with the remainder of the costs being met from within Service reserves and through Prudential Borrowing. It was stated that the cost of running the new service, once fully operational, would be less than the recycling service currently in place.

The Lead Member and officers acknowledged that, at present, the greatest risk to the timely roll-out of the new Service lay with the granting of the permit for the Waste Transfer Station by NRW. Although there was not a Plan 'B' or a contingency plan in place to instigate if there was a delay with the permit's granting, the Lead Member and officers were confident given the regular discussions underway with NRW both locally and nationally that the permit would be granted in time.

Members stated and agreed that there was a need to be positive about the new Waste Service and work with officers to inform the public.

The Chair thanked the Lead Members and the Project Executive lead officer for their report.

Following a detailed discussion, the Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above observations and the answers given to the questions raised -

- (i) to acknowledge the progress made to date with the Project's delivery, including the efforts made to secure the timely approval of the operational permit required for the new Denbigh Waste Transfer Station; and**
- (ii) that as part of its consideration it had read, understood, and taken account of the recently updated Well-being Impact Assessment, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**

7 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT

The Lead Member for Local Development and Planning introduced the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment report (previously circulated) to Members.

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 required that an assessment of accommodation needs for Gypsies and Travellers must be undertaken and submitted to Welsh Government (WG) every 5 years. The Council undertook the assessment between August and October 2021, and this was submitted to WG on 24 December 2021.

Following Cabinet approval and WG submission of the previous Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), a family with an existing need who had previously declined to participate, contacted the Council, and asked to now be included.

Following a report to Cabinet Briefing on 9 January 2023, the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTAA) Task and Finish Group (T&F) was re-established to support work on the new assessment. That T&F Group had now concluded its work and the final report from the Group was attached as appendix 1 to the report. The report provided the conclusions from the work of the T&F Group.

The Chair of the T&F Group outlined the conclusions of the Group and work that had been completed as follows:

- The T&F Group had 4 meetings and the consultants, ORS, conducted interviews with the additional family and undertook a light touch review with the families who had previously engaged with the assessment process to ensure that their findings continued to be pertinent. The T&F Group was satisfied that the correct process had been followed.
- The T&F Group was satisfied as a Group that the findings and recommendations of the assessment were a result of following Welsh Government methodology and applying a robust approach to the work.

- As a Group it was felt that a Member T&F Group with an elected Member from each MAG had worked well, and the approach would be beneficial for future work.

The Lead Member thanked the T&F Group for their hard work and Councillor Scott for his role as Chair.

The Corporate Project Manager reiterated the Council's legal obligations. The Housing (Wales) Act required all Councils to undertake an assessment of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs and submit it to Welsh Government. There was also the responsibility to address any needs identified.

The Project had been led by the Project Board which included Senior Officers and the Lead Member, and all work had been overseen by the T&F Group.

Acknowledging the need identified within the Assessment for residential pitches members queried why a need for transit provision had not been identified. The Lead Member and officers advised that whilst illegal encampments did occur in the county periodically, these were usually for short periods of time and were more effectively managed via a negotiated and tolerated approach. This was also the view of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

The Chair gave thanks for the report and questions were welcomed by Members.

Members commented on the improved process in place and the excellent work that had been completed, which would support the development of the new Local Development Plan (LDP) in due course.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and Officers for the report.

Following a comprehensive discussion, the Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) to endorse the conclusions of the Task and Finish Group that the Welsh Government methodology had been applied appropriately to the analysis of need;***
- (ii) confirmed its support for the approach adopted for the delivery of Denbighshire's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment as being robust and in line with Welsh Government guidance;***
- (iii) to recommend to Cabinet that the revised draft Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment be approved for re-submission to the Welsh Government; and***
- (iv) confirmed that as part of its consideration of the information provided it had read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment, Appendix 3 to the report - completed prior to the first assessment submission in 2021 and reviewed in 2023.***

8 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Coordinator guided members through the Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report (previously circulated).

The next meeting was scheduled for 7 December 2023, proposed for that meeting were four agenda items.

- i. Second Homes and short-term Holiday lets.
- ii. Draft Sustainable Transport Plan.
- iii. Housing Rent Increase and Budgets 2024/2025.
- iv. Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance.

The Scrutiny Co-Ordinator informed the Committee that the 'Second Homes and Short-term Holiday lets' report would not be ready for the December meeting following a discussion with officers, as further guidance on a licensing regime for such properties was awaited from Welsh Government. The Committee consented for it to be rescheduled.

A report on Car Parks Draft Investment Plan 2024 - 2029 would be added to the Forward Work Programme for February/ March 2024.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator encouraged Members if they had concerns on any matters to complete and return the Members Proposal Form (Appendix 2) for deliberation at the next Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting on the 28 November 2023.

The Committee:

***Resolved:* subject to the rescheduling of the above mentioned 'Second Homes and Short-Term Holiday Lets' item, along with the inclusion of the 'Draft Car Park Investment Plan 2024-29' report for early 2024, agreed earlier during the meeting, to confirm the Committee's forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**

9 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Delyth Jones informed members that she had recently represented the Committee at the Education and Children's Services Service Challenge meeting. She was currently awaiting the notes of the meeting. Upon receipt she would brief the Committee on the proceedings.

The Chair thanked officers and members for attending the meeting and closed the meeting.

Meeting concluded at 12.15pm

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|------------------------------|--|
| Report to | Communities Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting | 7 th December 2023 |
| Lead Member / Officer | Councillor Rhys Thomas |
| Head of Service | Liz Grieve Head of Housing & Communities |
| Report author | Geoff Davies, Lead Officer – Community Housing |
| Title | Housing Rent Increase and Budgets 2024 / 25 |

1. What is the report about?

1.1. To consider the process for determining the recommendation on the level of weekly rent increase for Community Housing tenants.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 Pre-decision scrutiny to determine: has the increase being proposed adequately considered - the impact on affordability for households and the impact of other options on Housing investment budgets.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 The committee considers the contents of the report and makes any comments or recommendations to Cabinet.

4. Report details

4.1. Each year the Housing service, which manages the council housing stock through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is required to issue a rent increase notification to our tenants.

4.2. The maximum increase to weekly rents is set by Welsh Government Rent Policy which is based on the September CPI figure each year.

- 4.3. This year CPI was 6.7% and therefore the Minister has recommended a 6.7% maximum increase.
- 4.4. Whilst we understand the any rent increase has to be carefully considered we are also required to ensure that we can maintain and improve our Council housing stock of 3,334 homes to the standard required by the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and our own Corporate Plan.
- 4.5. With a new focus on Net Zero and Affordable Warmth we have been set challenging targets to achieve for our stock which will however ultimately benefit council tenants through higher standards and more energy efficient homes than they have now.
- 4.6. When considering the rent increase last year, Cabinet suggested that they would have preferred to have been presented with a menu of options to consider. Due to significantly rising standards and significantly rising costs, the Housing service now believes that any choice has been taken away from us and we have no option but to seek approval for the maximum increase.
- 4.7. Even with this additional income we are still faced with a challenge to meet the required standards whilst also continuing to deliver much needed new homes.
- 4.8. All other Local Authorities with Housing stock in Wales have indicated that they will be seeking a recommendation to increase rents by the maximum.
- 4.9. Maximising our own income generation is an important factor when seeking to draw down extra grants from the Welsh Government.
- 4.10. A key point in our decision to make this recommendation is to consider the Affordability model used by the service to formally measure whether our rent levels are affordable for households in Denbighshire. Using the respected Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) "Living Rent" Model we have been able to measure rents and can confirm that with the maximum increase allowed our weekly rents remain within the strict affordability limits for earned income of the lowest income households within Denbighshire.
- 4.11. Information on the affordability model and the detailed, wider considerations of investment required to achieve the standards required are contained within appendix 1.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. Housing is a Corporate Priority and the capital program will support the local economy by maximising the local employment, training and supply chain opportunities for local people and businesses

5.2. Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 (WHQS) has working towards a net zero Housing stock as core element.

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

6.1. The Housing Revenue Account is ring fenced and costs of implementation are covered by income through rents and service charges.

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

7.1. The Council appreciates that any increase in weekly rent could have an impact on some of our customers' ability to meet their weekly commitments.

7.2. The increased income is needed to invest in our homes ultimately benefitting our tenants.

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

8.1. The Denbighshire Tenants and Residents Federation (DTARF) have been consulted and the reason for the rent increase and the impact on the HRA business plan has been fully explained to the group.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. A full review of the Housing Stock Business Plan (HSBP) has confirmed that the Plan remains robust and viable. There are sufficient resources to support the management and supervision of the housing service and the investment needs of the stock.

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

10.1. The risk is a failure to follow the Housing Stock Business Plan and to set budgets accordingly could lead to financial concerns and potential intervention by Welsh Government.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Rent policy is determined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. The Housing Revenue Account is ring-fenced by statute.

Housing Rent Setting 2024/2025

Report to consider the annual Housing Rent Increase with a focus on: the impact on Households; the investment in housing stock; the delivery of new homes and service delivery.



1) Introduction

The Council housing service is funded by income from tenant's rents and is managed separately from other council finances.

This income goes into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the costs required to deliver services to tenants and manage and maintain the housing stock is managed by a mix of revenue and capital expenditure.

When setting rent levels, Welsh Government requires social landlords to consider an "assessment of cost efficiencies across the operating cost base, value for money and affordability for tenants".

These factors are discussed in this report along with the considerations given to the balance between the level of increase we should apply and the level of investment required to invest in our stock and services.

We now know we have to achieve new higher standards to support affordable warmth; continue to deliver new homes to support the Council's response to the housing crisis and increased homelessness; and balance this with affordability and support for households in council owned homes.

2) Summary

- With the maximum increase allowed, our weekly rents remain within our affordability measures for those households with the lowest levels of earned income.
- Even with the maximum increase we are face significant budget pressures to be able to achieve the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard
- We can demonstrate the positive impact that investment in our stock has on our households through reduced bills.
- Any rent increase less than the maximum is less investment in our homes.
- Our tenants tell us we provide value for money
- Our tenants tell us the rents we set are fair
- We can demonstrate and show comparison that we use our money well
- Our tenants are satisfied with the services they receive

3) Background

Last year Cabinet suggested they would like different rent increase scenarios to consider, however the strong recommendation from the Housing service this year is that we increase the rent by the maximum allowed by the Minister. This is explained in this report.

A key point is that we have measured our rent levels using a nationally recognised affordability model, with the maximum increase allowed, and can confirm that they remain affordable for the lowest income earners in Denbighshire. [Impact on Household Affordability](#)

We have a number of risk & safety priorities in addition to other requirements we need to adhere to, such as a new Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 2) and delivering on priorities is now no longer a matter of choice. We are required to make difficult decisions in terms of investment in the council housing stock.

Why we are where we are?

Due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, followed by a period of high inflation, which has led to significant cost increases in the building & construction sector, we now face for the first time with backlogs in our improvement programmes compared to our previous level of standards. For example, we have 600 homes in need of replacement kitchens and bathrooms compared to what we would have previously expected to deliver.

In addition, the increased standards specified in WHQS 2 will require us to achieve an EPC energy rating of C75 for all our homes by 31st March 2029. There are further requirements to achieve an EPC energy rating of A and 'net zero' for our housing stock overall at a later date. This will require significantly increased levels of investment to what we have budgeted to date. It is vital to remember that this investment, while a significant cost to us as the Landlord, will immediately benefit our tenants who will be living in an excellent standard of accommodation with a renewed focus on affordable warmth. [Impact of our Investment](#)

The current situation with regards to cost increases (this is estimated to be 40% increase for the building and construction sector) and higher standards to adhere to, places the HRA under significant pressure. It is likely that compromises will have to be made around new build schemes and compliance with WHQS to enable us to remain within manageable borrowing levels.

[Impact on longer term HRA revenue budgeting](#)

Failure to implement the maximum rent increase allowed by the WG Minister would lead to even further pressures on HRA budgets and therefore capital programmes. For example, even a 0.5% deviation from the maximum 6.7% increase would reduce income by nearly £90K next year and for each subsequent year following. By the next deadline date for WHQS compliance this 0.5% deviation would be £358,337 less to spend. This would also mean the potential risk of increasing backlogs in our improvement programmes and it would take us even longer to achieve the new WHQS, to the detriment of our tenants.

| Element | Compliance date |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 3b) In the interim, all homes must meet a minimum of SAP 75 – EPC C | 31 March 2030 |
| 3c) Carbon emissions from homes must be minimised (minimum of EIR 92) | set by the Targeted Energy Pathways |
| 3d) Landlord’s must carry out a Whole Stock Assessment and produce Target Energy Pathways for their homes | 31 March 2027 |

Source WHQS Welsh Government October 2023

4) Impact on Household Affordability

We currently have 72% of households in receipt of some support to meet their weekly rent, either through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs. Any increase in weekly rent charge will be met by the housing costs support for these households (assuming their circumstances did not change).

In addition, we have adopted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Living Rent Model to enable us to assess our rent levels for affordability in relation to household income in the county. This uses the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data from October 2023 on average household incomes in Denbighshire.

- We have used the lowest **30th percentile** of average incomes to reflect the lowest **earned** incomes in the County.
- We set a target for our weekly rent to be no more than **28%** of this lowest average weekly earned income.

Even with a 6.7% increase a household with the lowest third of average earned income would still have a weekly rent less than 28% of this income.

While we aim to ensure that our rent is affordable, we also continue to offer a range of income maximisation support for households. [Advice & Support to Promote Affordability](#)

It is important to add that the Council charges a lower average rent than RSLs who operate in Denbighshire, so our tenants are paying less rent than most other social housing tenants in the county.

More detail on the affordability model can be found here -

http://pdf.savills.com/documents/Living_Rent_Methodology.pdf?_ga=1.123272841.345168137.1430233577

Our Affordability modelling is shown in the graph below -

Affordability

No one on the lowest 30th percentile of earned incomes should have a weekly rent of more than 28% of their income.

The Joseph Roundtree Foundation (JRF) Living Rent Model allows us to calculate this.



Advice & Support to Promote Affordability

Council tenants have access to a free and independent welfare rights, energy and debt advice service called **Key To Advice**. This is currently delivered by **Citizens Advice Denbighshire and** this also enables the housing team to benefit from a specific worker from CAD to provide support to tenants. This includes a focus on fuel poverty to assist our tenants with their fuel bills and tariffs.

Highlights of April 2023 to October 2023 of the Key to Advice project are:

- 244 tenants supported
- £628,139 annual income gains

Working Denbighshire

We also have a dedicated Housing Employment Mentor in partnership with Working Denbighshire. This focuses on working closely with tenants to enable them to be employment ready, provide access to job searches and provide work placements and training opportunities. 55 council tenants have been supported in 2023.

Financial Inclusion

We also have a Financial and Digital Inclusion Officer in the Community Resilience team, funded by the HRA, who works alongside Community Housing to support council tenants to access advice and information and support on financial matters.

This role provides community level support as opposed to individual case work bringing specialist advice services into the community via groups and events.

Examples of projects include money advice workshops, digital literacy surveys and supporting digital awareness sessions.

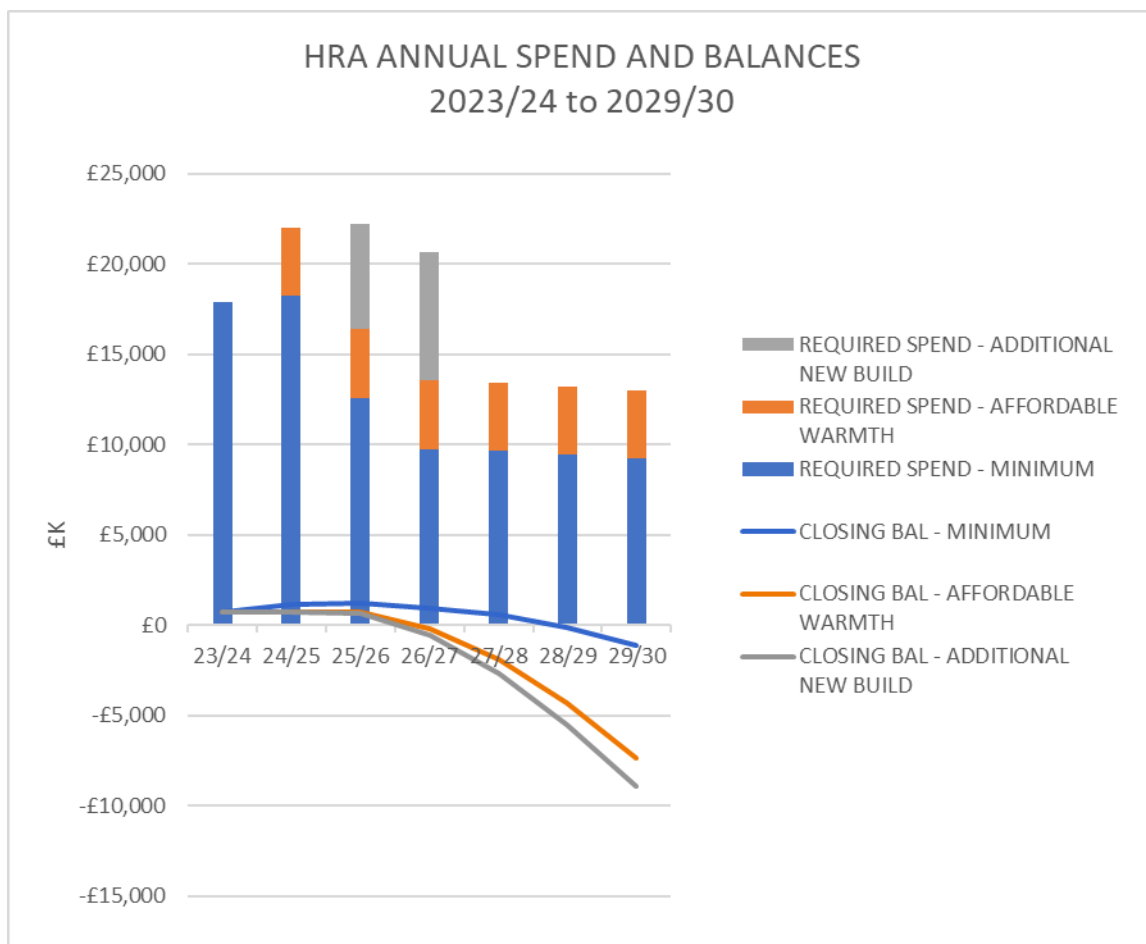
5) Impact on longer term HRA budgeting

The chart below shows the annual spend required on our housing stock to deliver -

- A. The 'bare minimum' standard to continue with our improvement and new build programmes.
- B. The WHQS affordable warmth target by 2029
- C. Additional new build properties to meet our Council target of 170 properties by 2027

The chart also shows the impact of these levels of spend on the balances of the HRA. Even the lowest level of spend leads to balances falling below zero in 5 years' time.

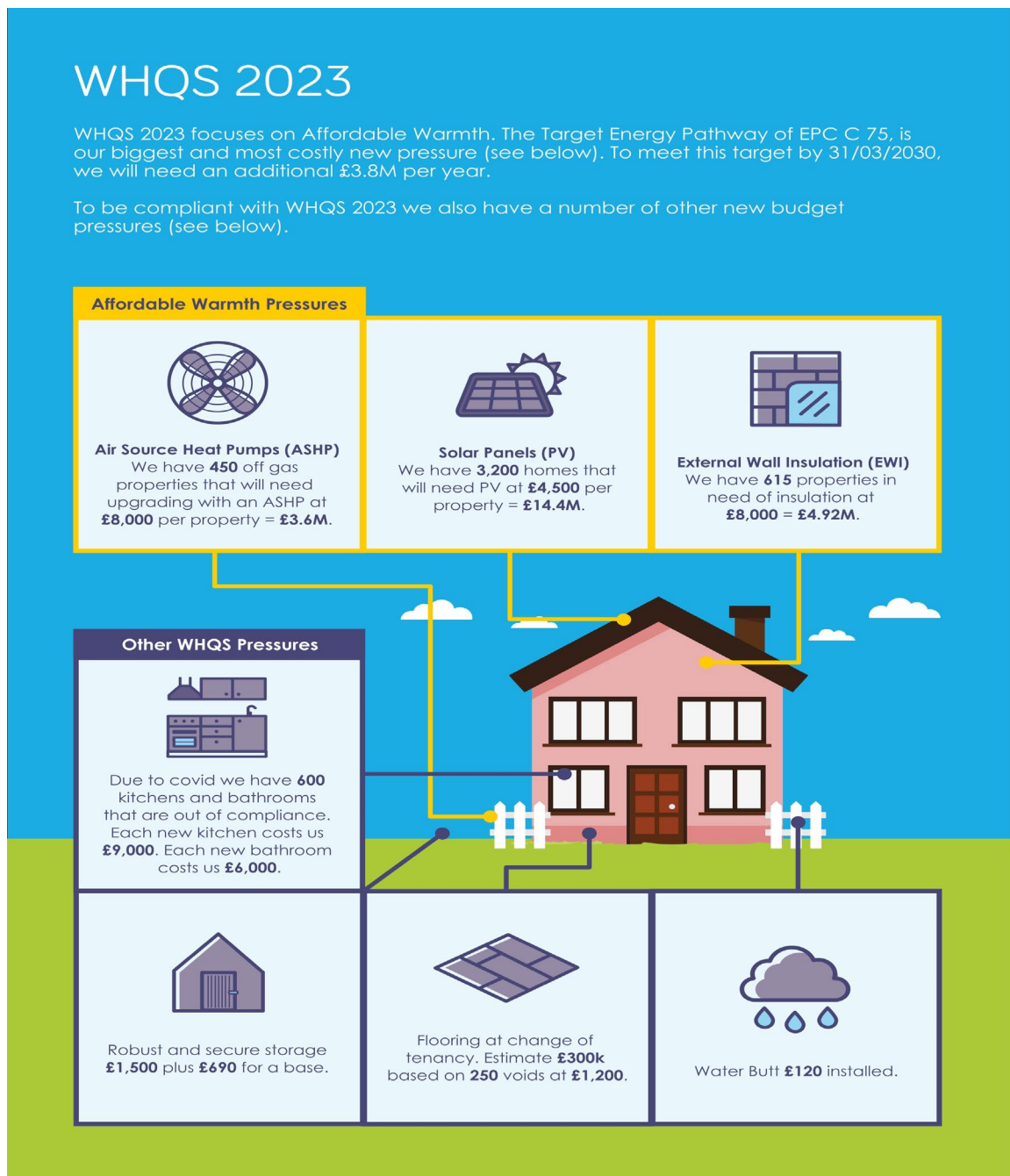
This includes all external grants for improvements and new homes at current levels.



6) Capital investment in our stock

The following infographic outlines where we are with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and the additional pressures on our level of investment required so we can achieve what is required of us and will help our households in term so the quality of their homes.

We need to spend an additional £3.8m per year to achieve the additional WHQS 2 items and the kitchen / bathroom programme as well as existing safety and compliance matters.



Budget Pressures on the Housing Revenue Account

The graph below shows the additional investment required to achieve WHQS 2 alongside our current expenditure. Therefore, even with the maximum rent increase this year we do not have sufficient funding to be able to achieve the new standards within the required timescale without a significant increase in Welsh Government support.

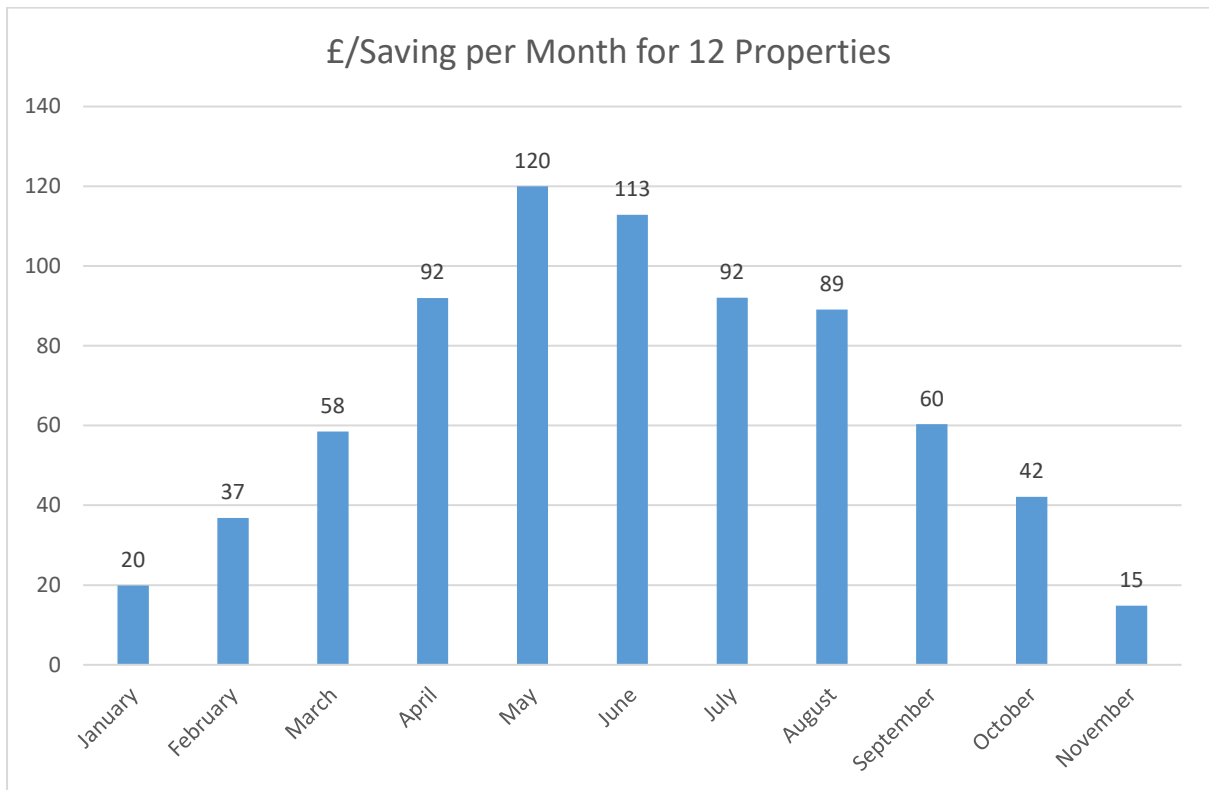
To demonstrate this the second graph shows the extent of the challenge with kitchen and bathrooms replacements.



7) Impact of our Investment

On a positive note, the graph below shows the benefit to households of investment in our homes. These are 12 random homes selected following “retrofit” improvement works which have significantly improved the energy efficiency and therefore weekly bills for these households.

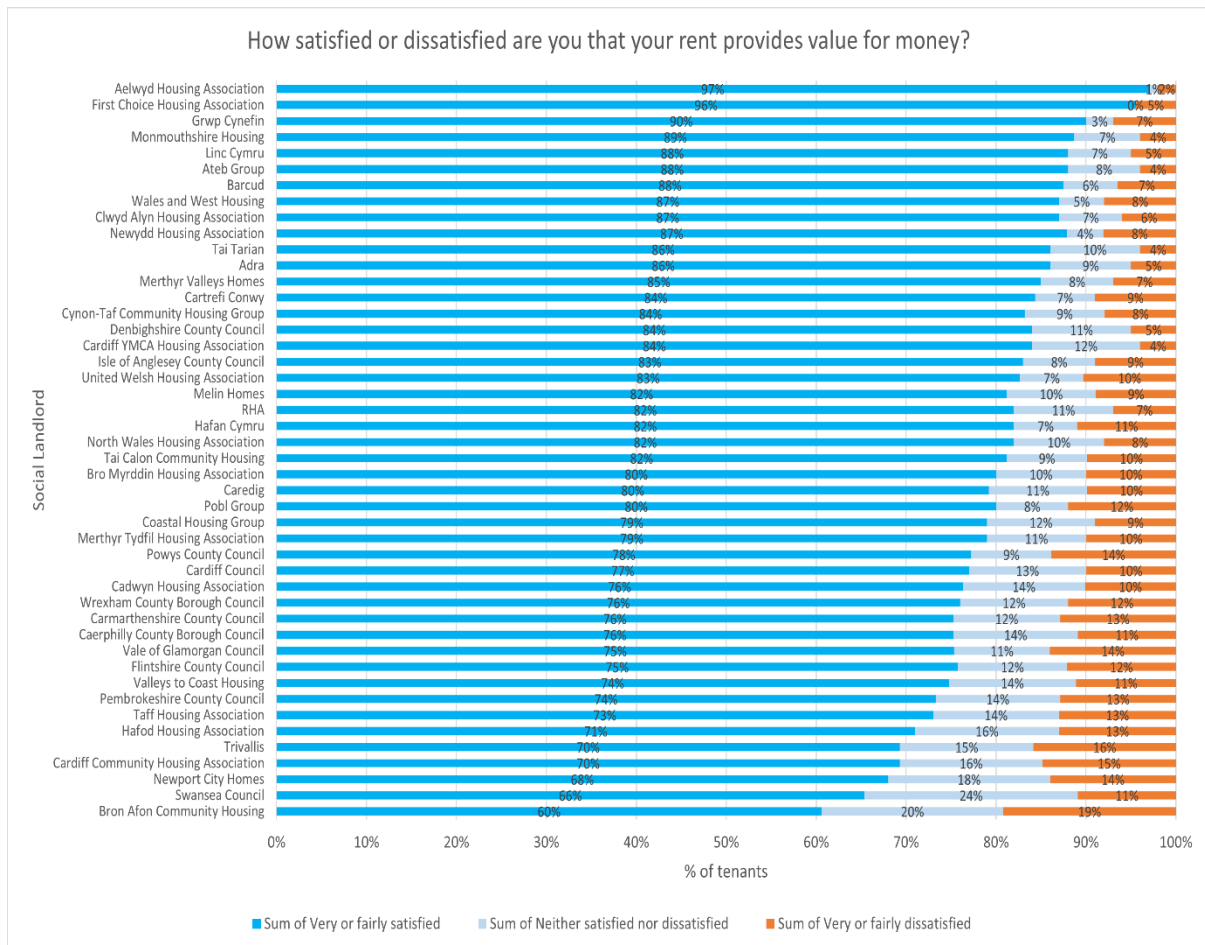
Each individual property is saving approximately £36 per month due to Retrofit energy efficiency works.



8) Value For Money

Our most appropriate measure of value for money is feedback from our tenants.

The graph below shows all social landlords (Councils and RSL's) in Wales. Denbighshire has 85% value for money satisfaction which places us 16th out of 46 Landlords in Wales.



Source: WG May 2023

Service Charges

Service chargeable income collects actual costs for specific services and overall shows a slight increase over last year to £401k. Individual properties may be subject to a varied charge. As a result, the average charge per property has increased to £2.33 per week (from £2.23 last year).

We aim to keep service charges as low as we possibly can and ensure value for money through competitive costs and the delivery of good quality services. We

have compare our service charges to other landlords and we remain amongst the lowest on average.

Cost Efficiency

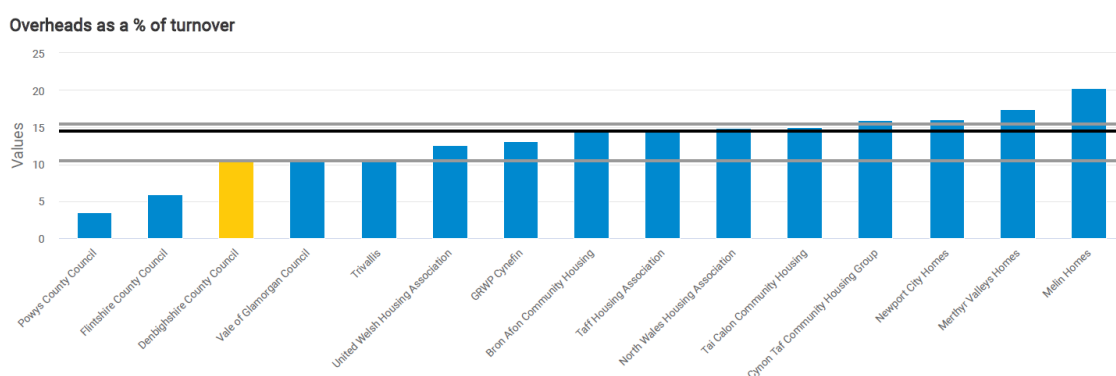
The information below is taken from data provided by the national benchmarking service HOUSEMARK and shows our costs are relatively low compared to comparable landlords but our cash investment in our assets is high.

1.1 Overheads

This graphs show Overheads as a percentage of our Turnover and Cost Per Property (CPP) and Employee Overheads.

This is all the staffing and support costs for running the housing and property management service.

The full report is available on request.



Source: Housemark

Communication with Tenants

- We provide information to our tenants on how their rent money is spent. Each year with the rent increase notification letter we send all tenants a booklet which explains -
- How the average weekly rent is spent with a breakdown of our management, maintenance and finance costs.

Tenant feedback on our Rents

We recently surveyed council tenants about their weekly rent and overall the feedback, from 778 responses, was that 73% of households told us that they believe that our rents are fair with 6% saying they are not.

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| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Report to | Communities Scrutiny |
| Date of meeting | 7 th December 2023 |
| Lead Member / Officer | Cllr Jason McLellan, Leader and Lead Member for Economic Growth and Tackling Deprivation / Tony Ward, Corporate Director: Environment and Economy |
| Head of Service | Emlyn Jones, Head of Planning, Public Protection & Countryside Services |
| Report author | Tony Ward, Corporate Director: Environment and Economy |
| Title | Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance |

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report is about the Rhyl Regeneration Programme and governance of the programme.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To examine the effectiveness of the Programme Board's work in delivering the regeneration programme to date.

2.2. To Identify any barriers or slippages and to formulate recommendations to try and address them and sustain the delivery of the programme to secure the regeneration of Rhyl to benefit the economy and the lives of the town's residents and the county in general.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee discuss the report and provide feedback, as required.

- 3.2. That the Committee confirm that they are satisfied that the necessary governance structures are in place to have effective oversight of regeneration work in Rhyl. Alternatively, to suggest what in addition the Committee would like to see.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board had responsibility for overseeing the strategic direction and delivery of the Rhyl Regeneration Programme for Denbighshire County Council, with a focus on the delivery of Regeneration schemes within the Town Centre on which Denbighshire leads.
- 4.2. The Programme Board therefore managed the Council's contribution to the delivery of the Town Centre Vision along with any related Council led regeneration projects in the town.
- 4.3. The task of the Programme Board was to drive forwards the regeneration in Rhyl through a coordinated approach to ensure effective delivery of existing projects, to identify gaps and opportunities and to drive forward new initiatives. It was also responsible for identifying projects and for acquiring and scheduling appropriate resource to deliver them.
- 4.4. Since the adoption of the 2022-27 Corporate Plan, there has been a rationalisation of specific Boards relating to Rhyl, and it has been agreed that we will work through the new Corporate Plan governance arrangements to delivery our over-arching ambitions for Rhyl. This is because the themes in our Corporate Plan match those WIMD factors that we'd like to address in Rhyl, giving us an opportunity to mainstream the work. Working via the Corporate Plan governance vehicles has the advantage of strong organisation, oversight, engagement, resource allocation, etc.
- 4.5. However, in order to preserve the focus on Rhyl – given that it is our biggest town and has high levels of inequality that we want to address – it has also been agreed that regular reports will be brought to Rhyl MAG and the Rhyl Reference Group providing commentary on progress against each of the Corporate Plan themes on a Rhyl basis (i.e. taking a place-based approach to the themes in our Corporate Plan). For example, Rhyl elements of a Housing Strategy, or updates on economic growth and regeneration on Rhyl will be tabled for discussion at the Rhyl MAG and the Rhyl Reference Group.

- 4.6. As the Corporate Plan Boards are strategic in nature, we have retained an officer working group who meet more regularly to discuss progress on projects; barriers to delivery; alignment of projects; and priorities for developing a future pipeline of projects. This group is chaired by the Corporate Director: Environment and Economy.
- 4.7. In recent years, the main funding for regeneration projects in Rhyl has been from Welsh Government. More recently, funding from UK Government has also become available in the form of Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) and, Levelling Up Funding (LUF), and we hope that this may also contribute towards major regeneration projects in Rhyl in future.
- 4.8. The council has overseen the delivery of several Rhyl regeneration projects over the past 12-18 months, including:
- construction of the Queen's Market food hall and event venue
 - public realm strategy and design guide
 - green infrastructure project
 - the purchase and/or demolition of several key eyesore sites
 - transformation of 2-16 Aquarium Street (former Houses of Multiple Occupation).
- 4.9. The past 12-18 months has also seen the development (to various different stages) of several exciting projects that we would be looking to deliver as and when appropriate funding streams become available, for example:
- Promenade scheme (phase 1) to reconnect the top of the High Street to the beach *
 - Town Centre Gateway Project (pocket park) *
 - Town Centre Public Realm Project *
 - Queen's Market future phases (Outline Business Case for mid-range hotel development)

- Renovation and new build projects on Rhyl High Street to provide 10 apartments for Intermediate Rent and ground floor retail units (funding in place and work planned to start in early 2024)
- Redevelopment of the former Goldilocks salon in Queen Street to provide 6 units of one-bedroom apartments (site acquired and cleared)
- Redevelopment of 26 Wellington Rd (adjacent to former post office) to provide 2 residential units and commercial on the ground floor.

4.10. One recent development is the announcement of a provisional allocation (subject to a number of factors) of c.£20m from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) for the Vale of Clwyd. This was only announced on 20th November 2023, so further discussions are required to fully understand the opportunities presented by this funding. However, it does appear to be the case that the funding has been provisionally allocated to deliver the programme of projects agreed at Cabinet on 14th Dec 2021 and submitted to UK Government for LUF funding in August 2022. The projects marked by an * in the bullet points above were included in our LUF submission in August 2022, so it's fair to assume that this provisional funding allocation presents an opportunity to deliver these regeneration projects. We also have a governance structure in place to manage the delivery of the LUF, so this will provide further oversight of the Rhyl regeneration work up until April 2026 (the deadline for delivering the new provisional LUF allocation).

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. No decision is required from this report, but the regeneration of Rhyl remains a key part of our Corporate Plan. Elements of Rhyl regeneration are overseen by the Corporate Plan Boards, in particular the Prosperous Denbighshire Board and the Corporate Plan Housing & Homelessness Board.

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

6.1. Regeneration projects in Rhyl are generally not funded by Denbighshire, but they can place a strain on services in relation to the officer time required to both develop projects and manage delivery.

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

7.1. No wellbeing impact assessment was undertaken for this report.

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

8.1. Discussion have taken place with the Rhyl Member Area Group and Rhyl Reference Group.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. The expectation would be that funding for Rhyl regeneration projects will come predominantly from external sources, including Welsh Government and UK Government, to ensure that the work does not place an unmanageable financial burden on the authority via increased borrowing debt and associated repayments. External funding often comes with a match funding requirement, so any new projects would need to be approved via the appropriate mechanisms, e.g., Capital Scrutiny Group, Cabinet, etc.

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

10.1. A risk register was developed to support the Rhyl Regeneration Programme, and those risk continue to be monitored as they are still relevant to the Rhyl regeneration work. Specific risk registers also exist for each of the Corporate Plan Boards.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. This report does not require a decision.

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| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Report to | Communities Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting | 07 December 2023 |
| Head of Service | Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Services: People |
| Report author | Karen Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator |
| Title | Scrutiny Work Programme |

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report seeks Communities Scrutiny Committee to review its draft forward work programme (see Appendix 1). As part of its review the Committee is asked to reflect on how Scrutiny can support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and its aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030, whilst also prioritising matters which the Committee deems important to scrutinise.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 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;
- 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 themes (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 continued 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 Scrutiny's business agenda they have to submit a formal request to the SCVCG seeking Scrutiny to consider a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of scrutinising suggested subjects.

- 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.

5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

- 5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group's next meeting is scheduled for 1st February 2024.

6. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 6.1 Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its Corporate Plan 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 themes, improve outcomes for residents whilst also managing austere budget and resource pressures.
- 6.2 Whilst the decision on the Committee's forward work programme itself will have a neutral contribution on the Council's aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030, the Committee by effectively scrutinising all matters examined by it can help support the delivery of this ambition.

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

- 7.1 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?

8.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to the purpose or contents of this report. However, Scrutiny 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?

9.1. 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?

11.1 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

12.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

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

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Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Note: Items entered in italics have not been approved for submission 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 |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 7 December | <i>Cllr Rhys Thomas</i> | 1. Housing Rent Increase and Budgets 2024 / 25 | To consider the process for determining the recommendation on the level of weekly rent increase for Community Housing tenants. | Pre-decision scrutiny to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. has the increase being proposed adequately considered II. the impact on affordability for households and III. the impact of other options on Housing investment budgets. | Liz Grieve / Geoff Davies | By SC&VCG 03/10/23 |
| | <i>Leader</i> | 2. Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance | To examine the effectiveness of the Programme Board's work in delivering the regeneration programme to date | Identification of any barriers or slippages and the formulation of recommendations to try and address them and sustain the delivery of the programme to secure the regeneration of Rhyl to benefit the economy and the lives of the town's residents and the county in general | <i>Tony Ward</i> | <i>June 2022</i> |
| 1 February 2024 | <i>Cllr. Barry Mellor</i> | 1. <i>Draft Car Park Investment Plan 2024 – 2029 (tbc)</i> | <i>To examine the draft investment plan for the county-owned car parks</i> | <i>The development of a deliverable programme of investment in the county's car parks that will support the delivery of a prosperous, better connected, greener, fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire</i> | <i>Emlyn Jones/Mike Jones</i> | <i>October 2023</i> |
| | <i>Cllr Rhys Thomas</i> | 2 Community Housing Tenancy Management | To consider the management of council housing /estates. Including support available | To examine the Community Housing Team's management of council housing estates - dealing with complaints about tenant behaviour whilst supporting victims and perpetrators of breaches of tenancy. | Geoff Davies / Liz Grieve | SC&VCG November 2023 |

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

| Meeting | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title) | | Purpose of report | Expected Outcomes | Author | Date Entered |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | | | | to all households and powers to deal with breaches of tenancy conditions. | | | |
| | Cllr Rhys Thomas | 3 | Council Housing Tenant Feedback and Satisfaction | To review feedback from Council tenants about the service including local priorities and satisfaction with their homes and the services provided | To assess whether council tenants are receiving a satisfactory service from the council and to highlight any local community issues. | Geoff Davies / Liz Grieve | SC&VCG November 2023 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 14 March | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| 9 May | Cllr. Barry Mellor | 1. | Tree Maintenance & Management (tbc) | To examine the Council's policy(ies) relating to tree maintenance and management along with the resources allocated for tree maintenance and management work across Denbighshire | An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Council's current work in relation to tree management and maintenance with a view to securing sufficient resources to ensure the delivery the Council's Corporate Plan themes of a greener, and a fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire whilst also supporting the ambition of becoming an ecologically positive and net carbon zero authority by 2030. | Andrew Cutts/Joel Walley/Emlyn Jones | By SCVCG July 2023 |
| | Cllr. Win Mullen-James | 2. | Second Homes and Short-term Holiday lets | To report the findings and conclusions of the | (i) An assessment of the proposals' anticipated impact on Denbighshire County Council, | Emlyn Jones/Angela Loftus/Lara | June 2022 (rescheduled November |

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

| Meeting | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title) | | Purpose of report | Expected Outcomes | Author | Date Entered |
|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| | | | and their impact have been fully assessed) (timing tbc – once the full details of the WG proposals are known (incl. Licensing Scheme proposals) | Welsh Government's study in relation to addressing the impact of second home ownership in Wales, including its proposals for reviewing the regulatory framework and system as they apply to holiday accommodation, along with national and local taxation systems (the WG's "three-pronged approach to address [the] second homes crisis" | residents, businesses, and local economy Formulation of recommendations with a view to realising maximum benefits for the Council, residents businesses and the economy, or for mitigating the impact of any risks that may arise from any proposals | Griffiths/Paul Barnes/Gareth Roberts | 2022/ March 2023/ October 2023) |
| (check if any WG reviews/legislation outstanding in relation to sustainable transport at present) | Cllr. Barry Mellor | 3 | Draft Sustainable Transport Plan | To consider the initial findings following the consultation of the draft plan | Pre-decision scrutiny to enable the formulation of recommendations to Cabinet in relation to approving and adopting a Sustainable Transport Plan for the county that will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan themes of a better connected and greener Denbighshire, whilst also contributing to the Council's ambition of becoming net carbon zero and ecologically positive by 2030 | Emlyn Jones/Mike Jones | By SCVCG July 2023 |

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

| Meeting | Lead Member(s) | Item (description / title) | | Purpose of report | Expected Outcomes | Author | Date Entered |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|-----------|--|
| 27 June | | | | | | | |
| 5 September | | | | | | | |
| 24 October | | | | | | | |
| 12 December | | | | | | | |
| 2025 | | | | | | | |
| Feb 2025 (date tbc) | | | | | | | |
| March/ April (date tbc) | Leader/Cllr. Barry Mellor | 1. | Rhyl Promenade Masterplan | To examine the proposals contained in the Rhyl Promenade Masterplan to be implemented following the completion of the coastal flood defence schemes | Consideration of the draft masterplan and the public's views on its contents will enable the Committee to formulate recommendations with respect of the final masterplan that will support the Council, business community and residents' aspirations to realise the sustainable economic regeneration of Rhyl and Denbighshire by linking the beach/promenade to the town. Delivering a prosperous and better connected Denbighshire | Tony Ward | By SCVCG July 2023 (in response to a Notice of Motion to County Council) |

Future Issues

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

| Item (description / title) | Purpose of report | Expected Outcomes | Author | Date Entered |
|----------------------------|--|---|---------------------------|--------------|
| | Update on the Draft Tourism signage Strategy | To provide an update on progress in regard to brown tourist direction sign projects within Denbighshire | Mike Jones/Peter McDermot | 09/05/23 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

For future years

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
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Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Information/Consultation Reports

| Information / Consultation | Item (description / title) | Purpose of report | Author(s) | Date Entered |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|---------------|
| INFORMATION (for circulation early autumn 2023 <i>once work has been undertaken</i>) | Community Impact Assessment on the communities of Rhewl and Llanynys | To present the findings of the community impact assessment undertaken following the closure of Ysgol Rhewl as agreed as part of the modernising education programme | Geraint Davies/James Curran | December 2020 |

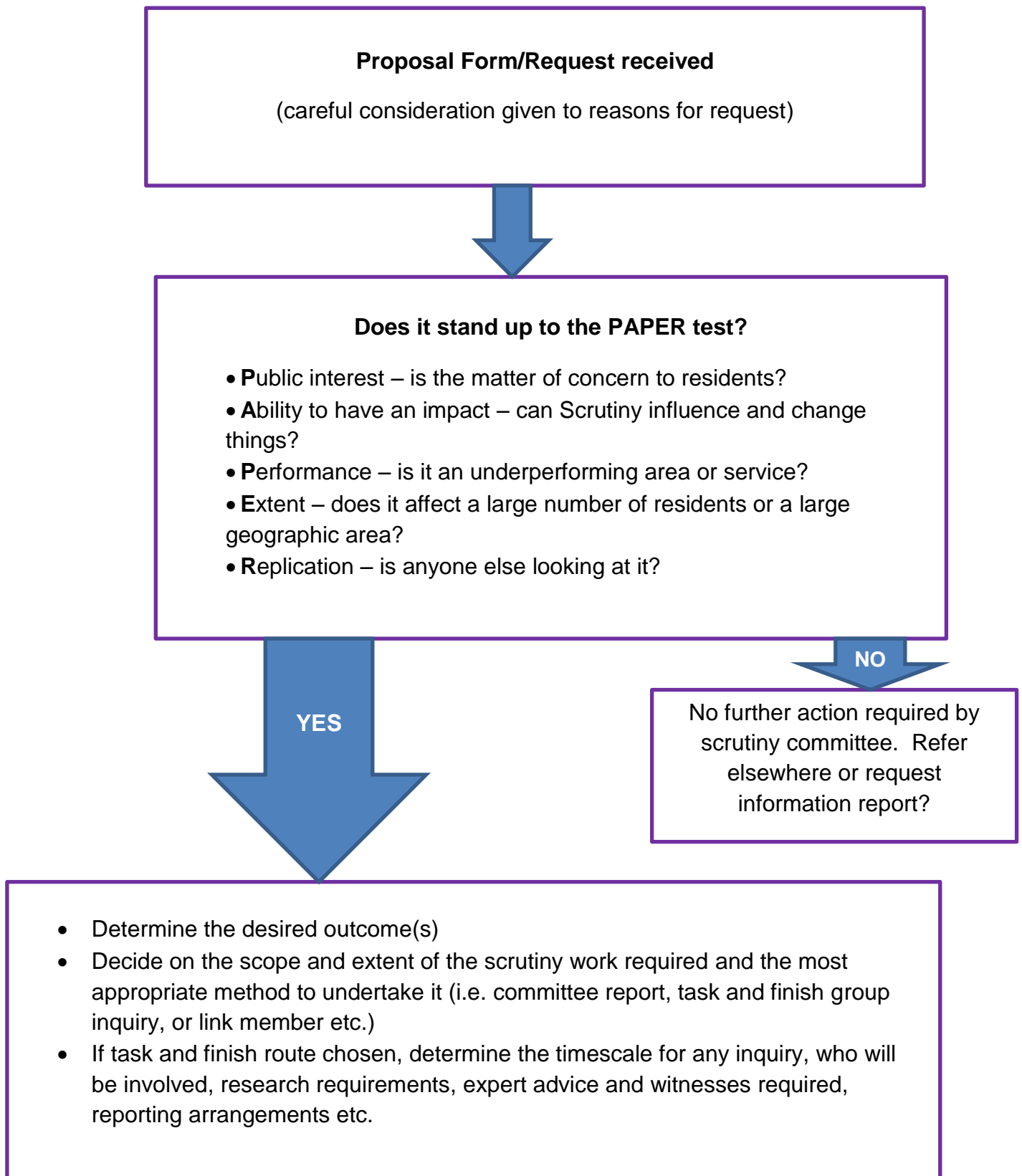
Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

| Meeting | Deadline | Meeting | Deadline | Meeting | Deadline |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 st February 2024 | 18th January | 14 th March | 29th February | 9 th May | 25th April |

28/11/23 KE

| 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 themes? (if 'yes' please state which theme(s)) | 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 |
|------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|------------------------------------|--|
| 19 December | 1 | Library Savings Proposal | To outline how savings could be achieved by reducing Library Services | Yes | Cllr Emrys Wynne Lead Officer/Report Author – Liz Grieve |
| | 2 | North Wales Construction Framework (NWCF) Phase 3 | To approve the NWCF following the procurement exercise | Yes | Cllr Julie Matthews Lead Officer/Report Author – Karen Bellis |
| | 3 | Housing Rent Setting & Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024/25 | To seek approval for the proposed annual rent increase for council housing and to approve the Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2024/25 and Housing Stock Business Plan | Yes | Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author Geoff Davies |
| | 4 | Contract for Haulage, Sorting and Brokerage of Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) | To consider a contract variation/extension of DMR | Yes | Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Paul Jackson / Simon Lammond |
| | 5 | Keep my Home Project | To seek Cabinet approval to go out to tender for the project to support people living in Denbighshire to sustain their accommodation and prevent homelessness | Yes | Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Nigel Jones/Sharon Whalley/Hayley S Jones |

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting | Item (description / title) | | Purpose of report | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | 6 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 7 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
| | | | | | |
| 23 January | 1 | Budget 2024/25 - Final Proposals | To consider the implications of the Local Government Settlement 2024/25 and proposals to finalise the budget for 2024/25 | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Head of Finance and Audit |
| | 2 | North Wales Velodrome Business Case | To consider the business case for the North Wales Velodrome Project | Tbc | Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author Tony Ward / Jamie Groves |
| | 3 | Care Home Fee Setting 2024/25 | To seek Cabinet approval for the Fee Structure 2024/25 | Yes | Cllr Elen Heaton Lead Officer/ Report Author Nicola Stubbins/Ann Lloyd |
| | 4 | Fairer Council Tax Consultation | To approve the authority's response to Welsh Government consultation on fairer council tax | Yes | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer – Liz Thomas Report Author – Paul Barnes/Leah Gray |

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

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|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | 5 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 6 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
| | | | | | |
| 20 February | 1 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 2 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
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| 19 March | 1 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 2 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
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Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| Meeting | Item (description / title) | | Purpose of report | Cabinet Decision required (yes/no) | Author – Lead member and contact officer |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 23 April | 1 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 2 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
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| 21 May | 1 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 2 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
| | | | | | |
| 25 June | 1 | Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024 | To consider a report by the Strategic Planning Team for Council to approve the Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024. | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans, Iolo McGregor, Emma Horan |
| | 2 | Reviewed and updated Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030) | To present the reviewed and updated Climate and Ecological Change strategy | Yes | Cllr Barry Mellor / Liz Wilcox-Jones / Helen Vaughan-Evans |

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

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|---------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | | | document for Council to decide on whether to adopt it | | |
| | 3 | Finance Report | To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council | Tbc | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas |
| | 4 | Items from Scrutiny Committees | To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention | Tbc | Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators |
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FUTURE ITEMS

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|---------------|---|--|---|
| 19 Nov | Council Performance Self-Assessment Update – July to September (QPR2) | To consider a report by the Strategic Planning Team for Council to approve the Performance Self-Assessment July to September | Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans, Iolo McGregor, Emma Horan |
|---------------|---|--|---|

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

| <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Deadline</i> | <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Deadline</i> | <i>Meeting</i> | <i>Deadline</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | |
| <i>19 December</i> | <i>5 December</i> | <i>23 January</i> | <i>9 January</i> | <i>20 February</i> | <i>6 February</i> |