

To: Members of the Performance
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 23 November 2023

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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, 30 NOVEMBER 2023** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE.**

Yours sincerely

G. Williams
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

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

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Pages 5 - 6)

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

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 20)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 September 2023 (copy enclosed).

5 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REPORT (Pages 21 - 102)

To consider a report on the Corporate Risk Register from the Strategic Planning and Performance Officer reviewing the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement (copy enclosed).

10.10am – 11am

BREAK

6 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT UPDATE (Pages 103 - 236)

To consider an update report on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives from the Planning and Performance Officer (copy enclosed).

11.15am – 12pm

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 237 - 262)

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.

12pm – 12.20pm

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Hugh Irving (Chair)

Councillor Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair)

Ellie Chard
Huw Hilditch-Roberts
Martyn Hogg
Carol Holliday
Alan Hughes

Paul Keddie
Diane King
Terry Mendies
Andrea Tomlin

COPIES TO:

All Councillors for information
Press and Libraries
Town and Community Councils

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

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

Denbighshire County Council

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

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)**

Signed

Date

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

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PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 28 September 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Martyn Hogg, Carol Holliday, Paul Keddie, Terry Mendies, Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair) and Andrea Tomlin

Lead Members- Councillor Gill German, Lead Member for Education, Councillor Rhys Thomas, Lead Member for Housing and Communities and Councillor Emrys Wynne, Lead Member for Welsh Language, Culture and Heritage.

Education Co-opted Members- Neil Roberts and Kathleen Jones

Observers: Councillors Joan Butterfield Jeanette Chamberlain Jones

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (Monitoring Officer) (GW); Head of Adult Social Care and Homelessness Services (AL); Head of Education (GD); Principal Education Manager (JB); Healthy Schools / Pre Schools Officer (SL); Principal Education Manager (RT); WESP Development Officer (MLJ); Strategic Planning and Housing Manager (AL); Programme Manager - Housing Development (MD); Lead Officer - Community Housing (GD); Service Manager, Business Support & Communities (NJ); Strategic Planning & Housing (JA); Scrutiny Coordinator (RE); Zoom host (KJ) and Committee Administrator (SJ).

GwE Core Leads for Denbighshire: Jacqueline Chan (Primary) and Mair Herbert (Secondary).

Diocese of Wrexham and Christ the Word School representatives: Bernadette Thomas – Acting Head Teacher of Christ the Word Catholic School; Collette Owen – Wrexham Diocese; John Droog – Chair of Governors at Christ the Word Catholic School; Claire Armitstead – Head Teacher of Rhyl High School/Associate Head Teacher at Christ the Word School; and

Rona Jones Head Teacher of Ysgol Emmanuel (for business item number 6).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Councillor Hugh Irving, and Councillors Alan Hughes and Diane King.

In the Chair's absence the Vice-Chair chaired the proceedings.

Members were informed that Councillor Chris Evans had resigned his seat on the Committee and that the Independent Group had appointed Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts to take up the vacant position.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following members declared a personal interest in business items 5, 6 and 7:

Councillor Ellie Chard – Local Education Authority Governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa
Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts – Local Education Authority Governor at Ysgol Pen Barras
Councillor Martyn Hogg- Parent Governor at St. Asaph VP School
Councillor Carol Holliday – Governor at Ysgol Penmorfa
Neil Roberts – Governor at Ysgol y Parc
Gareth Sandilands – Local Education Authority Governor at Ysgol Clawdd Offa
Councillor Andrea Tomlin as a grandparent of a pupil at Christ the Word School

Councillor Andrea Tomlin also declared a personal interest in business item number 8 as the owner of a business who had dealings with the private rented sector in Denbighshire.

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 OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 July 2023 were submitted. It was:

Resolved: that the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 July 2023 be approved as a true, accurate and correct record of the proceedings.

No matters were raised in relation to the contents of the minutes.

5 CHRIST THE WORD CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT UPDATE

The Chair reminded members of the reason for presenting the report stating the report outlined the progress achieved to date by Christ the Word Catholic School since the last report presented in January 2023 in relation to improving standards.

The Lead Member for Education Councillor Gill German introduced the update report (previously circulated) to Members. The information was in addition to the previous information presented to the Committee. She informed members numerous multi- agency meetings had taken place at which she had been present. Members also heard two monitoring visits from Estyn had taken place.

The Head of Education expanded on the Lead Member's introduction stressing to the Committee that realising improvements at Christ the Word Catholic School was a priority for the school and the Education Service as a whole. He offered his thanks to all parties for their part in supporting the school. Work undertaken by officers, teaching staff and external partners was all aimed at addressing the recommendations set by Estyn.

There had been extensive work completed at the school since the initial inspection and first update report presented to the Committee in January 2023. A high degree of scrutiny of the work had taken place, Estyn as the regulators regularly scrutinised the developments along with the multi-agency school approach with the Governing Body, the Diocese and GwE reviewing the progress made against the 5 recommendations. Further work was required against the 5 original recommendations. To date the improvements were in line with officers expectations.

The Chair thanked all organisations in attendance for their support to secure improvements at the school along with their commitment to progressing the improvements further and sustaining them for the future. Following the introduction Members were invited to raise any concerns or questions and the following points were discussed in more detail:

- Work to ensure support available was the right support at the right time. All stakeholders that supported the school were in agreement that the support accessed and provided needed to be timely, focused on the right areas and conducted in the right priority order. Discussions and support would be ongoing with the school as with all schools in Denbighshire.
- As in any school the biggest and most important resource was the staff. Having all staff working together was essential for success as was securing their support for any changes and improvements.
- The working party of staff started as a behaviour committee. School staff across the board and from all levels were included in the group. It was to discuss and review the behaviour of pupils in the school and what measures required to be implemented to support improvement. The group naturally progressed from not only behavioural aspects but to lessons and how the tone could be set correctly in each lesson. Expectations were established for both staff and pupils for each lesson. The expectation for staff had been to follow a pattern to establish consistency through the whole school. Members were provided with some of the expectations of staff, such as treating all pupils with respect, meeting students at the door and providing clear instructions on all learning activities. Those expectations set the tone for each lesson and informed teaching staff of the procedure for each lesson and the expected outcome. To monitor those expectations, monitoring processes were established within the school. GwE attended the school and looked at this area when they conducted observations of lessons. Feedback was provided on how the interventions had been implemented. Every monitoring cycle the school had scheduled would look at the expectations and considered whether they were working effectively.
- Members congratulated all involved with the hard work that had taken place at the school since the issues arose and from the initial report presented to

the Committee. Concerns were raised that once the recommendations had been reached and completed the school would see a decline in the monitoring of the improvements and would fall back to previous ways of schooling. However, it was stressed that the school had to be open to receive any support or guidance from Denbighshire or external partners at any time, similar to all other schools.

- A summary against each recommendation had been included for Members reference. It was made clear that attendance rates and behaviour had to be separated. Attendance had seen a considerable improvement at the school. Attendance was not an issue Christ the Word School had in isolation, it was a national issue following the pandemic. It was felt the school was suitably aspirational with regards to attendance. The school had accepted all the support from officers with regards to improving attendance at the school.
- It was confirmed behaviour had not been included as part of the initial recommendations, it had been recognised by the school that behaviour had to be supported and understood in order to encourage pupils to learn. The behaviour issues identified were not unique to Christ the Word school, they were wide spread across Wales. When Estyn visited and communicated with staff, the majority of issues around behaviour were around pupils being off task or not focussing on the task in hand. To improve behaviour, along with the support group a dialogue with Denbighshire County Council officers to support staff to identify behaviours and offer suggestions on how to improve class behaviour. A day on trauma informed schools had taken place for all staff members to attend and to educate staff on understanding trauma and how to manage those situations if and when they arose.
- The school through GwE were working with Bangor University on a piece of work entitled positive, readiness for learning behaviour project. Two behaviour analysts were currently working at the school on an analysis of behaviours and why children behave in certain ways, with a view to devising proactive measures to address behaviour challenges and getting the pupils to reengage with learning.
- Members heard if a child had been permanently excluded from 2 schools, a third school would not have to accept that child. After one permanent exclusion any school would have to accept that child if the school had space.
- It was stressed the staff at the school were 100% committed to making the improvements needed at the school and supporting the pupils during their education at the school. Staff morale was key; the importance of ensuring staff were happy was vital in then supporting pupils. Support provided by the Authority, GwE, Diocese and others for staff with any concerns had been greatly appreciated.
- The biggest cost to Denbighshire County Council had been officer time. Officer time spent to support the school and staff had been essential in order to secure progress and improvement. No funding had been sought from other schools' budgets. Budgets were delegated to schools for the Governing bodies to use to run and support their school. Additional support had been provided to the Governing Body in the way of external training which incurred a small charge. Officers stressed that no funding had been transferred from other schools to support Christ the Word school. The Lead Member highlighted the staffing and practical support received from

surrounding schools in Rhyl. She offered her thanks to the other schools for the added support provided.

- Governance in schools had changed over recent years. Schools were accountable to their governing bodies and were regulated by Estyn. Denbighshire County Council had followed the statutory process in appointing governors at the school and had appointed additional members with specialist skills to support the Governing Body. Officers of the Authority and GwE had attended numerous governing body meetings to support if required. Training events for governors were regularly offered. It was hoped that by the end of the term the governing body would be at its full capacity.
- The new Chair of the Governing Body commended the support that he had received from the local education authority. He emphasised that the Governing Body was now nearing full complement, with members bringing an extensive range of competencies and experiences with them to the Governing Body that would be invaluable to it in its role of governing and supporting the school to move forward.
- The next expected visit from Estyn would be at some stage prior to Christmas.

Following an extensive and in-depth discussion the Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above comments and observations –

- (i) to acknowledge the progress made to date in delivering the action plans and improve standards across the school; and***
- (ii) requested that a further progress report on the delivery of the Post Inspection Action Plan and the joint local authority and GwE school support action plan be submitted to the Committee at the end of the current academic year, in July 2024.***

6 WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Families introduced the report (previously circulated) on whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being. She stressed the importance of nurturing the well-being of pupils in Denbighshire. The approach had changed to include partners that work with children, and as a result a number of interventions and programmes had taken place in schools. The financial landscape did cause concern and worry, many of the interventions in schools were seen as additional facilities and may be affected by future funding decisions.

The Head of Education stressed the importance of well-being, it was present in everything schools and education conducted on a daily basis. Members heard that a Whole School Approach Group met half termly with partners to develop specific training schools felt would be beneficial to staff and the school pupils. The importance of supporting the well-being of children was stressed following the pandemic it was critical the authority enabled and supported schools to pass that support on to pupils and to wider families.

The multi-agency inspection that took place in February 2023 highlighted a lot of positive work that Denbighshire and partners currently did in supporting schools.

The Head of Education introduced Rona Jones, Head Teacher of Ysgol Emmanuel, who provided the Committee with a school perspective of work being done to enhance support for pupils in schools.

The Chair thanked all the officers and guests for attending the meeting. He opened the discussion and invited members to raise any concerns or questions they had. The following points were discussed in greater detail:

- Partnership working was essential. Not all issues of well-being in society could be resolved in schools in isolation. Working together with Public Health Wales (PHW), Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Healthy Schools Scheme along with other partners was vital. The intention of the whole school approach was to encourage everyone to work together, on the same agenda to support all. The Whole School Approach Working Group involved all partners to make best use of the available resources and avoid duplication and silo working.
- There was a counselling service currently for 4-18 year olds which delivered a service using a variety of different methods. They offered a face to face service or remotely if required. The majority of the young people they worked with were 11-18 years old as the provision of a counselling service for 11 – 18 year olds was a statutory requirement. About 12% of pupils were from primary school age, the counsellor offering the service to the young children were trained in therapeutic play. The service would like to expand more at the primary level but would rely on the availability of funding through the grants the Service received.
- Members heard Ysgol Emmanuel had been the first school in Denbighshire to be awarded the Trauma Informed School accreditation. Rona Jones provided members with detail of the work that had been undertaken at the school to support children. A number of children at the school had needed the provision. The trauma informed approach was about protecting and regulating ensuring the children felt safe, putting interventions in place to support the emotions children express. Funding had allowed the school to employ additional teaching assistants trained in therapeutic services and a play therapist two days a week. Funding was a concern for the service to be able to continue as it was, let alone expand. As a result of the service the school had observed lower exclusion rates. Each member of the school staff had been on board from the start and had been instrumental in making the changes happen.
- Identification of individuals need was key. Staff had to ensure the best value for money from the interventions in place. Members heard that staff undertook Pupils Attitude to Self and School (PASS) Surveys which provided information from the pupils. It allowed the collection of data and information to aid decisions on what was needed in schools. On occasions referrals were made to the school to help support children and families to offer support that was needed during the school day. Close working with partners and agencies to support children was beneficial.

- Staff at schools would support children with or without any diagnosis. Staff were aware of waiting lists but continued to support families in ways that would aid the child's needs.
- It was hoped that the changes and interventions instigated in schools would have a positive impact on society and the community in the coming years. Ensuring young people had the skills and mental strength to thrive in the future was one of the reasons for implementing the changes.
- In the opinion of the Lead Member the health and wellbeing element of the curriculum for Wales was vital and essential. It would have a positive impact on pupils in schools and provide support for those that needed it.
- Capacity to support and deliver the services was challenging. Funding, time and capacity was a concern. Staff were at times going above and beyond to support individuals during difficult times. It was stressed Education staff and schools did the best for young people in Denbighshire.
- It was noted that emotional well-being support services were not at present statutory services, members asked if that was an area that could become statutory. The Lead Member stressed that any such decision lay with the Welsh Government, although local education authorities were regularly lobbying the Government on the value of this area of schooling and the differences it had made to individual pupils' educational journeys. It was hoped that in the future more weight may be given to this area.

The Chair thanked all present for their contribution to the discussion.

The Committee registered their concerns about the potential impact of diminishing financial resources on the long-term sustainability and development of this extremely valuable non-statutory provision within the Council's schools. At the conclusion of a comprehensive discussion members':

Resolved: subject to the above observations –

- (i) to acknowledge the work undertaken to date in implementing the Welsh Government's statutory framework on 'embedding a whole-school approach' to emotional and mental well-being across the county's schools; and***
- (ii) to support the efforts of all partners involved in developing appropriate levels of support across all of the county's schools.***

7 DELIVERY OF WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Families introduced the report (previously circulated) on the delivery of the Welsh Medium Provision in schools in Denbighshire.

The Head of Education guided Members through the report. The reason for the report followed a request made in 2022 after a report on the changes to the categorisation of schools. As a result of that report, a workshop had taken place recently on supporting scrutiny to support the Welsh language.

The authority had a 10-year plan to increase the provision of the Welsh language in education. It was stressed the plan was ambitious, challenging and was live-changing regularly.

Elected members served on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Steering Group whose role it was to monitor the development of the plan and challenge when required. The added challenge noted had been the reduction in the percentage of learners who received education in year 2 in 2022-23 through the medium of Welsh. This had reduced from the baseline in the plan of 28% in September 2020 to 26.4%. Details of the support provided had been included in the report, including a request to produce a business case to increase the Welsh provision in schools. A great deal of work was taking place across numerous services in the authority and with external partners in relation to this matter.

The Chair thanked the Lead Members and officers for the introduction and opened the debate for members to ask questions. As part of the ensuing discussion, further detail was provided on the following:

- Members raised concerns on the target of 40% of all seven-year-old pupils would attend Welsh Medium Education. Officers stressed the target had been set by Welsh Government based on the current position of each Local Authority. The target had originally been set in 2020, after which officers noted a reduction in the baseline. One of the reasons for the reduction had been following the Covid 19 pandemic, due to the closure of Welsh medium schools along with Welsh-medium nurseries. The 40% target would be a challenge for officers and schools to achieve. Conversations with Welsh Government with regards to the target continued. Education was one of the main partners in promoting the Welsh Language. It was emphasised that all schools in Denbighshire would have to contribute and work towards the target.
- The action plan itself had been included in the Welsh Education Strategic Plan that had previously been agreed by County Council.
- Pre-school and Mudiad Meithrin nurseries played an important role in setting the first steps to filter through children to Welsh medium primary schools.
- Members heard that a Cylch Meithrin had recently been opened in the Oak Tree Centre in Rhyl. In addition, work was underway with a view to establishing an 'immersion provision' at Ysgol Brynhyfryd, Ruthin.
- It was stressed the format of the report that had been attached as an appendix to the paper was the layout of the report that was sent to Welsh Government. The language used in the report reflected the language used by Welsh Government.
- It was confirmed the authority did have one category 2 school, which would be required to further develop its provision of the Welsh language. From September 2023 it provided the nursery provision, solely through the medium of Welsh.
- Officers agreed with Members on parents' concerns on sending children to a Welsh medium school if not spoken in the home. It was stressed all information presented to parents was bilingual enabling Welsh and non-Welsh speakers to know and understand the school policies, curriculum and communication between staff and parents. Members heard there were systems in place for parents to improve their Welsh alongside children.

Resources were continually improving to support parents through the time their children are at a Welsh Medium school.

- It was stressed that the term Welsh medium teaching was being undertaken in English speaking schools. The predominately English medium schools were expected to deliver 20% of teaching through Welsh with the aim of supporting their pupils along the continuum. Support was given to staff to teach through the Welsh Language.

Following detailed discussion, the Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) whilst acknowledging the unforeseen obstacles experienced as a consequence of the pandemic, to support the planning and implementation work undertaken to date in Denbighshire with respect of securing the delivery of Welsh medium curricula and non-curricula provision across the county's schools in accordance with the Welsh Government's vision; and***
- (ii) request that a further progress report on the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time.***

The Chair thanked Co-Opted Member Kathleen Jones, for her time and commitment on the Committee since 2016. He explained to Members that the current meeting was Kathleen's last meeting with the authority. On behalf of the whole Committee he wished her well for the future and thanked her for her contributions to discussions.

At this juncture (12.20 p.m.) the meeting paused for a 10 minute comfort break.

The meeting reconvened at 12.30 p.m.

8 DENBIGHSHIRE'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Lead Member for Housing and Communities introduced the report (previously circulated) to the Committee. He stressed to the Committee a great deal of work had been undertaken within the service. He thanked officers for attending the meeting to answer any questions.

The Strategic Planning and Housing Manager guided members through the report. She reminded members the Housing and Homelessness Strategy set out the aims for housing across the County for the period 2021-2026. It involved a number of areas within the Council. An action plan sat alongside the Strategy with the delivery of the action plan overseen by the Corporate Plan Housing Board. The group met quarterly, with actions reviewed prior to each meeting with an update to the action

plan discussed at every meeting. The group had a key role in monitoring the development of the actions and any issues that arose. A copy of the action plan had been included in the agenda papers for members' information.

The report illustrated the key areas of progress, in her opinion good progress had been made in delivering key elements of the strategy.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and Officers for the introduction and invited members to raise any questions. The following points were discussed in more detail:

- In response to a question submitted by Councillor Chris Evans and read out by the Chair it was advised that housing management and tenancy management was not an action point highlighted in the Strategy's Action Plan. Officers were happy to attend a further Scrutiny meeting to address members' concerns on the management of tenancies. Officers had to prioritise work load and resources and the more serious issues often took priority over some issues. The team were productive and did conduct tenancy visits to all households on an annual basis. Officers would also take part in estate walkabouts with members if they requested. The Lead Member encouraged members to contact himself or officers with any concerns.
- The private sector was an important part of the overall housing market, officers echoed the concerns of Members with regards to the changes to legislation. The reduction in private landlords was concerning, information had been included in the report which linked the reduction to homelessness figures. Work on monitoring the data would continue going forward. There were a number of reasons that had also impacted on the number of private rented accommodation available.
- Officers confirmed they had noticed an impact on the homelessness sector due to the changes made to legislation governing private rented accommodation. It was stressed officers were managing to support individuals out of homelessness into rented accommodation. Since the Covid-19 pandemic the private sector had been challenging for officers due to rent increases. Members were reminded of the private rented leasing scheme, where possible officers made landlords aware of that scheme.
- A well-attended private landlord forum had taken place and allowed officers and landlords to have discussions on concerns and raise any questions. The Lead Member stated it was very beneficial for all in attendance.
- Officers reassured the Committee that under occupation was one of the priorities for officers. Progress had been slow in terms of the numbers. Officers continued to discuss with tenants about options the authority could offer. The delay in the new build properties had impacted on individuals or families moving to more suitable sized properties. Often another challenge faced was people not wanting to move out of their family home although it was now too large for them.
- Members heard that unfortunately the contractor for construction of the Dell project in Prestatyn had gone into administration earlier in the year. The proposed plan was to begin with the creation of the access and

demolition of the bungalow on site. Officers confirmed they would circulate further details once available.

- Whilst there was a need for one and two bed properties for rent. Officers had to manage resources to accommodate as many individuals and families as possible.
- There were currently three Denbighshire County Council onsite projects that would be completed by September 2024. An update on affordable housing would be presented to each Member Area Group (MAG) in the near future.
- Officers confirmed there were no individuals registered with the homelessness service accommodated in caravans.
- Early intervention and prevention was one of the key aspects of the homelessness guidance officers worked towards. It was often found that families and individuals did not contact the service until later in the process or they were soon to be evicted. A contract – My Home Denbighshire, had been awarded. This work centred around early intervention had been awarded to support individuals and prevent people becoming homeless. Since its implementation 231 referrals had been received, of which 206 had been accepted as relevant referrals. There was a wide variety of reasons for referral, officers focused on categories for the higher number of referrals. They were using the data collected to research solutions which could be instigated and implemented at earlier stages in future, with a view to proactively addressing issues and intervening in cases before they presented as homeless.
- The My Home Denbighshire was a three-way partnership, led by Shelter Cymru. It cost in the region of £260,000 per annum.
- Monthly monitoring of data to establish any areas for potential homelessness was key in order to proactively support those at risk. Officers implemented early intervention and established early communications in those targeted areas.
- Officers confirmed the current Local Development Plan (LDP) policy was clear and did not allow Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO). The policy was currently under review as part of the new LDP. Officers confirmed that HMOs could potentially offer accommodation at affordable rates and served a purpose. The key would be to ensure good management and standard of living within HMOs, if any future policy were to permit their development. It would be an area of discussion for the Strategic Planning Group (SPG), whose meetings were open to all members to attend.

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

Resolved: - subject to the above observations to –

- (i) confirm it had read and understood the report, and acknowledged the progress made to date in delivering Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021 to 2026; and***
- (ii) continue monitoring the delivery of the Strategy's Action Plan on an annual basis, unless significant risks or concerns regarding the Authority's ability to deliver it came to light which required Scrutiny's attention.***

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced the report and appendices, (previously circulated) the purpose of which was to seek the Committee to review its programme of future work.

The next meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for the 30 November 2023, proposed for that meeting were three agenda items.

1. Corporate Risk Register: September 2023 review
2. Council Performance Self- Assessment Update
3. Economic and Business Development.

Members had agreed to include an update report on Christ the Word School on the forward work programme for July 2024 and a follow on report on Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action plan for autumn 2024 earlier in the meeting.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group meeting was scheduled for 3 October and Members were reminded to complete the relevant form if they had any topics they wished to be considered.

Appendix 3 was the Cabinet's forward work programme for members' reference. Appendix 4 provided the Committee with further information regarding the recommendations from the previous meeting.

Reference was made to an information brief that had been issued to Members prior to the meeting. The Scrutiny Co-Ordinator explained the report on the Council's Quarter 1 Corporate Plan Performance had been included for information. At the next Committee meeting in November, officers would present quarter 2 report to discuss any issues of concern.

Members were reminded that three training sessions had been scheduled, all Members were welcome to attend.

Those sessions were due to be held on:

- 6 October 2023 – Diversity - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
- 11 October – Scrutiny Chairing Skills
- 03 November – Scrutiny Questioning Skills

Members:

Resolved: *subject to the inclusion of the progress reports agreed during the course of the discussions at the current meeting, to confirm the Committee's Forward Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.*

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Sandilands briefed Committee members on the proceedings of a recent meeting of the Capital Scrutiny Group at which the following topics amongst others were discussed:

- Levelling Up Funding Projects

- Natural Flood Management
- Places for Nature
- Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Grant
- Community Focussed Schools
- Kentigern Hall, St. Asaph
- North East Wales Joint Archive Project

Councillor Ellie Chard provided an overview of the discussions that had taken place at the Education and Children's Services Service Challenge meeting. Pre-birth liaison work and the progress achieved in addressing 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) related issues were examined in detail.

Meeting concluded at 1.20pm

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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	30th November 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Helen Vaughan-Evans – Head of Corporate Support: Performance, Digital & Assets / Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
Report author	Heidi Barton-Price, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer
Title	Corporate Risk Register Review, September 2023

1. What is the report about?

1.1. An update on the September 2023 Review of the Corporate Risk Register.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information regarding the latest review of the Corporate Risk Register.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That Committee considers and comments on the amendments made to the Corporate Risk Register through the September 2023 review (Appendix 3), including the status of each risk against our Risk Appetite Statement (Appendix 4).

3.2. That Committee considers the summary document (Appendix 2) that incorporates colour and trend status.

4. Report details

4.1. The Corporate Risk Register is developed and owned by SLT alongside Cabinet. It is reviewed twice yearly by Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing.

- 4.2. Following each review, the revised register is presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee and is shared with Governance & Audit Committee.
- 4.3. The last review was undertaken in February 2023. [Papers submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee are available online.](#)
- 4.4. During this latest review, there has been a complete review of all 20 Risks on the Corporate Risk Register to include, titles, risk owners, descriptions, critical controls and risk scores. Significant changes have been made to the risk register and are specified at the start of each risk in Appendix 3. A summary of the most significant changes is provided in Appendix 1.
- 4.5. With the amalgamation of Risks 06, 18, 27, 30, 33, 36 into refined risks, the de-escalation to a service level of Risks 13, 44 and 49 and the addition of Risks 51 and 52 we now have a total of 13 Corporate Risks on our Register (Appendix 2). Please note the original number of the risk at time of first identified is kept for audit purposes.
- 4.6. The Council's risk appetite statement has been applied to the discussions that we have had with risk owners, and our risk exposure (based on the score) is analysed within the Corporate Risk Register (Appendix 3).
- 4.7. Seven risks 01, 21, 34, 45, 50, 51 and 52 (54%) are currently inconsistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (Appendix 4).

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

- 5.1. The purpose of the Corporate Risk Register is to identify the potential future events that may have a detrimental impact on the Council's ability to deliver its objectives, including its corporate priorities. The identified controls and actions are, therefore, crucial to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027.

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

- 6.1. The cost of developing, monitoring and reviewing the Corporate Risk Register is absorbed within existing budgets.

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

- 7.1. The Corporate Risk Register documents identify risks and mitigating actions. The process of developing and reviewing the document itself does not impact adversely on any of the well-being goals. However, any new process, strategy or policy arising as a result of a mitigating action may require a well-being impact assessment.

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

- 8.1. Prior to Cabinet Briefing individual discussions have been held with Corporate Executive Team (CET) Risk Owners (Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Directors) also including input from relevant Heads of Service and officers leading on further actions for instance.
- 8.2. A report was circulated to CET to agree and / or make further amendments on October 3, 2023.
- 8.3. The Register has been discussed by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on October 19, 2023 to agree and / or make further amendments.
- 8.4. The Register has been discussed at Cabinet Briefing on November 6, 2023 to agree and / or make further amendments.
- 8.1. The updated register was shared with Governance & Audit Committee on November 22, 2023 to provide assurance of the latest review of the Corporate Risk Register and to make any observations.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. There are no financial implications arising from developing, monitoring and reviewing the Corporate Risk Register.

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

- 10.1. There are no risks associated with this review.

11. Power to make the decision

- 11.1. Local Government Act 2000.

11.2. The Council's Constitution outlines the roles and responsibilities of senior officers and stipulates that clear procedures and processes must be in place to manage risk effectively.

11.3. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7 of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's powers in relation to examining decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions whether by Cabinet or another part of the Council.

In summary, the most significant changes include:

Risk 06: The risk that the economic and financial environment worsens beyond current expectations, leading to additional demand on services and reduced income, Risk 27: The risk that even if the settlement is as anticipated, decisions that are necessary to identify and deliver the savings programme and enable a balanced budget are not taken or implemented quickly enough and Risk 33: The risk that the cost of care is outstripping the council's resource have been amalgamated into a new financial Risk 51: The risk that the economic and financial environment worsens and results in the Council's inability to set a balanced budget. (Risk 06, 27 and 33 removed and archived).

New financial Risk 52: Insufficient funding leads to withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered has been added.

Risk 11 : The risk title has been amended from 'The risk of an ineffective response to a serious event, such as severe weather, contamination, public safety, cyber-attack, or a public health event (such as Covid-19) to 'The risk of an unexpected or unplanned serious event occurring'. Examples have been removed from the title to cover any unexpected and unplanned serious event. Councillor Barry Mellor and Councillor Win Mullen James have been removed as Lead Members for this risk and Councillor Julie Matthews Lead Member (Corporate Strategy, Policy & Equalities) remains as the Lead Member with overall strategic responsibility for Emergency Planning.

Risk 13: The risk of significant liabilities resulting from alternative models of service delivery with focus on DLL has been removed and de-escalated to Service Risk Register.

Risk 18: The risk that programme and project benefits are not fully realised has been removed.

Risk 30 'The risk that Senior Leadership capacity and skills to sustain service and corporate performance is not available' has now been incorporated into Risk 48 with the amended title of 'The risk that recruitment and retention issues leads to a loss of expertise and capacity resulting in poor or inadequate performance'. The Risk Owner is now Gary Williams (previously Graham Boase).

Risk 34: The title of this risk has been amended from 'The risk that demand for specialist care cannot be met locally' to 'The risk that there is insufficient regulated care'.

Risk title amendments of Risk 37: The risk that partners don't have the resources, matching priorities or commitment to support delivery of shared plans and priorities and Risk 45: The risk to the Council's reputation of not responding swiftly or sufficiently enough in making our contribution to tackle climate change and bring about nature's recovery following the declaration of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019 have resulted in a change of focus of the risks and accordingly they have been completely rewritten and reviewed.

Risk 44: The risk of Ash Dieback Disease (ADB) in Denbighshire leading to significant health and safety issues that represent a potential risk to life has been removed and de-escalated to a Service level as part of the ongoing Ash Dieback Project and Action Plan management.

Risk 49: The risk that the future funding regime doesn't allow the Council to continue to support the most vulnerable learners and disengaged young people in the way we have been through EU funding has been removed and de-escalated to Service Risk Register.

Risk 50: The risk that Welsh Government's commitment to eliminate profit from the care of Children Looked After results in an unstable or unsuitable supply of placements has been reviewed and the Residual Risk Score has increased from C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible and Medium Impact to B2 – Critical Risk: Highly Likely and High Impact. Now a Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk.

Appendix 2

Summary of Corporate Risk Register September Review 2023

Corporate Risk Register

The Council's Corporate Risk Register (CRR) contains the Council's most serious risks. It is owned by Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

We define our risks using a scale of likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact of the risk occurring. We also determine whether the risk is in line with our risk appetite. Risk appetite is the level of risk we are prepared to tolerate or accept in pursuit of our long term, strategic objectives.

The Risk Management Strategy is available [on our website](#).

Risk Score	Risk Severity	Escalation Criteria
C5, D4, D5, E4, E5	Minor (Green)	Risk easily managed locally and no need to involve management
A5, B4, B5, C3, C4, D3, E2, E3	Moderate (Yellow)	Risk containable at service level and senior management and SLT may need to be kept informed
A3, A4, B3, C2, D1, D2, E1	Major (Orange)	Intervention by SLT with Cabinet involvement
A1, A2, B1, B2, C1	Critical (Red)	Significant SLT and Cabinet intervention

Summary of current corporate risks and score (September 2023)

Following this September 2023 review we now have 13 corporate risks on our register. 54% (7) are outside of our risk appetite.

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2023 REVIEW

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2023 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
01. Safeguarding incident	A1 Critical (Red) Risk Almost Certain and Very High Impact	A1 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and Very High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated	Same	No
11. Ineffective response to a serious event	A2 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and High Impact	C3 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Possible and Medium Impact	Risk title amended to :The risk of an unexpected or unplanned serious event occurring. Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2023 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
12. Negative reports from external regulators	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	C3 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Possible and Medium Impact	Risk reviewed and updated	Same	Yes
14. Health and Safety	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	E2 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Rare and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes
21. Strategic misalignment between the Health Board and the Council	A1 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and Very High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk title amended to: The risk that the integration of health and social care services between BCUHB and DCC does not develop further. Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2023 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
31. Fraud and corruption	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	E2 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Rare and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated	Same	Yes
34. Demand for specialist care cannot be met locally	A2 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and High Impact	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	Risk title amended to: The risk that there is insufficient regulated care. Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No
37. Partnerships and inequalities deprivation	B1 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and Very High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk title amended to: The risk that partners don't have the resources, matching priorities or commitment to support delivery of shared plans and priorities and rewritten.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2023 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
45. Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically positive	A2 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk title amended to: The risk to the Councils reputation of not responding swiftly or sufficiently enough in making our contribution to tackle climate change and bring about natures recovery following the declaration of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019 and rewritten.	Same	No
48. Recruitment and retention	B3 Major (Orange) Risk: Likely and Medium Impact	B3 Major (Orange) Risk: Likely and Medium Impact	Risk title amended to: The risk that recruitment and retention issues leads to a loss of expertise and capacity resulting in poor or inadequate performance. Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2023 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
50. Placements for Children Looked After	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated. The Residual Risk Score increased from C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible and Medium Impact to B2 – Critical Risk: Highly Likely and High Impact. Now a Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk.	Worse	No
51. Economic and financial environment worsens and results in the inability to set a balanced budget.	B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact	C1 – Critical Risk: Possible / Very High Impact	New Risk: Incorporates previous Risks 06 Economic environment worsens (council), 27: Budgetary decisions are not taken or implemented quickly enough and 33: Cost of care is outstripping resource.	New	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2023 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
52. Insufficient funding leads to withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered	B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact	B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact	New Risk: Insufficient funding leads to withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered	New	No



Appendix 3

Corporate Risk Register - September 2023

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Corporate Risk Register - September 20231

Please note the original number of the risk at time of first identified is kept for audit purposes.

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Corporate Risk Register (September 2023)

September 2023 Review changes are summarised under each risk title summary.

Risk 01: The risk of a serious safeguarding or practice error, where the council has responsibility, resulting in serious harm or death

Lead Member(s): Councillor Elen Heaton, Councillor Gill German, and Councillor Julie Matthews

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2023 update:

Risk 01 has been reviewed and updated.

It continues to feel appropriate to keep the residual risk score at A1 – Critical Risk Almost Certain and Very High Impact.

Keeping the risk score at this level enables the risk to be further prioritised and escalated with significant scrutiny continuing at CET, Cabinet and Governance & Audit Committee (GAC).

Description

This risk - concerning children and adults at risk - is increasing as the environment is changing, with growing expectations around our duties in relation to third party provision. The cumulative impact of recruitment and retention issues in social care is significantly impacting on the council's ability to deliver statutory social care functions. As at September 2023, we remain deeply concerned that a death could occur as a result of insufficient staffing resources.

There is a national recruitment and retention crisis in social care (see also [risk 48](#)). Social care frequently loses staff due to the superior pay and conditions offered by recruitment agencies, other local authorities and the health board, often for similar but less demanding roles. Our services are often only able to replace experienced staff with newly qualified or inexperienced workers that require significant support and are unable to independently work with the increasingly complex cases referred to the service. Many new starters are younger, newly qualified staff and rates of maternity leave in some teams are high.

There were already reported shortages in social care and health sector. However, an impact of Covid-19 is a significant movement of the workforce away from social care and health. As described above, fewer social workers are entering the profession than are leaving. The market is extremely competitive and there is no national pay structure in place in the sector (like there is for education). Other employers offer more competitive and attractive packages that the council cannot compete with.

At the same time, caseloads are becoming more complex and are increasing. There is a risk of people not being supported, or not being seen with the right intensity.

Recruitment and retention challenges, together with more demanding cases and workloads, are impacting social care services' ability to deliver its statutory responsibilities; are placing increased pressure on remaining staff in the teams, negatively impacting their well-being and increasing levels of unplanned absence.

Failure of social care services to deliver its statutory responsibilities could result in:

- Death, injury or neglect to vulnerable citizens and their carers
- Legal challenge
- Financial damage
- Reputational damage
- Sanction by Regulatory Body

Anticipated direction of travel:

The impact of Covid-19, the continued pressures with recruitment and retention, the deterioration in the economy and the pressures people are facing, all escalated this risk in terms of its inherent and residual risk scores, with the overall risk score being heightened to its maximum level in September 2022. Since the situation has not improved. We will ensure continued extremely close management at the most senior operational, corporate and political levels of the council, and we continue to raise this risk at a national level.

Impact / Consequences

- Individual(s) experience significant harm or death.
- Significant reputational loss.
- Possible intervention by Welsh Government or Care Inspectorate Wales.
- Legal/compensation costs.

- Poor staff well-being and sickness

Inherent Risk

A1 – Critical Risk: Almost certain / Very high impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

In addition to the controls listed further below, CET and Cabinet have introduced monthly risk reviews. Every month, Lead Members, the Corporate Director and Heads of Service provide a verbal update on the level of risk and the actions being taken to manage and reduce it.

Cllr Julie Matthews has been identified as another Lead Member for this risk, because it links to recruitment.

Critical controls:

- The joint inspection of the multi-agency response to keeping children and young people safe in Denbighshire was published May 2023.
 - The report outlined findings about the effectiveness of partnership working and of the work of individual agencies in Denbighshire and found in common with many areas across Wales, challenges in recruitment and retention of staff across key agencies in Denbighshire is impacting on safeguarding children's arrangements. This is made more difficult by the high levels of demand and increasing complexity of children's needs.
 - Due to a lack of social workers, there is a growing reliance on newly qualified and agency social workers. In the local authority, the situation has been categorised as a corporate high risk.
 - They found there are systems and relationships in place to facilitate effective partnership working where a child is at risk of harm. Partners are working to a shared ethos of safeguarding children at different levels of vulnerability. Organisational leaders have a shared vision with a positive approach to regional safeguarding arrangements.
 - This clear strategic commitment has resulted in the commissioning of a sufficient range of effective local services to support children and families.
- This was a new multi-agency inspection by four regulators and was the first in Wales to be carried out.

- The first risk focus session for CET took place on October 17, 2022 following the escalation of this risk and discussion at CET on October 13, 2022. CET agreed to focus on progress in relation to key actions, which it now discusses every month. The actions under review bring together the critical operational, strategic and political actions the council is undertaking to manage this risk.
 - Cabinet now receives monthly verbal updates at Cabinet Briefing, from Lead Members, the risk owner and Heads of Service.
- [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) and Governance and Audit Committee received reports on the February 2023 risk review. To follow up on previous lines of enquiry at Governance and Audit - and to support discussions related to the interconnected nature of this risk with other risks contained within this register - a report on recruitment and retention issues in Social Services was submitted as an information report.
- [Governance and Audit Committee received a report on October 4, 2022](#), about a Care Inspectorate Wales inspection. The report highlighted recruitment and retention challenges and the Committee was reassured that safeguarding was being managed as a critical risk on the council's corporate risk register and that steps were being taken to try to alleviate the situation.
 - Meetings with Welsh Government have taken place to discuss the extent of our concerns and how the risk has escalated. We are having internal meetings involving CET, and with the Leader and lead members. There is now a memorandum about children's agency workers, and is being led by All Wales Children's' Heads of Service, and is being adhered to.
 - We have set the care fees to ensure that providers can pay their social care staff the Real Living Wage. Although the Welsh Government settlement notification states that they have included funding to enable authorities to continue to meet the additional costs of introducing the Real Living Wage for care workers, the total Revenue Support Grant fell well short of funding all pressures within social services so the commitment remains a pressure for the Council.
 - Ongoing discussions with HR are taking place and we are taking action as part of our efforts to resolve recruitment and retention issues in social care and health and more widely across council service ([see also controls for the recruitment and retention risk 48](#)).
 - The Corporate Social Care Recruitment & Retention Board is chaired by the Corporate Director, supported by Human Resources, Communications, and

Working Denbighshire. An action plan has been developed and most actions have been implemented, including:

- Appointment of a dedicated HR Recruitment Specialist for Social Care
 - Extended advertisement for social care vacancies
 - Improved recruitment packs
 - Detailed analysis of joiners and leavers data
 - Liaising with Working Denbighshire to capture / follow up unsuccessful candidates
 - Dedicated Job Fairs and DCC attendance at various community events with a focus on social care recruitment
 - Specific advertising and social media campaign focussing on social care recruitment including delivery vehicles and DCC branding
 - Removal of Grade 7 for New Social Workers and Occupational Therapists
 - Grade 8 to Grade 9 Progression for Social Workers and Occupational Therapists
 - Re-Introduction of Practice Teacher Payments
 - Review of Adult Mental Health Social Workers
 - Claiming of Registration Fees – process reviewed and simplified
 - HR has conducted a comprehensive comparison of pay and conditions across the 6 North Wales Local Authorities and BCUHB
- The Corporate Director presented the situation to the WLGA in September 2022. WLGA is gaining momentum in its work to support local authorities on this.
 - We have a statutory responsibility for safeguarding and the operational delivery of our statutory functions, alongside our partners', are our critical controls to mitigate the risk. Other services, and our wider corporate response, is about understanding and awareness so that people know what to do if and when they have concerns about a person or family's welfare.

Ancillary controls:

- We have asked other councils in North Wales how they are evaluating and managing any safeguarding risks on their corporate risk registers.
- We have responded to a Welsh Government call for evidence regarding independent schools' legislation and guidance in Wales. Some of the proposed changes to safeguarding are a direct result of issues and concerns raised by Denbighshire County Council.

- The North Wales Safeguarding Children Board Local Delivery Group, developed by Denbighshire, has been recognised as good practice.
- The Corporate Parenting Forum continues to progress well and is well attended.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Safeguarding policy and procedures are in place. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and updated in line with legislation.
- Corporate Safeguarding Training Programme.
- Framework of self-assessment for schools in relation to safeguarding has been established.
- Section 28 audit tool in place for voluntary sector to ensure safeguarding practices are in place.
- Compliance with safeguarding practises is part of the annual HR audit of schools.
- Regional arrangements for safeguarding a) children and b) adults at risk are in place. The regional safeguarding boards set priorities and actions regionally, e.g. training and policies & procedures. This includes, for example, working in partnership with North Wales Police on such issues as County Lines.
- Risk assessments in place for recruiting staff who require a DBS check and/or references and this is monitored and scrutinised by the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.
- Safeguarding policy review has taken place with Schools and guidance has been developed
- Key posts within the Council that could have an impact on safeguarding have been identified and Heads of Service are reviewing the posts to ensure that adequate checks are undertaken by the Council or and external body. All employee contracts make reference to safeguarding.
- Corporate Safeguarding Panel has been reviewed including the terms of reference, roles and responsibilities.
- Heads of Service have been asked to ensure they consider safeguarding when reviewing their risk registers and that safeguarding be included in service challenge where appropriate.

- Briefing sessions on safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation have been delivered to County Council. Safeguarding features in three Cabinet Members' portfolios.
- Improvements have been made to safeguarding arrangements with contractors including (i) DBS contract checks, (ii) ensuring that Council staff responsible on site for the contractor and managing the tendering / contract process are clear of their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding, (iii) ensuring contracts terms and conditions (including JCT) in relation to DBS checks are appropriate, (iv) ensuring that self-assessment arrangements as part of contract management are appropriate.
- Safeguarding e-learning module in place and compliance is monitored and scrutinised by the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.
- Recording and sharing safeguarding incidents and near misses is a standing item of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. It also shares case reviews where there is a corporate perspective for lessons learned. Service representatives are responsible for reporting any key messages from panel meetings to members of staff within their services.
- Adoption of Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CSP102m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date DBS (DCC)
- CSP103m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date reference check or risk assessment (DCC)
- CSP104m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date DBS (schools)
- CSP105m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date reference check or risk assessment (schools)
- CPCSP47i Percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules (including Safeguarding) by the end of the year (excluding schools)

Assurance:

- A joint inspection of the multi-agency response to keeping children and young people safe in Denbighshire was published May 2023.

- Corporate Support Services: People took a report on Workforce Planning, Recruitment & Retention to [Performance Scrutiny](#) in July 2023.
- Senior Leadership : All recruitment to the vacant Head of Service posts have now been completed with the following appointments and start dates:
Head of Adult Social Care & Homelessness Services – commenced post 1st July 2023
- In summary, the report confirmed that Human Resources (HR) have robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the Corporate Workforce Plan. The development of some policies and guidance has been delayed due to vacancies within the team and workload pressures, however these have now revised completion dates.
- A Corporate Recruitment and Retention paper was presented to January 2023 [Governance and Audit Committee](#), which included aspects of social care issues.
- This risk is a standing item on Cabinet Briefing and Corporate Executive Team monthly meetings.
- The North Wales Safeguarding Children Board Local Delivery Group and Adult Local Delivery Group continue to meet and influence policy and practice.

Residual Risk

A1 – Critical Risk Almost certain / Very high impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a minor risk. The Risk Owner has confirmed that the scoring accurately reflects the current risk to the council.

Risk 11: The risk of an unexpected or unplanned serious event occurring

Lead Member(s): Councillor Julie Matthews (Lead Member for Emergency Planning)

Risk Owner: Graham Boase

September 2023 update:

Risk 11 : The risk title has been amended from `The risk of an ineffective response to a serious event, such as severe weather, contamination, public safety, cyber-attack, or a public health event (such as Covid-19) to **`The risk of an unexpected or unplanned serious event occurring`**

Examples have been removed from the title to cover any unexpected and unplanned serious event.

Councillor Barry Mellor and Councillor Win Mullen James have been removed as Lead Members for this risk and Councillor Julie Matthews Lead Member (Corporate Strategy, Policy & Equalities) remains as the Lead Member with overall strategic responsibility for Emergency Planning. Relevant Lead Members may have to lead on specific aspects of an emergency and its implications, but the overall strategic lead in relation to the Councils planning for an emergency and strategic response to an emergency should be Cllr Julie Matthews.

Critical controls have been updated.

The residual risk score remains unchanged as:

C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact.

Description

Serious unexpected and unplanned events can occur at any time, and are planned for and responded to via our strategic corporate approach to emergencies.

Emergency Planning in North Wales is coordinated by the North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service, the host authority for which is Flintshire County Council.

The Region has an agreed Emergency Management Policy and the Council has its own Major Emergency Arrangements Procedure.

We have in place a Strategic Emergency Management Team (SEMT) structure which (i) plans and prepares the Council for an emergency and (ii) coordinates the Council's response to a significant emergency. SEMT is Chaired by the CEO and meets quarterly to review plans and preparations/responses to an emergency. There are 4 sub-groups under the SEMT, each one Chaired by a senior Officer; (i) Corporate Emergency Information Team (ii) Corporate Emergency Humanitarian Response Team (iii) Corporate Emergency Operational Team and (iv) Corporate Emergency Recovery Team.

In addition Corporate Executive Tema (CET) are on a 24/7 Gold Rota, so a Senior Officer is always available to lead on an emergency. In the event of an emergency the Senior Officer on call via the Gold Rota will initially coordinate the Council's response, including considering calling an SEMT meeting. Depending on the circumstances of the emergency the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is likely to take overall strategic control.

All emergency arrangements are supported by the regional team, including working with partners, and any regional dimension to the emergency.

The Senior Lead Officer (i.e. Gold Rota lead) will need to consider the role of the Lead Member, Cllr Julie Matthews in any emergency, as well as how best to inform other relevant Lead Members, Cabinet as a whole and the wider Membership of the Council.

Heads of Service have responsibility to plan for Service response to emergencies e.g. seasonal variations in weather, other environmental related emergencies relating to food, water, air quality etc, cyber-attacks, terrorism, and of course viral pandemics and public health events such as Covid.

Major emergencies put terrific strain on organisations such as ours, impacting on service delivery, staff capacity, and of course finances. It also challenges the resource capacity of partners.

Our approach to this risk is to strategically plan to minimise the impact of an unplanned event should it occur.

Anticipated direction of travel:

We expect this to be a risk that consistently features in our corporate risk register. This ensures continued close management at the most senior operational, corporate and political levels of the council.

Impact / Consequences

- Serious injury or fatality
- Significant disruption to core services.
- Reputational risk to the council in the way it responds to any emergency
- Significant cost pressures to our budget.

Inherent Risk

A2 – Critical Risk: Almost Certain / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls (strategic relevance):

- The North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service, provides a high level of support in terms of planning for and responding to an emergency
- The strategic approach via SEMT, the associated sub groups, the Gold Rota and individual Service planning (including Service Business Continuity Plans) ensures we are prepared for an unexpected or unplanned serious event.
- Close regional partnership working
- Emergency Planning training and mock events.

Ancillary controls:

- An annual Emergency Planning Response report is taken to SLT, the Lead Member and Partnerships Scrutiny, as requested, every year.
- We undertake regular reviews to ensure ICT systems are secure, including making updates to our Firewall.
- We have a vulnerable people mapping tool to help us identify those that require specific support in an emergency.
- Deputies for Chairs of SEMT and subgroups have been appointed.
- Seeking more volunteers to be loggists to support record taking during an emergency
- Guide for Members in terms of their role during an emergency

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CSPHS1001i RIDDOR accident rate (National measure – No. of RIDDOR x 100,000 / No. of FTE employees)
- PDA904i Denbighshire County Council achieves Public Services Network (PSN) security Standard compliance (0 = pass; 1 = fail)

Qualitative indicators:

- Production, and where needed implementation of, Service business continuity plans
- Establishment, uptake and effectiveness of emergency rest centres.

(Please note: some of these indicators are only measured should a serious event occur)

Residual Risk

C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Yes

Risk 12: The risk of a significantly negative report(s) from external regulators.

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis and Councillor Jason McLellan

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 2023 update:

We expect this risk to always feature in our corporate risk register, but one that may increase or decrease in line with other factors, for example the financial environment.

The risk has been reviewed and the residual risk score remains as C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact

Description

Negative reports from regulators could lead to a range of impacts that could be negative for Denbighshire County Council. The council is committed, however, to responding to reports and working with partners, including external regulators, to addressing any concerns that may arise.

Our relationships with external regulators are very important. We need mutual confidence in our relationships to ensure the best possible outcomes in terms of service improvement and shared learning. We ensure we alert external regulators to issues that may be becoming problematic early on, and we work closely with them on programmes of work to share learning more widely.

Governance and Audit Committee received a report on October 4, 2022, about a Care Inspectorate Wales inspection. The report highlighted recruitment and retention challenges and the Committee was reassured that safeguarding was being managed as a critical risk on the council's corporate risk register and that steps were being taken to try to alleviate the situation.

A further piece of work, this time focussed on children's services highlighted some issues, such as - once again - recruitment. CIW is currently undertaking a national study of child placements in unregulated settings.

A paper about Audit Wales's report about commissioning older people's care homes has been presented to Governance and Audit Committee. This was a national study that included a review of regional arrangements, including in North Wales.

Anticipated direction of travel:

The score has been considered in relation to current performance and is felt to be accurate. The current position is generally positive. We expect this risk to always feature in

our corporate risk register, but one that may increase or decrease in line with other factors, for example the financial environment. This risk will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure all necessary controls are effective and operating as they should be.

Impact / Consequences

- A wider lack of confidence in council services.
- Reputational damage.
- Potential intervention by the WG.
- Significant resources may be required to be diverted to deliver immediate and substantial change.

Inherent Risk

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Regulation we are subject to includes: CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales); WAO Office; Estyn; HSE (Health & Safety Executive); ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) Public Services Ombudsman. Information, studies and other reports are also published by other commissioners such as the Welsh Language Commissioner for Wales or the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

Critical controls:

- SLT, Estyn, CIW and Audit Wales hold an annual Audit Risk Assessment meeting to reach consensus on the regulatory inspections to take place throughout the year.
- SLT on 26th January 2023 received this year's Joint Audit Risk Assessment setting out the programme of assurance planned for the year ahead. The report included the priorities of the inspectorates, and their intentions at a national and local level to identify strengths and areas of concern. The issues identified within the report affect all local authorities across Wales and nothing was raised as a specific local concern regarding Denbighshire. Estyn highlighted some local concerns but these are issues we are already aware of and managing.
- A joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA), involving Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and

Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn, was undertaken in Denbighshire during the week commencing 6th February 2023.

- We maintain positive and proactive relationship management and ongoing communication with external regulators. We have healthy and open relationships with our regulators.
- The corporate performance management framework (PMF) is the main control in this area.
- Head of Corporate Support Services: Performance, Digital & Assets, Strategic Planning Team Manager and Chief Internal Auditor meet monthly with Wales Audit Office to understand and respond to their concerns.
- Regulators sit on Service Performance Challenges.
- Protocol developed for addressing recommendations from WAO national studies: services' response will be the subject of performance scrutiny and service challenge.

Ancillary controls:

- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Annual Governance Statement and Performance Self-Assessment are aligned.

Relevant indicator of the effectiveness of controls:

- CH012i: The cumulative number of negative reports from external regulators, financial year to date

Assurance:

- The joint inspection of the multi-agency response to keeping children and young people safe in Denbighshire was published May 2023. ([Links to Risk 01](#))
- Internal Audit reviews forward work programme
- External regulatory bodies. For example, CIW monitor progress through routine performance review activities and through a CIW local authority risk based

approach to inspection planning. CIW is currently undertaking a national study of child placements in unregulated settings.

Residual Risk

C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Yes

Risk 14: The risk of a health & safety incident resulting in serious injury or the loss of life. (where H&S is referred to, this incorporates fire safety)

Lead Member(s): Councillor Julie Matthews

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 2023 update:

The Risk Owner has been amended from Steve Gadd to Gary Williams, Corporate Director: Governance and Business for the strategic leadership and delegated responsibility for Health and Safety.

This risk to now encompass any health and safety incident that represents a potential risk to like and subsequently the Risk 44: The risk of Ash Dieback Disease (ADB) in Denbighshire leading to significant health and safety issues that represent a potential

risk to life has been removed and mitigated as part of the ongoing Ash Dieback Project and Action Plan management.

Critical controls have been updated and the Residual Risk score remains as E2 – Moderate Risk: Rare / High Impact

Description

This could be as a result of unsafe acts, unsafe work places or ineffective H&S management.

Anticipated direction of travel:

This impact of this risk had previously been heightened as a consequence of risks associated with Covid-19. The risk has been reviewed and is considered to be static.

Impact / Consequences

- Serious injury or death of an employee and/or any other person.
- Significant reputational damage
- Substantial legal/litigation costs.
- Criminal prosecution of staff or the organisation.

Inherent Risk

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

- In response to National concerns regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) the Council has revisited surveys of schools and other buildings to identify the presence of RAAC and any measures required to mitigate any risk posed by it.
- Many staff continue to work from home some or most of the time. The New Ways of Working Project team, led by our Corporate Director: Governance and Business,

continues to monitor the situation. There may be risks associated with a potential lack of fire wardens and first aiders in the office buildings under these current working arrangements. This is being explored and any actions or solutions identified will be added to our controls.

- Strategic leadership is provided by the Corporate Director: Governance and Business, with delegated responsibility for Health and Safety.
- Competent H&S advisors are employed by the organisation to provide competent advice, guidance and training on H&S to all Council employees and services.
- H&S maintain Service Level Agreements with all Local Authority Schools.
- A Corporate Health and Safety Policy is in place, which defines the H&S organisation and arrangements in the council.
- There is an established H&S Management System in place.
- H&S training programme focussed on council activities and the way we manage H&S.
- “Managing safely in Denbighshire” training is mandatory for all managers.
- The Corporate H&S team carry out a programme of targeted monitoring
- An online accident, incident reporting process is in place. There is an expectation that all accidents and incidents are reported.
- An online Staff Protection Register where staff can search for or request the addition of records in connection with their authorised activities. All access requests are monitored by the system and records of all access is recorded by the system for auditing purposes.
- Quarterly Health & Safety newsletter is published to keep staff up to date with health and safety management within the Council.

Ancillary controls:

- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- An established Corporate H&S Committee is in place as part of the Joint Consultative Committee for Health and Safety and Employee Relations which is a forum for the employer and employee representatives to discuss and consult on H&S.

- A number of service level H&S committees meet to provide a forum for service managers and employee representatives to discuss and consult on H&S.
- Significant H&S related accidents, incidents and near misses are investigated internally.
- Schools have effective health and safety practices.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CSPHS1001i RIDDOR accident rate (National measure – No. of RIDDOR x 100,000 / No. of FTE employees)
- FAH123m The percentage of properties with asbestos where a re-inspection has been carried out in line with the asbestos management plan
- FAH119m The percentage of properties with a valid Fire Risk Assessment (*please note asbestos, fire, water, gas, electricity etc. are building compliance risks rather than health and safety risks, although failure to manage will have a health and safety impact*)
- Gas servicing, fixed wire testing and water hygiene are relevant indicators that are also monitored regularly

Assurance:

- Annual Corporate Health & Safety Report reported to Governance & Audit Committee. The latest report presented in October 2022 for 2021 to 2022 defined Denbighshire County Council as continuing to be assessed by Corporate Health & Safety as being an organisation that sits in the “calculative and proactive” zone.
- Annual Fire Safety Programme and Performance is reported to Governance & Audit Committee

Residual Risk

E2 – Moderate Risk: Rare / High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council’s Risk Appetite?

Yes. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a cautious risk.

Risk 21: The risk that the integration of health and social care services between BCUHB and DCC does not develop further

Lead Member(s): Councillor Elen Heaton and Councillor Gill German

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2023 update:

Risk 21: The risk title has been amended from 'The risk that effective partnerships and interfaces between BCU Health Board and Denbighshire County Council (DCC) do not develop, leading to significant misalignment between the strategic and operational direction of BCU and DCC' to: **The risk that the integration of health and social care services between BCUHB and DCC does not develop further.**

CET have closely monitored developments at the Health Board having particular regard to their potential impact on this risk. Risk reviewed and updated.

The residual risk score remains as C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

Description

Integrated social care and health services and delivering on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is a fundamental part of our partnership with the health board and more widely, across North Wales, through the Regional Partnership Board and the North Wales Social Care and Well-being Improvement Collaborative.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), which covers the whole of North Wales, was placed back in special measures on Monday 27, February 2023 having

previously been in the category between 2015 and 2020. Health at a local level, and the effectiveness of health and social care working together, is subject to increased political and regulatory scrutiny. This requires a level of scrutiny and a strong commitment to partnership. There is a national agenda to drive effective partnership working.

Relationship management and communication is critical to successful mitigation.

Since going back into special measures the Health Board has put an interim Chair and interim Chief Executive in post, however, there are still a number of interim posts at various levels which affects decision making.

Anticipated direction of travel:

The longer term impact of Covid-19 is becoming apparent but is by no means fully understood. The catch up required in routine/planned treatment, exacerbated health inequalities and hidden harms (due to not having treatment, mental health impact of Covid-19), all create a potential for challenge in the system, and therefore the relationship, which could affect delivery of integrated social care and health services in Denbighshire. The funding arrangements with Welsh Government create an ongoing friction.

The partnership arrangements and relationships we have built means there is enough interface and opportunity to deal with issues before they become significant problems.

However, the reinstatement of special measures means there is a possibility that this risk could increase in terms of both likelihood and impact (and sit further beyond our risk appetite), until such time the Board is no longer in special measures, the Board's restructure settles or should our controls be ineffective.

Impact / Consequences

- Inefficient services
- Gaps in service provision
- Delays/failure to deliver joint projects
- Reputational damage
- Ability to meet statutory duties - Well-being of Future Generations Bill, Social Services and Well-being Act

Inherent Risk

A1 – Critical Risk: Almost certain / Very high impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

- Delivery of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Plan.
The 2022 to 2023 annual report was presented to [Partnerships Scrutiny Committee](#) on 14th September 2023.
- The BCUHB restructure has been implemented but posts have not been permanently appointed to (the post holders are interim). The new Integrated Health Community Director (Central) is now permanent and we consider our relationship with that post holder to be very positive.
- Three of the four Senior Mental Health Directorate posts remain interim.
- The Regional Partnership Board and the North Wales Social Care and Well-being Improvement Collaborative have reviewed needs in relation to social care and health services as part of our population needs assessment (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014).
- Four Community Resource Teams have been established.
- The Regional Partnership Board is in place to progress cooperation and integration.
- BCUHB is a member of the Conwy/Denbighshire PSB, which has shared priorities and a shared governance vision.

Ancillary controls:

- We assume, as at last time the Board was put into special measures that an Assurance Board will be established. The Council to look to engage with that Board and receive regular updates.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- NWSIC has reviewed its governance arrangements in partnership with BCUHB.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- Pathways of Care: There is a requirement for each health board to measure delayed pathways of care activity via a monthly validated census with local authority partners. This will enable monitoring of the number and length of delays, plus their reasons, assisting NHS and LA partners in prioritising actions to alleviate delays.

Qualitative indicators that describe what effective management/partnerships looks and feels like may be more appropriate in this instance. Such as, governance (e.g. Regional Partnership Board) and service level agreements, Memorandums of Understanding.

Assurance:

- Audit Wales has examined Regional Partnership Boards' commissioning of older people's care homes recently and a report was presented to Governance and Audit Committee in March 2022.

Residual Risk

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Major risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk. The Risk Owner has confirmed that they are comfortable that the scoring accurately reflects the current risk to the council.

Risk 31: The risk of fraud and corruption resulting in financial and reputational loss and possibly impacting on service delivery.

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 2023 update:

Risk reviewed and updated.

This risk is a static risk, and our aim is to maintain it as a moderate risk. We would not foresee a time when this risk would not be on the risk register.

Critical controls have been updated and the Residual Risk score remains unchanged as E2 – Moderate Risk: Rare / High impact

Description

Denbighshire County Council employs around 4,500 staff and spends in excess of £300 million per year. It commissions and provides a wide range of services to individuals and households and works with a wide range of private, public and voluntary sector organisations.

As with any other large organisation, the size and nature of the Council's services mean that there is an ongoing risk of loss due to fraud and corruption from both internal and external sources. There is also an ongoing risk of bribery as the Council provides and procures goods, works and services. The Council has therefore put in place proportionate systems to minimise this risk and these are kept under constant review.

The council recognises that as well as causing financial loss, fraud is also detrimental to the provision of services, and damaging to the reputation of, and confidence in, the council and public bodies in general.

Anticipated direction of travel:

This risk is a static risk, and our aim is to maintain it as a moderate risk. We would not foresee a time when this risk would not be on the risk register. There are no performance measures currently available to quantify progress in reducing this risk.

Impact / Consequences

- Financial loss.
- Loss of reputation and confidence in the council and public bodies in general.
- Negative impact on service provision / delivery.
- Negative impact on the council's culture.
- Legal / compensation costs.
- Criminal prosecution.
- Negative audit / inspection reports.

Inherent Risk

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

In its policies and procedures, the council gives out the clear message that it will not tolerate any impropriety by employees, elected Members or third party organisations. It has put in place appropriate and proportionate systems to minimise this risk and these are kept under constant review, including the following:

Critical controls:

- Internal Audit held Fraud Awareness Sessions for Schools in January 2023 to raise awareness and promote the Corporate Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption and Bribery to schools.
- The fraud policy has been updated.
- The Council has appointed a Corporate Director: Governance and Business.
- The Governance & Audit Committee received in September 2023 the Annual Whistleblowing Report.
- Internal Audit has conducted a review of ethical culture. As a result, we introduced clearer guidance about our code of conduct (for officers) to strengthen

arrangements for declarations of conflicts and interests, including gifts and hospitality.

- Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption and Bribery which includes fraud response plan, was updated and ratified by Governance and Audit Committee in July 2021. The purpose of the Strategy and Fraud Response Plan is to provide management with a tool to ensure progress and transparency with regards to counter-fraud activities. It is designed to heighten the Council's fraud resilience and demonstrate its protection and stewardship of public funds.
- In developing this Strategy, the Council has adopted the guiding principles included in "Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally 2020" (FFCL2020) which is the counter fraud and corruption strategy for local government. It provides a blueprint for a coordinated response to fraud and corruption perpetrated against local authorities with the support of those at the top.
- IT systems have authorisation controls in place, which reduce the risk of fraud (remote working does not increase the risk)
- The Code of Corporate Governance
- The Code of Conduct for Elected Members
- The Employees' Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations including Contract Procedure Rules
- The Whistleblowing Policy
- The Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Recognition and monitoring of the risk of fraud in service risk registers
- Systems of internal control
- Recruitment processes
- Annual review by the council's Internal Audit team
- Regular internal and external review of our systems and procedures
- The risk of fraud and corruption is also managed at a service level

Ancillary controls:

- The Communications team has a close working relationship with Internal Audit and low assurance rated reports are flagged up at an early stage.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications

Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.

- Engagement with the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)
- E-learning modules on Whistleblowing and Code of Conduct

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CSP8i: The number of data protection breaches that were reported to the Information Commissioner's Office
- CPCH014i: Negative news stories as a percentage of all news stories about the council
- CH013i: The cumulative number of Internal Audit low assurance reports, financial year to date

Residual Risk

E2 – Moderate Risk: Rare / High impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Yes

Risk 34: The risk that there is insufficient regulated care

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gill German and Councillor Elen Heaton

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2023 review:

Risk 34: The title of this risk has been amended from 'The risk that demand for specialist care cannot be met locally to **'The risk that there is insufficient regulated care'**.

The risk has been reviewed and critical controls updated.

There residual risk score remains the same: B2 – Critical Risk: Likely / High Impact.

Description

Availability of some regulatory adult and child service can be scarce, leading to the requirement to provide alternative and/or expensive services. A reduction in the availability of domiciliary care provision means we find it challenging to provide services needed (particularly in the south of the county).

This continues to be a significant risk. We are still in a position of having circa 1,000 hours of domiciliary care being handed back to the council due to staff shortages. This means people are waiting for domiciliary care agency allocation. However, there are signs that the number of hours being handed back is reducing, but this is still being managed extremely closely.

As previously highlighted, the reasons for this situation are summarised as follows:

- **Recruitment and retention** – This is a national issue for the care sector. At the root of this are many factors, including the relatively low wages, high demands, and sometimes a perceived lack of esteem/value in the care career path. Even internally in DCC, we struggle to recruit to care work positions.
- **Increase in scale and complexity of needs** – The ageing population brings obvious additional pressures in this area. We have seen an increase in need for double-handed packages. Some individuals currently awaiting domiciliary care have also had previous agencies withdraw, due to their being unable to manage the level/complexity of need.
- **Denbighshire's rural geography** – This presents a number of challenges, including because of costs, e.g. travel time can make a rural care package much less attractive to prospective providers, and recruitment, e.g. as usually care workers covering more rural areas must be able to drive.

- **Citizens' choice** – A number of individuals currently awaiting care have been made offers that they have declined, on the basis that they are unhappy with the specific hours being offered.
- **The prevention and reablement agenda** – Enabling people to remain independent and prevent the need for residential care, prolonged hospital stays etc. as far as possible - while of course significant wellbeing goals and priorities for the council - naturally creates additional pressures on domiciliary care/interim services.

The wider long-term consequences of the pandemic are also making this issue more challenging. People are also making life changes with some leaving the sector altogether.

The risk is also heightened as a result of [risk 50](#). The Welsh Government's Programme for Government makes a commitment to 'eliminate private profit from the care of Children Looked After during the next Senedd term'. The objective of removing profit is a positive one and it has the region's resounding commitment. However, it is imperative that Welsh Government take steps in pursuit of not-for-profit arrangements that do not disrupt children and young people's lives in the short term. Our key concern is that providers become unsettled and the sufficiency and suitability of placements will be affected, affecting the lives of Children Looked After, and increases this risk that demand for specialist care cannot be met locally.

Anticipated direction of travel:

Currently, the risk associated with us being unable to meet the demand for regulated care locally is a critical risk, which is beyond our appetite. In the longer term, we hope to bring the risk under control and return to a 'business as usual' scenario. It is not clear how long this will take.

Impact / Consequences

- High cost
- Individuals with eligible needs unable to receive suitable domiciliary care due to lack of resources and service provision
- If far from home, there is a detrimental impact on a client's well-being (and that of their family)
- Unable to meet need in preferred language
- Staff become over-stretched

- Reputational damage.

Inherent Risk

A2 – Critical Risk: Almost certain / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

These critical controls relate to action being taken to deal with the current demand and challenges for domiciliary care provision in the county:

- Develop a new Children’s Assessment Centre (Bwthyn y Ddôl) jointly with Conwy CBC. This is an ongoing project.
- Micro-enterprises/micro providers has been brought back in-house, previously we paid a provider called Community Catalysts to run our Micro-Provider project. We now directly employ a full-time Deputy Team manager to run the service whose role includes: recruitment, training and monitoring of micro-providers. Maintenance of the Micro-Provider Directory. Promoting Micro-Providers as an effective alternative to traditional forms of care support, amongst health and social care staff designing packages of care for vulnerable citizens and their un-paid carers.
- Denbighshire now has a pool of 43 Micro-Providers able to deliver 900 hours of care and support per week, with an additional 20 recruits participating in the Micro-Provider development programme.
- Implementation of Welsh Government’s decision to fund the Real Living Wage (RLW) for registered social workers.
- A corporate Social Care Recruitment and Retention Group is in place (see [risk 01](#)).
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Our in-house teams (Reablement, Interim and Health & Social Care Support Workers) are covering as many outstanding care packages as possible.
- We are currently looking at how we can safely (in compliance with CIW/SCW requirements) draw on more support from other internal social care staff who do not currently deliver personal care.

- Working closely with health colleagues to manage workload and explore the potential to tap into their care applicants.
- Continue to explore alternative ways of meeting people's needs, within a strengths-based, enabling approach.
- We are working with Procurement to look at contractual arrangements to respond to the exceptional circumstances.
- We are returning to discussions with other local authorities to look at opportunities for joint commissioning.
- We will continue working to ensure that carers have the support they need.
- We are looking at ways that we can try to manage the expectations of citizens/families; to continue to honour preference as much as possible, while at the same time ensuring that we are realistic about what we can provide, and that we are ultimately led by need.

Critical controls under usual circumstances include:

- Single Point of Access is fully established and proving successful in providing advice and information to individuals in order for them to access community services themselves.
- Community Led Conversations 'What Matters' project changing the way staff support individuals enabling them to take control of their own well-being and utilising other external resources where possible.
- Developing a range of staff skill mixes through workforce development in order to enable staff to work in new ways that complement the new government agenda.
- Series of meetings with providers across Adult Social Care are underway to discuss annual fee setting process.
- Review and re-assessment project to ensure individuals are still eligible under new criteria
- Further development of support budgets
- Regional project considering issues.
- Recommissioning domiciliary care project in progress - this includes the implementation of the new regional domiciliary care framework in Denbighshire to include patch based commissioning for difficult rural areas.

A number of posts remain un-recruited to Reablement and Health and Social Care in the south of Denbighshire. This does limit our ability to pick up care packages.

We have successfully recruited 4 staff members who will work across the whole of Denbighshire with the more complex cases, however this is funded with temporary funding. We continue to work on a rolling recruitment programme with the support from a dedicated HR officer.

Ancillary controls:

- Recruitment fayres taken place in county to highlight the need for specific health and social care staff.
- Continue to look at the use of grant monies in creative and combined ways to deliver better solutions.
- CIW national review of domiciliary care - implementing recommendations.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- Delivery of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Group's action plan.
- Vacancies (internal and external) and recruitment activity
- Budget variance
- ASCHAD005: Of the number of new assessments completed for adults, the number where needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan

Assurance:

- CIW monitor progress through routine performance review activities and through a CIW local authority risk based approach to inspection planning.

Residual Risk

B2 – Critical Risk: Likely / High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk. The Risk Owner, together with the Head of Childrens Services, are actively managing this risk to bring it back under control. This is a national issue though and one that is unlikely to be resolved quickly.

Risk 37: The risk that partners don't have the resources, matching priorities or commitment to support delivery of shared plans and priorities

Lead Member(s): Councillor Jason McLellan

Risk Owner: Graham Boase

September 2023 update:

Risk 37: The title of this risk has been updated to reflect the risk as a more generic risk around partnership working from 'The risk that partners don't have the resources, matching priorities or commitment to support delivery of shared plans and priorities, and in particular, fail to reduce inequalities and deprivation' to '**The risk that partners don't have the resources, matching priorities or commitment to support delivery of shared plans and priorities**'

The Risk Owner has changed from Tony Ward to Graham Boase.

The description and controls have been updated.

The residual risk score remains unchanged as : C2 – Major risk: Possible / High Impact

Description

With finite resources and competing priorities, there is a risk of a lack of commitment or capacity within strategic partner organisations to support shared plans, priorities and outcomes.

In delivering services to our communities the Council is reliant on a number of strategic partners including Health (inc Public Health Wales), North Wales Police, National Resources Wales, Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council, City/Town/Community Councils, neighbouring authorities, etc.

There is a complex structure of regional working, including Corporate Joint Committees (CJC), North Wales Economic Ambition Board (Ambition North Wales), Regional Partnership Board (RPB), Conwy & Denbighshire Public Service Board (PSB), Safer Communities Board etc. Much resource goes into attending and servicing these structures, but with budget pressures the risk is they become less effective, impacting on our ability to provide services to our communities. The biggest impact is likely to be on our more deprived communities.

Anticipated direction of travel:

We therefore do not expect the risk to diminish in likelihood or severity soon.

Inherent Risk

B1 – Critical Risk: Very Likely / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls (strategic relevance):

- Denbighshire is represented at collaborative boards by senior managers and/or political leadership, for example, at the Regional Partnership Board (Corporate Director Social Services & Education and Lead Member Health & Social Care), North Wales Economic Ambition Board (CEO and Leader), Conwy & Denbighshire Public Service Board (CEO and Leader) etc
- Collaborative plans and priorities have been developed by the regional boards for which there is commitment from partners.
- Our Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 has been approved, with Pledges that specifically address the need for working with partners
- Partnership and [Alternative Service Delivery Model Toolkit](#) recommends an annual review of partnerships to ensure membership and shared commitment remains relevant.

Ancillary control:

- Corporate Director Economy & Environment has regular meetings with senior management in NRW.

Assurance:

- Feedback from the Welsh Government and the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner on the Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan.

Impact / Consequences

- Objectives not delivered.
- Failure to maximise opportunities to collaborate to resolve issues no single organisation is responsible for or capable of resolving on its own.

- Ineffective management of expectations among partners/public/Members leading to reputational damage.
- Investment of council resources with minimal return.

Residual Risk

C2 – Major risk: Possible / High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Yes. This risk fits within our open risk appetite in relation to operational and policy delivery.

Further actions:

To develop a clear escalation pathway to HoS, Directors, and/or Cabinet Leads as appropriate, where partnerships aren't delivering as hoped.

Action due date: 31 March 2024

Person Responsible: Helen Vaughan-Evans

Risk 45: The risk to the Council's reputation of not responding swiftly or sufficiently enough in making our contribution to tackle climate change and bring about nature's recovery following the declaration of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019.

Lead Member(s): Councillor Barry Mellor

September 2023 update

This Risk has been completely reviewed and updated in light of the following title change:

Risk 45 title has been amended from: The risk that the council fails to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030 to: **The risk to the Council's reputation of not responding swiftly or sufficiently enough in making our contribution to tackle climate change and bring about nature's recovery following the declaration of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019.**

The residual risk score remains unchanged as C2 – Major: Possible / High Impact

Description

Since declaring a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency in July 2019, we have adopted the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030) and put in place the Climate and Ecological Change Programme to deliver on the strategy goals to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030. The delivery of Climate and Ecological Change Programme is a large part of the Council's A Greener Denbighshire theme within the Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2027. In addition to aspects around supporting communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change.

Anticipated direction of travel:

This risk is currently within our risk appetite. Following positive feedback from Audit Wales on our programme management and organisational ambition on this agenda we are reassured that we have a well-scoped action plan in place. However, a national report about the public sector's response more generally, to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, broadly says organisations need to be bold and take risks if they are to stand a chance of meeting this ambitious target. Analysis of 2022/23 data suggests we are not currently delivering at the pace required for us to feel assured we will achieve Net Carbon Zero Council by 2030 and interdependencies of elements outside our control is also a limiting factor. The assessment for Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 is more promising although recent challenges with extending wildflower meadow grassland management approaches are acknowledged as concerning to further progress on this goal. We will be

reviewing the Strategy, its scope, the targets within and our now 7-year Programme during 2023/24. Careful communication planning will be required as part of that process and through the decision making board process the revised strategy document will go through (performance scrutiny, cabinet and council). This risk will require regular management to ensure controls are working as intended. We expect the likelihood to reduce, although the impact is anticipated to remain high.

Impact / Consequences

- Damage to the organisations credibility and reputation.
- Public complaints and protest.
- Deteriorating staff morale.
- Inability to meet statutory obligations and avoid legislative offenses.
- Opportunity loss in coproduction approaches with communities and partners around climate change impact, climate risk resilience and nature recovery.
- Opportunity loss in securing external funding for work in this area.

Inherent Risk

A2 – Critical Risk: Almost Certain / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

- 2023/24 Strategy Review and Refresh work has commenced and will require CET and SLT time and input, as well as Cabinet, Scrutiny and Council. It involves public involvement and engagement through surveys and a workshop.
- Analysis of net carbon zero performance to date and forecasted progress to 2030 following 2022/23 data return indicates there is a gap between what we forecast can be achieved and the carbon reduction/carbon sequestration increase targets.
- A national report about the public sector's response more generally, to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, broadly says organisations need to be bold and take risks now if they are to stand a chance of meeting this ambitious target.
- The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency cross party political working group has been re-established and has met for first time. Cross party consensus around

being upfront with our knowledge to date on progress and forecast within the updated strategy document.

- Communication representatives on the Greener Denbighshire Board and cross party political working group to enable the Communications Team to manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Effective programme management is in place, including communications and risk management.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss.
- Climate Change team has been established, with a programme board in place. Resource plans are in place for services for key areas of the Climate and Ecological Change Programme.
- We have secured budget to deliver the 2023/24 programme, including recruiting a procurement business partner to reduce emissions in our procurements. Other roles being explored will largely be expansions of existing roles and teams.
- The Climate and Ecological Change programme actively seek opportunities for external grant funding
- Introduction to Climate Change training is available to all staff. All but one of the Senior Leadership Team have attended a one-day accredited Carbon Literacy course. Intranet pages launched to increase awareness of staff to the contribution they can make.
- Active participation in national, regional and local strategy and operational groups to leverage benefits from collaboration.
- Active engagement with Environmental Representative groups active in Denbighshire. Public engagement within strategy review and refresh every 3 years.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- NCZCORP: Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains)
- CTOTALCORP: Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) for the Net Carbon Zero goal
- STOTALCORP: Total carbon tonnage sequestered (Corporately) for the Net Carbon Zero goal

- SRHIGHCORP: Percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness
- SRLOWCORP: Percentage of DCC owned and operated land in lowest categories of species richness

Assurance:

- Internal Audit Review planning prompts for testing-related controls in all relevant projects
- Office Accommodation Internal Audit Review 2020
- Included in Internal Audit 2022/23 plan
- Audit Wales – Delivering Environmental Ambitions 2020-21
- Audit Wales – Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030
- Verto reporting capability to track projects that help, hinder or are neutral to carbon management and nature recovery

Residual Risk

C2 – Major: Possible / High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Major risk. Risk Appetite suggests this risk should/could be tolerated as a major risk as long as appropriate steps have been taken to proactively manage community relations and media and coverage. Although, clearly, our ambition is to meet the 2030 goals, we hope to be able to reduce the likelihood of the risk closer to 2030 once sufficient benefits and positive impacts have been achieved.

Further actions:

1. Ensure all of SLT, including any new members, attend one-day carbon literacy training

Action Due Date: Rolling

Person Responsible: Interim Climate Change Programme Manager

2. New action: Roll out ecological literacy training

Action Due Date: 31/03/2024

Person Responsible: Interim Climate Change Programme Manager

3. Conduct a review of the Strategy, its scope, targets and the Programme pathway to 2030, include public engagement in the process and take refresh Strategy through decision making board

Action Due Date: 31/03/2024

Person Responsible: Interim Climate Change Programme Manager

4. Develop a defined communication plan and messaging for revised and refreshed Strategy adoption (internal and external communications) and implement

Action Due Date: 31/03/2024

Person Responsible: Communications and Marketing Officer

5. Complete more in depth stakeholder mapping exercise and include in Climate and Ecological Change Programme Communication Plan

Action Due Date: 31/03/2024

Person Responsible: Communications and Marketing Officer

Risk 48: The risk that recruitment and retention issues leads to a loss of expertise and capacity resulting in poor or inadequate performance

Lead Member(s): Councillor Julie Matthews, Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 2023 update:

Risk 48: The risk title has been amended from `The risk that recruitment and retention issues, leading to a loss of expertise and capacity, worsen resulting in poor or inadequate services` to `**The risk that recruitment and retention issues leads to a loss of expertise and capacity resulting in poor or inadequate performance**'.

Previous Risk 30 : `The risk that Senior Leadership capacity and skills to sustain service and corporate performance is not available` has now been incorporated within this risk.. Accordingly Councillor Gwyneth Ellis has been added as a Lead Member (Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets)

Risk Owner has transferred from CEO to Corporate Director Governance & Business. Critical controls have been updated.

While pressures in relation to recruitment and retention in social care and health, in particular, are acute, the risk level across the organisation and across all services remains the same as it was in February 2023.

The residual risk score remains unchanged as: B3 – Major Risk: Likely / Medium Impact

Description

The Council has a regular turnover off staff as individuals move on for a host of reasons. A number of service areas then face difficulties to recruit to those vacancies, particularly but not limited to critical front line social care and highways and environment roles. This is a national issue.

Anticipated direction of travel:

From a corporate perspective the risk is likely to reduce as we embark upon finding significant savings. Vacant posts may need to be deleted from the structure to contribute to savings or be left open to offer redeployment opportunities in connection with savings elsewhere. It is anticipated that certain Services will retain the risk in their Service Risk Registers.

Impact / Consequences

- Failure to recruit to and retain staff in key roles, including front line positions
- Difficulty in sustaining services
- Difficulty meeting statutory requirements
- Declining performance in critical areas, particularly Childrens' Services.
- Deteriorating staff morale/well-being
- Increased pressure on middle and senior managers
- Well-being of staff members expected to cover additional work due to the Council carrying a high number of vacant posts

Inherent Risk

B3 – Major Risk: Likely / Medium Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Services are taking specific actions, to deliver targeted recruitment programmes. This risk though captures the impact on the organisation corporately and the following controls reflect a corporate response. Whilst these controls are regarded as important to undertake, we are not currently certain that they will reduce the risk. There are regional and national pressures around recruitment and retention and some of these pressures may resolve themselves.

Critical controls:

- The Council has completed the review of the Senior Leadership Team structure and has successfully recruited to all vacant SLT posts.
- Corporate Plan Theme 9 will be considering issues of retention and recruitment
- An Internal Audit has been completed of the workforce plan action plan, reported to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in July 2023.

In summary, the report confirmed that Human Resources (HR) have robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the Corporate Workforce Plan. The development of some policies and guidance has been delayed due to vacancies within the team and workload pressures, however these have new revised completion dates.

- Workforce planning actions are underway to progress the findings of the corporate and service-level workforce planning reviews. There continues to be a significant focus on recruitment, especially in social care and health roles. A six monthly update report on delivery of the action plan was presented to the Corporate Executive and Senior Leadership Teams during the period. An annual update was presented in April 2023.
- A Group has been established looking a recruitment issue in social care, chaired by the Corporate Director for Social Services & Education. An action plan has been developed.
- Work is taking place regionally to tackle particular/acute recruitment issues (such as those in social care and health).

Ancillary controls:

- The Denbighshire County Council Pay Grading Structure will need reviewing
- Activities that are likely to be considered in relation to a taking a corporate approach to the issue could include a review of our marketing, recruitment process, and how managers and 121s support learning and development.
- Work experience, career grade job roles, apprenticeships are available in the council.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- LHRD10i: % of people who started in the last 12 months and who are still working for DCC

Qualitative indicators (delivery of activities):

- CPCSP6a: Undertake an annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan 2022 to 2027
- CPASCH4001a: Deliver the action plan of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Operational group

Assurance:

- An Internal Audit has been completed of the workforce plan action plan, reported to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in July 2023 (see above under Critical Controls).

Residual Risk

B3 – Major Risk: Likely / Medium Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Yes. If operational and policy delivery is regarded as the most significant impact, our risk appetite in this regard is open.

Risk 50: The risk that Welsh Government's commitment to eliminate profit from the care of Children Looked After results in an unstable or unsuitable supply of placements

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gill German

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2023 review:

Risk 50: There has been no change to the risk title.

The risk has been agreed Regionally for inclusion in Corporate Risk Registers

The Risk Owner is to be a CET member and has been reverted back to Nicola Stubbins.

The risk has been reviewed and in some cases, where a placement is necessary but cannot be sourced due to national placement insufficiency a bespoke arrangement may have to be established. In this regard the residual risk score has been reviewed increasing from C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible and Medium Impact to B2 – Critical Risk: Highly Likely and High Impact.

Now a Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk.

We continue to monitor the long-term implications of this commitment from Welsh Government on adult placements. For now, the risk owner remains as Councillor Gill German but should it become a risk for adult placements Councillor Elen Heaton will be added as a Lead Member.

Description

The Welsh Government's Programme for Government makes a commitment to 'eliminate private profit from the care of Children Looked After during the next Senedd term'.

The objective of removing profit is a positive one and it has the region's resounding commitment. However, it is imperative that Welsh Government take steps in pursuit of not-for-profit arrangements that do not disrupt children and young people's lives in the short term.

Our key concern is that providers become unsettled and the sufficiency and suitability of placements will be affected, affecting the lives of Children Looked After.

This risk is closely linked to [risk 34](#) (The risk that there is insufficient regulated care)

Anticipated direction of travel:

This risk has been regionally agreed. We will review the anticipated direction of travel as our management of this risk progresses over the next few months. We always felt this would take time to be resolved but there have been delays, but there is a real desire from Welsh Government to implement but it is a complex and challenging issue to resolve. It is

becoming more challenging to find placements. In some cases, where a placement is necessary but cannot be sourced due to national placement insufficiency a bespoke arrangement may have to be established. This is known by CIW as Operating Without Registration (OWR) and is an offence. Work is ongoing between CIW, ADSSC, AWHoCS and WLGA to agree a process for the monitoring of OWRs. It is accepted that national placement insufficiency is leading to an increased use of OWR arrangements.

Impact / Consequences

- Reduction in the number of placements for Children Looked After both generally and within the region or reasonable travel distance to the region.
- Current placements will be destabilised.
- Reduced investment in the area to develop local supply by private providers.
- Inability to source placements may result in the establishment of an emergency bespoke provision, contrary to regulations (OWR).

Inherent Risk

B2 – Critical Risk: Highly likely and High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

- Work with Welsh Government to ensure children are supported as close to home as possible.
- Raise the issues connected with this approach with Welsh Government and stress that a detailed and informed approach, attuned timing, and compatible messaging is essential to the competent management of the journey.
- Identify other alternative provision that is available
- Raise awareness within the Regional Partnership Board and partner organisations.
- The Regional Commissioning Board to consider other models such as In-house delivery

Ancillary controls:

- None.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- Costs associated with care for CLA will be available.

Residual Risk

B2 – Critical Risk: Highly likely and High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk.

Risk 51: The risk that the economic and financial environment worsens and results in the Council's inability to set a balanced budget.

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Liz Thomas

September 2023 update:

Incorporates previous Risks :

Risk 06 – The risk that the economic and financial environment worsens beyond current expectations, leading to additional demand on services and reduced income.

Risk 27 – The risk that even if the settlement is as anticipated, decisions that are necessary to identify and deliver the savings programme and enable a balanced budget are not taken or implemented quickly enough.

Risk 33 – The risk that the cost of care is outstripping the council's resource.

All sections have been reviewed to provide this new Risk 51: The risk that the economic and financial environment worsens and results in the Council's inability to set a balanced budget.

The Risk Owner for this new Risk being Liz Thomas and the Lead Member Councillor Gwyneth Ellis.

Residual risk is C1 – Critical Risk: Possible / Very High Impact

Description

The Local Government indicative settlement for 2024 to 2025 is 3%, this compares to a settlement of 8.2% in 2023 to 2024. There continues to be an ever growing list of significant economic and demand pressures related to inflation (e.g. pay, energy), social care, support for schools, benefits, the supply of goods and services in the supply chain (and the impact on our capital plan).

The economy has suffered several shocks in recent years. Leaving the European Union, Covid-19, war in Ukraine and increases in cost of living. Cost of fuel, goods and services have increased and led to concerns around the level of inflation in the UK, prompting The Bank of England to increase base rates.

Although the position is based on a number of assumptions that can change the current projections indicate that pressures of £26m for next year will require funding. Even after taking into account the middle of the range of the Council Tax increase at 7% (a planning figure that has not yet been agreed), and the indicative RSG settlement of 3%, a shortfall remains of between £15m. Similar pressures are being experienced by other Welsh local

authorities. The position for 2025 to 2026 remains even more uncertain as the current UK Government spending plans end in 2024 to 2025 and therefore WG cannot provide an indicative settlement for that year.

Any plans require the approval of Cabinet and in some instances Council, and must be implemented in a timely manner that complies with legislation. While the budget process has been successful historically the Council has never faced the scale of financial challenges that we are currently. Substantial savings need to be made by the local authority and the political environment remains sensitive.

As decisions are becoming harder lead in times are becoming longer. Decisions may become more challenging as the financial and economic environment becomes tighter.

The investments and supply structures held by the council and its commissioned services could be placed in an uncertain position depending on the value of the pound. This is particularly of issue in the viability of some residential care homes, and the subsequent risk to the council if any of those private providers were no longer sustainable.

The main areas of pressure relate to:

- Social Care (Adults) – this pressure relates to the ever increasing demand due to need and demographic pressure. It is also impacted by inflationary pressures especially the annual increase in the Real Living Wage and the impact this has on the care home fees that are agreed on an annual basis.
- Childrens Services – the main driver of pressures in this area is the increasing number and cost of external placements.
- Pay and grading – the pressure for increases in public sector pay is a major concern for the Council’s finances when the expected settlement falls well short of inflation. It is expected that due to the RLW increasing at an even higher rate over a number of years that the Council’s whole grading structure will need to be redesigned – a project team has been established to carry out this work.
- Other inflation – the main impact on the Council’s budget is the increase in energy costs. Finance are working closely with our energy experts in Property to assess both the in-year pressure and to project costs for 2024 to 2025.
- School Budgets – the Council provides schools with inflationary pressures each year and then decides whether or not a savings target is applied. All the inflationary pressures (e.g. pay and energy) also impact schools’ budgets.

Anticipated direction of travel:

This risk remains outside of our risk appetite, and has the potential to worsen, as the scale of financial challenge has become clearer. We do have control on the likelihood of not being able to deliver a balanced budget, based on the decision-making processes we put in place. The outlook has deteriorated significantly over the last twelve months. The outlook for public bodies has worsened and we are expecting a return to financial settlements well below the rate of inflation - at least in the near term. We continue to work closely with the WLGA and Welsh Government to ensure everyone is aware of the situation. Services have already made significant savings over the last 13 years and further savings will result in reductions in service which will be more difficult to prioritise and deliver.

The direction of travel on the particular pressures are summarised below:

- Social Care (Adults) – this year the pressure (excluding pay) was £8.2m, a further pressure of at least £4m is expected for 2024 to 2025.
- Childrens Services - this year the pressure (excluding pay) was £2.7m, a further pressure of around £2m is expected for 2024 to 2025.
- Pay and grading - this year the expected pay pressure is in excess of £4m (settlement agreed as this report is being written), a further pressure of around £5m is expected for 2024 to 2025. On top of this core pressure, the impact of the grading issue is currently included at a high level estimate of £6.5m
- Other Inflation (energy) – a pressure of £3m was included in the budget for 2023 to 2024 and a further £1m has been projected for 2024 to 2025. However these figures are currently under review.
- School Budgets – Inflationary and demographic pressures of £4.2m was included in the 2023 to 2024 budgets. No savings target was given and a commitment was made to review the energy costs position in year. For 2024 to 2025 it is currently that a pressure of £6.2m will be required – however a savings target will be required and schools have asked to plan for a 3% savings target.

Impact / Consequences

- The council experiences increased costs.

- The council's ambition and the scope of projects and programmes are curtailed due to increased costs.
- Stretched resources, affecting our ability to deliver on statutory functions.
- Low staff morale.
- Regulatory action, and poor reputation if unprepared.
- Reputational damage.
- Ultimately the risk is that the Council cannot set a balanced budget which may lead to the issuing of a Section 114 notice and external intervention.

Inherent Risk

B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

The council has no control over the global economy or the WG settlement. Therefore, the inherent and residual risk scores are likely to remain high.

Critical controls:

- A new Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was agreed in April 2023 and we are currently having two weekly CET and Cabinet meetings to agree actions. This forms the basis of how we identify the efficiencies, savings and cuts necessary in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the council.
- Our level of financial reserves are kept at a sensible level so that shocks to economy can be dealt with.
- The collaborative approach to partnership working and sharing lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic (with Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association) has been mutually beneficial and we hope that this same approach could be established should we experience further economic shocks in the future. Working collaboratively, pan Wales, has been an effective way to develop solutions. However the financial capacity for Welsh Government to help is also very limited.
- The MTFS details the latest detailed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which contains different scenarios to try to ensure that it can deal with changes in the external environment.

- We try to reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring, where we can, for example through individual, regional, national lobbying and through other meetings/fora.
- Annual, detailed budget setting process that considers economic environment
- Regular (usually monthly) financial planning meetings between services and management accountants are in place.
- Services routinely monitor supply issues and cost increases.
- The Procurement Team supports services to ensure value for money and explore collaborative procurement where that may be a possibility.
- Service's budgets and budget proposals are scrutinised by the Lead Member for Finance and the Head of Service during budget-setting talks.
- The budget setting process involves Members, so they understand that difficult decisions are necessary, and they are involved with developing the proposals. This should make them more likely to support the recommendations made.

Ancillary controls:

- A detailed Communications Strategy has been developed to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and can have input into the budget process. Monthly meetings are held to monitor the progress of the detailed Communications Action Plan. This aims to provide clear communications around financial challenges and the budget process to Members and we try to ensure our residents are informed about how the council is funded and spends its funds.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls: The Head of Finance and Audit's service plan includes key performance indicators that are associated with effective management of this risk and provides a monthly budget report to Cabinet.

- FINA101m The % of required efficiency savings identified for next year (Quarterly)
- FINA102m The % of required efficiency savings achieved for this year (Quarterly)
- Council reserves (£k)

Assurance:

- The Budget Strategy is being reviewed regularly by the Governance and Audit Committee

Residual Risk

C1 – Critical Risk: Possible / Very High Impact

Risk 52: The risk that insufficient funding leads to withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Graham Boase

September 2023 update:

This is a new risk in addition to new Risk 51 The risk that the economic and financial environment worsens and results in the Council's inability to set a balanced budget.

Residual Risk: B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

Description**Description**

The Local Government indicative settlement for 2024 to 2025 is 3%, this compares to a settlement of 8.2% in 2023 to 2024. There continues to be an ever growing list of significant economic and demand pressures related to inflation (e.g. pay, energy), social care, support for schools, benefits, the supply of goods and services in the supply chain (and the impact on our capital plan).

The economy has suffered several shocks in recent years. Leaving the European Union, Covid-19, war in Ukraine and increases in cost of living. Cost of fuel, goods and services have increased and led to concerns around the level of inflation in the UK, prompting The Bank of England to increase base rates.

Although the position is based on a number of assumptions that can change the current projections indicate that pressures of £26m for next year will require funding. Even after taking into account the middle of the range of the Council Tax increase at 7% (a planning figure that has not yet been agreed), and the indicative RSG settlement of 3%, a shortfall remains of between £15m. Similar pressures are being experienced by other Welsh local authorities. The position for 2025 to 2026 remains even more uncertain as the current UK Government spending plans end in 2024 to 2025 and therefore WG cannot provide an indicative settlement for that year.

The main areas of pressure relate to:

- Social Care (Adults) – this pressure relates to the ever increasing demand due to need and demographic pressure. It is also impacted by inflationary pressures especially the annual increase in the Real Living Wage and the impact this has on the care home fees that are agreed on an annual basis.

- Childrens Services – the main driver of pressures in this area is the increasing number and cost of external placements.
- Pay and grading – the pressure for increases in public sector pay is a major concern for the Council’s finances when the expected settlement falls well short of inflation. It is expected that due to the RLW increasing at an even higher rate over a number of years that the Council’s whole grading structure will need to be redesigned – a project team has been established to carry out this work.
- Other inflation – the main impact on the Council’s budget is the increase in energy costs. Finance are working closely with our energy experts in Property to assess both the in-year pressure and to project costs for 2024 to 2025.
- School Budgets – the Council provides schools with inflationary pressures each year and then decides whether or not a savings target is applied. All the inflationary pressures (e.g. pay and energy) also impact schools’ budgets.

Anticipated direction of travel:

This risk remains outside of our risk appetite, and has the potential to worsen, as the scale of financial challenge has become clearer. We do have control on the likelihood of not being able to deliver a balanced budget, based on the decision-making processes we put in place. The outlook has deteriorated significantly over the last twelve months. The outlook for public bodies has worsened and we are expecting a return to financial settlements well below the rate of inflation - at least in the near term. We continue to work closely with the WLGA and Welsh Government to ensure everyone is aware of the situation. Services have already made significant savings over the last 13 years and further savings will result in reductions in service which will be more difficult to prioritise and deliver.

The direction of travel on the particular pressures are summarised below:

- Social Care (Adults) – this year the pressure (excluding pay) was £8.2m, a further pressure of at least £4m is expected for 2024 to 2025.
- Childrens Services - this year the pressure (excluding pay) was £2.7m, a further pressure of around £2m is expected for 2024 to 2025.
- Pay and grading - this year the expected pay pressure is in excess of £4m (settlement agreed as this report is being written), a further pressure of around £5m

is expected for 2024 to 2025. On top of this core pressure, the impact of the grading issue is currently included at a high level estimate of £6.5m

- Other Inflation (energy) – a pressure of £3m was included in the budget for 2023 to 2024 and a further £1m has been projected for 2024 to 2025. However these figures are currently under review.
- School Budgets – Inflationary and demographic pressures of £4.2m was included in the 2023 to 2024 budgets. No savings target was given and a commitment was made to review the energy costs position in year. For 2024 to 2025 it is currently that a pressure of £6.2m will be required – however a savings target will be required and schools have asked to plan for a 3% savings target.

Impact / Consequences

- Further savings will result in reductions in service which will be more difficult to prioritise and deliver
- Stretched resources, affecting our ability to deliver on statutory functions.
- Leading to an inability to deliver current levels of service provision.
- Overspends in Social Care place significant budget pressures on the council and could result in the scaling back or withdrawal of non-statutory services.
- Denbighshire overspends on its budget.
- Denbighshire cannot deliver savings.
- Low staff morale.
- Regulatory action, and poor reputation if unprepared.
- Reputational damage.

Inherent Risk

B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

The council has no control over the global economy or the WG settlement. Therefore, the inherent and residual risk scores are likely to remain high.

Critical controls:

- A new Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was agreed in April 2023 and we are currently having two weekly CET and Cabinet meetings to agree actions. This forms the basis of how we identify the efficiencies, savings and cuts necessary in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the council.
- Our level of financial reserves are kept at a sensible level so that shocks to economy can be dealt with.
- The collaborative approach to partnership working and sharing lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic (with Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association) has been mutually beneficial and we hope that this same approach could be established should we experience further economic shocks in the future. Working collaboratively, pan Wales, has been an effective way to develop solutions. However the financial capacity for Welsh Government to help is also very limited.
- The MTFS details the latest detailed Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which contains different scenarios to try to ensure that it can deal with changes in the external environment.
- We try to reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring, where we can, for example through individual, regional, national lobbying and through other meetings/fora.
- Annual, detailed budget setting process that considers economic environment
- Regular (usually monthly) financial planning meetings between services and management accountants are in place.
- Services routinely monitor supply issues and cost increases.
- The Procurement Team supports services to ensure value for money and explore collaborative procurement where that may be a possibility.
- Service's budgets and budget proposals are scrutinised by the Lead Member for Finance and the Head of Service during budget-setting talks.
- The budget setting process involves Members, so they understand that difficult decisions are necessary, and they are involved with developing the proposals. This should make them more likely to support the recommendations made.

Ancillary controls:

- A detailed Communications Strategy has been developed to ensure that all stakeholders are informed and can have input into the budget process. Monthly meetings are held to monitor the progress of the detailed Communications Action

Plan. This aims to provide clear communications around financial challenges and the budget process to Members and we try to ensure our residents are informed about how the council is funded and spends its funds.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls: The Head of Finance and Audit's service plan includes key performance indicators that are associated with effective management of this risk and provides a monthly budget report to Cabinet.

- FINA101m The % of required efficiency savings identified for next year (Quarterly)
- FINA102m The % of required efficiency savings achieved for this year (Quarterly)
- Council reserves (£k)

Assurance:

- The Budget Strategy is being reviewed regularly by the Governance and Audit Committee

Residual Risk

B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

Is our risk exposure (based on the score) consistent with the council's Risk Appetite?

Critical risk. Risk Appetite suggests that this should be at most a moderate risk.

Further Actions

1. Implement the Budget Strategy agreed in April 2023
Action Due Date: January 2024
2. Take action in year to reduce the projected in year overspend in order to ensure reserves are still available to fund exit costs, delays to savings identification and implementation, and the future financial challenges.
Action Due Date: September 2023 to end March 2024

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Appendix 4: Risk Scoring Matrix

Grading the likelihood of an event

Grade	% chance	Description
A: Almost Certain	Over 70%	Event is almost certain to occur in most circumstances
B: Likely	30% to 70%	Event likely to occur in most circumstances
C: Possible	10% to 30%	Event will possibly occur at some time
D: Unlikely	1% to 10%	Event unlikely and may occur at some time
E: Rare	Under 1%	Event rare and may occur only in exceptional circumstances

Rating the impact of an event

Rating	Service performance	Reputation	Financial cost
1: Very High	Unable to deliver core activities. Strategic aims compromised.	Trust severely damaged and full recovery questionable and costly.	Over £5million
2: High	Significant disruption to core activities. Key targets missed.	Trust recoverable at considerable cost and management attention.	£1million to £5million

Rating	Service performance	Reputation	Financial cost
3: Medium	Disruption to core activities / customers	Trust recovery demands cost authorisation beyond existing budgets.	£250,000 to £1million
4: Low	Some disruption to core activities / customers	Trust recoverable at modest cost with resource allocation within budgets	£50,000 to £250,000
5: Very Low	Minor errors or disruption.	Trust recoverable with little effort or cost.	Less than £50,000

The combination of impact and likelihood results in a risk exposure rating of:

Risk Score	Risk Severity	Escalation Criteria
C5, D4, D5, E4, E5	Minor	Risk easily managed locally – no need to involve management
A5, B4, B5, C3, C4, D3, E2, E3	Moderate	Risk containable at service level – senior management and SLT may need to be kept informed
A3, A4, B3, C2, D1, D2, E1	Major	Intervention by SLT with Cabinet involvement
A1, A2, B1, B2, C1	Critical	Significant SLT and Cabinet intervention

Summary of Denbighshire's Risk Appetite Statement

(as agreed November 2022):

Denbighshire County Council's risk appetite in relation to different aspects of council business is summarised below:

- **Reputation and Credibility** – Open risk appetite, willing to consider all options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). This means we will tolerate minor, moderate or major risks.
- **Operational and Policy Delivery** – Open risk appetite, willing to consider all options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). Again, this means we will tolerate minor, moderate or major risks.
- **Financial Projects** - Open risk appetite, willing to consider all options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). As above, we will tolerate minor, moderate or major risks.
- **Financial Treasury Management** – Cautious risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Within this risk appetite, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks.
- **Compliance and Regulation - Safeguarding** – Minimalist risk appetite, preference for ultra-safe options where the well-being of individuals is concerned, with a low degree of inherent risk and have a potential for only limited (safe) reward. This means we will only accept minor risks in this area.
- **Compliance and Regulation - Other** – Cautious risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Again, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks in this area.
- **People (Workforce) Learning and Development** – Cautious risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. As above, minor or moderate risks only will be tolerated.
- **People (Workforce)** – Cautious risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Again, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks in this area.

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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	30 November 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets Helen Vaughan-Evans, Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets
Report author	Emma Horan, Planning and Performance Officer
Title	Corporate Plan Performance Update: July to September 2023

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. To present an update on the Council's performance against its [Corporate Plan](#) as at the end of September (quarter 2), including Strategic Equality objectives and the seven key areas of governance, which are: corporate planning; financial planning; performance management; risk management; workforce planning; assets; and procurement.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. Regular reporting is an essential monitoring requirement of the Council's Performance Management Framework. Quarterly performance reports are routinely shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny Committee to support constructive discussion about our performance and the identification of interventions where necessary.
- 2.2. These quarterly performance update reports capture the evidence that forms part of our Self-Assessment of performance against our functions, as required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. Scrutiny Committee considers the report, and agrees any further actions required to respond to any performance related issues highlighted within it.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The report contained within appendix 1 is our familiar quarterly Performance Update Report, which is our process for ongoing self-assessment, for the period July to September 2023. The Council is required to self-assess our performance against the delivery of our functions under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 4.2. It is the second of four Performance Self-Assessment updates that are produced throughout the year to self-assess our performance against the delivery of our functions. Broadly, the report is presented in two parts that seek to outline progress against the following key areas:
 - Performance Objectives – comprised of our Corporate Plan / Strategic Equality Objectives (which also form our Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015).
 - Governance Areas – pre-determined by the statutory guidance on performance under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
- 4.3. The quarterly Performance Self-Assessment Update reports are all shared with the SLT, Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny Committee (tabling quarters two and four with committees). Quarter 4 reports are also shared with the Governance and Audit Committee and County Council, including a Self-Assessment Summary for the year. The reports should be seen as tools to support constructive, open and honest discussion about our performance, helping to identify good practise and areas for intervention or further scrutiny.
- 4.4. This Performance Update Report presents the latest picture covering July to September 2023, and is in a slightly updated format to reflect discussions following the Corporate Plan Tranche Review in September and publication of our April to June report:

- This report now includes sections that give a summary of measures and projects supporting each pledge for each of the nine themes in the Corporate Plan.
- Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) measures now appear at the end of each section.
- Stakeholder Survey measures now sit in their own table with data columns for those that answered 'agree', 'disagree' and 'no opinion/unsure', with a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree. We are, though, still considering Stakeholder Survey reporting.
- We have started to review, with Heads of Service, thresholds for some of our measures. We have noted where these have been updated.
- Pipeline projects are included.
- Following discussion by the new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board the wording of the pledges under theme 9 have been expanded. Approval for these wording changes will be sought from County Council as part of our Self-Assessment Report for the year in spring 2024. In the meantime, we will work on the basis that the expanded wording will be accepted.

4.5. Any further opportunities to continually improve the Performance Management Framework and Performance Update Reports, as always, will be taken by Strategic Planning Team.

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

5.1. The Performance Update Report includes an evaluation of the Council's success in delivering against its Corporate Plan themes.

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

6.1. There is no additional cost associated with this report.

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

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) is not required for this report. A WIA was undertaken on the Corporate Plan itself, and was presented to County Council when the Plan was approved in October 2022. New projects / programmes of work within

the Corporate Plan will be individually assessed, as any new actions will be going forward.

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

8.1. The report has been compiled by the Strategic Planning Team, in consultation with Council services. The performance information contained within the document has been provided by Services, and has been drawn from the Verto performance management system and reflects, where appropriate, discussion by Corporate Plan Boards or actions following the Tranche Review.

8.2. Discussion has already taken place at SLT and Cabinet (November 21).

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. There are no direct financial implications of this report. However, it should be noted that the overall financial position faced by the Council for 2024 to 2025 and beyond, may put pressure on services in maintaining performance levels in some areas in the future.

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

10.1. Failure to publish our performance update reports, that contribute to our annual Self-Assessment, would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, with implications for the reputation of the Council.

10.2. There is a risk of poor performance being reported out of context, impacting on our reputation. We have therefore discussed the key messages with the Communications Team.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (chapter 1, section 89).

11.2. Part 2 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (section 13).

11.3. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (section 16); and
The Equality Act (Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty) (Wales)
Regulations 2021.

11.4. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7 of the Council's
Constitution outline Scrutiny's powers in relation to performance management.

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Appendix 1

Corporate Plan Performance Update: July to September 2023

This document presents the council's performance against its Corporate Plan themes and governance areas between July to September 2023, including our application of the Sustainable Development principle, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Socio-Economic Duty.

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Contact details and more information

For more information, or to let us know what you think about anything in this report, contact us:

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By telephone: 01824 706291

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

By post:

Strategic Planning and Performance Team
Denbighshire County Council
PO Box 62
Ruthin
LL15 9AZ

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. There will be no delay in responding to correspondence received in Welsh.

To keep up-to-date:

Like us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Twitter](#)

Visit the [council's website](#) for information on the Corporate Plan

Visit the [County Conversation Portal](#) and sign up for *Y Panel!*

Subscribe to the [County Voice Newsletter](#)

Summary position

The chapters below provide a summary of activity that has taken place during the last period beneath our Corporate Plan themes, with a round-up of contributing news and committee items. There will be aspects still in need of development and some gaps to fill; some of these will be confirmed in subsequent reports, others are more complex and will require further scoping – and often form part of the forward work plans for the new Corporate Plan Boards. Detailed comments for annual measures previously reported may be found in our [performance self-assessment update reports January to March and April to June 2023 to 2024](#).

Corporate Plan theme summary

The measures evaluation for each theme below has been determined through the performance management framework that we have in place. The projects evaluation has been determined by the status of our projects.

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Our [Housing](#) theme continues to show positive progress in relation to projects supporting this theme. As reported previously, we are aware and already responding to address weaknesses in our performance, especially in relation to homelessness where outcomes for our communities are not as positive as we want and aspire them to be. We are starting to see more people supported by My Home Denbighshire (the homelessness early intervention service), with a greater proportion of those supported not requiring a referral into the homelessness prevention service. The energy efficiency of council homes project is 'At Risk', affected by a number of factors. Affordable and extra care housing projects continue and are 'On Target' and the number of people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list, whilst remaining a concern, shows some improvement with fewer people on the waiting list this period.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up funded projects are progressing in support of our [Prosperous Denbighshire](#) theme. However, we are facing some challenges regarding the Former North Wales Hospital project, whilst we await the section 106 agreement and funding. Some of our Rhyl-based projects are also experiencing delays (the Queen's Building) or funding shortages (project to reconnect Rhyl High Street with the beach). The Rhyl Business Improvement Districts, it is hoped, will contribute to further regeneration of the town. The latest tourism figures show some significant improvement in terms of visitor numbers and the economic impact of tourism. However, some of the critical measures (about incomes and employment) for this theme are a 'Priority for Improvement'. The new economic strategy for Denbighshire, which will, it is hoped, stimulate positive change for businesses, our economy and residents will be developed with support from the Well-being for Future Generations Commissioner's Office.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In terms of a [healthier, happier and caring Denbighshire](#), this report refers to the findings of the Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report, which notes that the demand on social care services had increased, and that performance had not progressed as well as the services would have liked due to national challenges and budgetary constraints. We are concerned about the increase in referrals made under Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (allegations about practitioners and those in a position of trust). However, the safeguarding report has highlighted the high level of safeguarding enquiries completed for adults within 7 days. Embedding the 'Whole School Approach' to mental health and well-being remains a priority. While the figure is lower this period compared to last, the distribution of specialist equipment that might enable single handed care means that some individuals are now receiving full or partial single-handed care, with potential cost savings of £1,500 per week.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Attainment measures in support of our [Learning and Growing](#) theme are still to be confirmed as we wait for Welsh Government to publish comparable core data sets around

school standards. The Modernising Education Programme continues to experience delays for several reasons, but particularly due to issues with the feasibility of preferred sites. Early Years support, Llwybrau and Working Denbighshire are achieving some positive outcomes with individuals accessing childcare and parenting support, work and volunteering experience, and support into employment. We need to continue to work with schools in relation to community focussed activities.

A better connected Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In support of a [better connected Denbighshire](#) we have completed our annual Surface Dressing programme on a number of high priority roads and our annual Resurfacing Programme - on a number of roads across the county where the life has expired - is ongoing. The percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. Discussions with Welsh Government to secure funding to deliver the most viable option to replace Llannerch Bridge are ongoing. We have also been making preparations for the upcoming 20mph speed limit coming into force from September 17. Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Projects will support this theme in terms of electric vehicle charging, public realm, active travel, and investment in community hub facilities, with an expected delivery date of March 2025.

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Ensuring that we meet our [net carbon zero commitment](#) as an organisation by 2030 continues to be a challenge and will not be easily achieved. Becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 is looking more promising. We have robust governance in place to test our progress and the plans we have in place. The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy will be carried out this year, 2023 to 2024. Delivery of the strategy does not stop whilst this review is taking place; work continues at pace concurrently with the review to deliver Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council and reduction in supply chain emissions. Data for reducing carbon tonnage from

our supply chains is currently pending (as are previous years), whilst we revisit the data collation methodology.

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Our overall judgement about our measures for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#) reflects the fact the majority of critical measures in this theme are a 'Priority for Improvement' and have been for some time. The obstacles and challenges in relation to poverty are perennial in some cases. Provision of Free School Meals continues to expand however, and it is hoped this will alleviate some of the effects of poverty on children. The number of repeat victims of domestic abuse has increased, so too the number of repeat offenders of domestic abuse. The significant spike in volumes is also evident for the rest of North Wales. Further work is required to understand the significant increase, but it is likely to reflect improvements in recording standards. Staff completion of key equality e-learning modules are a 'Priority for Improvement'; however, some modules may be more pertinent to certain job roles than others.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In terms of our [vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) theme, the reduction of learners receiving Welsh medium education in September 2020 makes the ambitious targets of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), very far-reaching. Support and investment are in place to deliver the WESP, bolstered by the county's Welsh Language Strategy. A workshop is being planned for all elected members to brief them on what the council is doing to promote Welsh in the county. Our pledge to 'Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events' remains on hold. Despite this, the council continues to support and promote a wide range of cultural projects and events.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The new [Well-Run, High Performing Council](#) Board, providing governance for this theme, will be established in October 2023. At the time of writing this update, the Board had met and agreed a way forward to progress the theme's five pledges, which are aligned to our council's five principles. Some changes to this theme's pledges have been requested, which offer an expansion and clarification on each pledge. Approval for these wording changes will be sought from County Council as part of our Self-Assessment Report for the year in spring 2024.

Our [self-assessment against the seven key governance areas](#) paints a largely positive picture of how well the council is performing. We have also provided an update on the significant funding gaps the council is facing. The council's Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet are working closely to deliver a balanced budget so that the council is financially stable now and in the future.

A Note on Measuring Performance

In Denbighshire, our default approach to setting performance thresholds is to take the upper-quartile (best performing) from nationally comparable information as the point where performance is considered 'Excellent'. The 'Priority for Improvement' threshold is usually the median. Midway between these two values determines the threshold between 'Acceptable' and 'Good' performance.

If no data is available that we can compare ourselves with (either nationally or by comparable grouping), then we will take a local view on what we feel reasonably determines 'Excellent' and 'Priority for Improvement' performance. This should represent our ambition.

Our data tables use this same language, except for 'Priority for Improvement', which is truncated to 'Priority to Improve'. Our data tables also show information about trend. Trend is identified as 'Better', 'Worse', or 'Same', and is based on a comparison with the previous period for which we have data. Where possible, we also show trend for projects and activities, which is determined by comparing the overall status of the project or activity with its status in the previous period. Project and activity statuses are identified as 'On Target', 'Experiencing Obstacles', 'At Risk' or 'Compromised'.

For more information on how we manage performance, view the [Performance Management Guide on our website](#).

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Ensure that there is quality housing that meets the needs of vulnerable people, assisting them to lead independent lives in appropriate accommodation for as long as possible

Delivering the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is an important programme of work for the council and one that integrates a number of actions from across many services. The project continues to make good progress against its aims and is considered to be 'On Target.' In September, Performance Scrutiny reviewed the [Housing and Homelessness Strategy](#), noting its progress. The Strategy and Action Plan will be scrutinised again in 12 months.

The Ruthin Extra Care Housing project that continues to progress 'On Target' and will contribute towards meeting the specialist housing needs of vulnerable people in Denbighshire. The Corwen Extra Care project is at business case stage and will enhance this provision further.

Prevent homelessness, and ensure that any instances of it are rare, brief, and unrepeated

Preventing homelessness is a priority for the council, and a number of measures have started to be monitored to inform this service area. The number of referrals received into the homelessness Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) service increased from 43 at the end of June, to 64 at the end of September. During the period, there was also an increase from 69.77% to 92.18% in the percentage of Early Intervention and Prevention referrals that were prevented from presenting to the homelessness prevention service. The council is taking steps to ensure early engagement with people at risk of homelessness, and we can report that 39 people were supported by the Citizens Advice Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention Team link officer by the end of September.

The council will continue to focus on early intervention and prevention, working in collaboration with partners such as the Salvation Army. A project to reduce the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens is progressing with plans in place for assessing further sites for suitability.

In August, it was reported that after listening to public feedback, plans to create temporary homeless accommodation at [Maes Emlyn in Rhyl](#) were no longer being pursued. The council now plans to redevelop the site to achieve the long-term goal of providing more social housing to meet demand. This is evidence of the council's commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. By ensuring citizens are involved in decision making, the council hopes to foster good long-term relationships, prevent future problems from occurring and benefit those at a socio-economic disadvantage. A pre-planning consultation for the new development will be published where residents will have another opportunity to be involved and share their views on the new plans.

Upgrade the council housing stock

Since the last reporting period, one project remains 'At Risk' and that is to improve energy efficiency in council houses. It is believed that the new and soon to be implemented Welsh Housing Quality Standard will create an extra financial pressure on the service as additional measures will be required to comply with the new standard. Inflated costs and the lack of qualified trades in the sector are also contributory factors to the status of the project. There is progress, however, in that the average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating across the council's housing stock continues to rise.

In July, a project to improve the energy efficiency of the [Aberadda council flats](#) in Llangollen was reported to be near completion. Denbighshire Housing has replaced the roof, improved insulation and increased the energy efficiency of the building. Similar projects are planned across Denbighshire in the near future.

As well as pledging to upgrade the energy efficiency of council houses, the council has a duty to ensure they're maintained, safe and suitable for the needs of residents. The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time for the period has remained at an 'Acceptable' rate of 96.90%. Also, a further 56 disabled adaptations have been carried out for council house tenants between July and September.

There has been a review of some performance thresholds which required updating in this theme. These relate to the Denbighshire [Housing Tenant Survey](#), which is launched every two years to inform service provision.

Signpost residents to opportunities to improve the efficiency of their homes

A clearer picture of how people may be supported to improve the energy efficiency of their homes is emerging as new measures start to be monitored. We know that between July and September 2023, 143 households were signposted and helped through the ECO4 scheme - a government scheme providing funding for eligible homeowners to make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. The number of recorded page views of the energy efficiency page on our website reached 357 up until September. This number is likely to be higher as we can only record visits to the webpage where browser cookies have been accepted. Discussions are taking place to overcome capacity issues relating to promoting the energy efficiency page on our website through social media channels. We are 'On Target' to signpost residents to the Welsh Government's Nest scheme for energy efficiency support, with the awareness campaign complete and a mail out scheduled during the next few months.

Deliver more homes to meet local need and demand

Several projects aimed at delivering more affordable, specialist and council homes are running 'On Target.' This includes the project to provide affordable housing at Edward Henry Street and the Additional Council Housing Developments Project, which has an improved delivery confidence.

An activity to 'Work with the Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to Contribute to Progressing the Rhyl Residential Strategy' has been renamed to 'Progress the Rhyl Residential Strategy'. The project is awaiting the publication of Welsh Government guidance to be able to complete a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment, and as such is still 'Experiencing Obstacles.'

The percentage of empty private properties brought back in to use through direct action by the council has increased from 2% during the last quarterly period to 7% for the period between July and September 2023, and performance is now considered 'Excellent'.

Also during the period, a public consultation whether to increase the council tax premium charges for both [long term empty and second homes](#) has taken place, with the majority of

respondents agreeing with proposals for additional charges. The proposals align with the council's long-term aims to encourage home owners not to leave their properties empty and bring them back into use to meet local need and demand. In July, Cabinet met to discuss the findings of the consultation and consider the [council tax premium proposals](#) to these homes, agreeing to progress the matter by seeking County Council approval. In September, County Council discussed the [proposals to increase council tax premium](#) charges and agreed by majority vote to accept the recommendations, with one additional amendment. The recommendations were to retain the 50% premium charge for April 2023, increase to 100% from April 2024, and to 150% from April 2025. Also that properties unoccupied and unfurnished for 5 years or more pay a higher premium at 50% more than the standard premium and that there be parity between the standard second home and long-term empty premium, to minimise avoidance by taxpayers. The additional recommendation was that any extra funding generated by the proposals would be allocated for use by local communities and to tackle homelessness.

Ensure that our residents are informed about available housing options and routes to housing, seeking also to reduce the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list.

The development of a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing is 'On Target' with a plan in place to inform tenants about housing matters and deliver a range of activities.

As at the end of September 2023, there were 1,760 people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list. The figure is yet to reach an 'Acceptable' threshold; however, it represents good progress when compared to the same period for the previous year (2,190).

The project to bring Denbighshire's SARTH system in-house has now been completed. The in-house system has been operational for five months and during that time, many obstacles have been successfully overcome by the programme team. The activity to develop performance and reporting systems following the implementation of the SARTH continues to be 'Experiencing Obstacles.' Work is now progressing with a planned system upgrade with full reporting expected to be available by the end of December 2023.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity related to the support offered to those experiencing homelessness please see our [learning and growing theme](#) and for connections between energy efficiency and fuel poverty, please see our theme for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time - Benchmarked Locally	95.85% Acceptable Better	94.72% Priority to Improve Worse	97.22% Acceptable Better	97.06% Acceptable Worse	96.90% Acceptable Worse
The number of disabled adaptations carried out for council house tenants – Count Only	66	64	56	53	56
The number of households helped through the ECO4 scheme – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	85	143
The number of page views of the energy efficiency page on our website – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	319	357
The percentage of empty private properties brought back into use through direct action by the local authority - Benchmarked Locally	8.5% Excellent Better	6.4% Excellent Worse	6.1% Excellent Worse	2% Acceptable Worse	7% Excellent Better

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of people on the SARTH waiting list - Benchmarked Locally	2,190 Priority to Improve Worse	2,235 Priority to Improve Worse	1,734 Priority to Improve Better	1,785 Priority to Improve Worse	1,760 Priority to Improve Better
The number of referrals received into Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	80	43	64
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that have been prevented from presenting to homelessness prevention service - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	89.36% Excellent	69.77% Acceptable Worse	92.18% Excellent Better
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are for people in employment – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	22.5%	13.04%	7.81%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are a) Privately Rented – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	63.75%	53.49%	64.06%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are b) Local Authority – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	11.25%	6.98%	1.56%

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are c) Housing Association – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	2.5%	0%	3.12%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are d) Owner occupied – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	5%	4.65%	6.25%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are e) Unknown – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	17.5%	34.88%	25.01%
The number of people at risk of homelessness supported by the CAD-HPT (Citizens Advice Denbighshire-Homelessness Prevention Team) link officer – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	28	39
Of those people at risk of homelessness supported by the CAD-HPT (Citizens Advice Denbighshire-Homelessness Prevention Team) link officer, the % that are in employment – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	7%	29%

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant - Benchmarked Nationally	106 Priority to Improve Better	66 Priority to Improve Worse
The number of people who were on the Complex Disabilities Specialist Housing Needs Register for whom supported housing has been secured - Benchmarked Locally	13 Excellent Better	16 Excellent Better
The percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (section 66) - Benchmarked Nationally	41.97% Priority to Improve Worse	38.35% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (section 73) - Benchmarked Nationally	21.55% Priority to Improve Worse	15.96% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households positively discharged from homelessness (section 75) - Benchmarked Nationally	44.75% Priority to Improve Worse	50.22% Priority to Improve Better
The total number of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) within 12 months of leaving care - Benchmarked Locally	9 Good Better	3 Excellent Better
The percentage of council properties compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Benchmarked Nationally	100% Excellent Same	100% Excellent Same
The percentage of Council House tenants that were satisfied with the quality of their home - Benchmarked Locally	84% Good Better	No data: does not apply
The percentage of tenants that were satisfied with the way Denbighshire Housing deals with repairs and maintenance - Benchmarked Locally	77% Acceptable Worse	No data: does not apply

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of existing and acquired Council housing stock achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above - Benchmarked Locally	35.44% Priority to Improve Better	41.89% Acceptable Better
The additional supply of affordable housing, including social housing, provided during the year - Benchmarked Locally	271 Excellent Better	139 Excellent Worse
The additional supply of Council Houses provided - Benchmarked Locally	13 Acceptable Better	15 Acceptable Better

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is sufficient, good quality housing in Denbighshire, which meets people’s needs - Benchmarked Locally	31%	47%	22%	40% Priority to Improve

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Housing (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Better	16% Priority to Improve Worse

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are seventeen projects listed within this theme in the Corporate Plan. The number of these that are running 'On Target' has increased to eleven since our last report. One is complete, three are 'Experiencing Obstacles', one is 'At Risk', and one is at business case stage.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Deliver and monitor the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	On Target Same	No exception
Ruthin Extra Care Housing (Phase 2)	On Target Same	No exception
Corwen Extra Care	At business case stage	No exception
Reduce the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens	On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses	At Risk Same	The average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating across our housing stock continues to rise. However, it is expected that the new and soon to be implemented Welsh Housing Quality Standard will create an extra financial pressure on the service as additional measures will be required to comply with the new standard. Inflated costs, limited funding for the Optimised Retrofit Programme, and the lack of qualified trades in the sector are all issues contributing to the 'At Risk' status of this project.
Work collaboratively with Flintshire County Council providing contact information and signposting on our website regarding homes' energy efficiency	On Target Same	No exception
Promote Energy Efficiency page on our website through our social media channels	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Discussions are taking place to establish which teams are best suited and have capacity to deliver this activity.
Signpost to Welsh Government's NEST scheme through the post	On Target Same	No exception
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	On Target Better	No exception
Denbighshire replacement Local Development Plan	On Target Same	No exception
Edward Henry Street	On Target Same	No exception
Additional Council Housing Developments	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Explore how we can protect housing through new Welsh Government legislation to regulate the impact of second homes	On Target Same	No exception
Progress the Rhyl Residential Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The team continue to await the publication of Welsh Government revised Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 to enable completion of the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment. The TAN15 is due to be published late 2023 or early 2024.
Develop performance and reporting systems following the implementation of SARTH and current Single Point of Access (SPoA) triage service to further understand citizens accessing housing information and SARTH	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There have continued to be system issues and full reports have been unavailable. Individuals have not been affected as the team have used manual processes and have been in regular contact with registered social landlords. Work is now progressing with a view to complete the system upgrade with full reporting available by the end of December 2023.
Develop a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing	On Target Same	No exception
SARTH: Bring in-house	Complete	As this has been operational now for five months with the large majority of issues resolved, the project is complete.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Work collaboratively with communities and partners to deliver projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic growth

The council is focused on delivering a number of initiatives to stimulate economic growth. The first of these to mention is the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). The overall programme is running 'On Target.' This was highlighted in news detailing that [20 Denbighshire projects](#) were awarded grants from the county's allocation of the funding. Nine projects that made the shortlist are regional or sub-regional projects and will proceed to the next stage of the application process when all North Wales local authorities have finalised their investment decisions. Information about the projects approved so far can be found at www.denbighshire.gov.uk/UKSPF-projects.

The council is also engaged with the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and has two overall programmes overseeing a number of sub-projects across service areas. The first programme is LUF Clwyd South, which is designed to improve connectivity and maximise the visitor economy resulting from the offer found at unique heritage and cultural assets in the areas around the Dee Valley. We report in this theme the progress of the programme overall, as well as that of a sub-project to regenerate Corwen High Street. The programme overall is 'Experiencing Obstacles'. A Project Amendment Request has been submitted to UK Government, which includes an extension of time, corrections to some output targets and a change to the prioritisation of the phasing of the Active Travel Route project. An outcome is imminent and once approved would change the delivery status to being 'On Target'. The detail of several sub-projects can be found in other themes relating to [better connected](#) and [culture](#). Regarding the project to improve [Corwen High Street](#), the work on the town centre's infrastructure has begun and is 'On Target.' The second round LUF programme has oversight of Clwyd West projects which are intended to protect the unique heritage of the areas in and around Ruthin, and the wellbeing of its citizens, as well as for its surrounding rural communities. The programme overall is 'Experiencing Obstacles.' At the request of UK Government, projects have undertaken a full review of their delivery and financial profiles. This has identified some projects which would benefit

from an extension of time. The LUF Programme Board is working with UK Government to formalise the changes. The detail of a number of sub-projects can be found in our [better connected](#), [greener](#), and [culture](#) themes. An [information event](#) was held at Ruthin Gaol in July to provide information to residents about the projects that have been successful in obtaining funding through the Clwyd West Levelling Up programme. In addition to the existing programmes of work, the council is actively developing funding bids for economic initiatives wherever possible. We await an update on a third round of Levelling Up funding.

Meeting in July, Partnerships Scrutiny considered the work and [progress of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board \(NWEAB\)](#) during the financial year 2022 to 2023.

Representatives from the Board presented their Quarter 4 and Annual Report and answered members' questions. It was reported that the NWEAB, formed in 2016, had secured £240 million investment into North Wales and had a total investment target of £1 billion over a 15 year period, creating 4,200 new jobs. Some of the challenges the Board had faced over the previous 12 months were explained, including the withdrawal and rescoping of three projects and the overall impact of cost inflation. The activity to enable and support North Wales Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales is therefore deemed to be 'Experiencing Obstacles'. A portion of funds released has been redirected to progress other Growth Deal funded projects, such as the Former North Wales Hospital in Denbigh. Some progress has also been seen in other projects, with the approval of three outline business cases, including the "Last Few %" project to provide minimum superfast broadband to poorly connected communities across North Wales.

The Former North Wales Hospital project remains 'At Risk' until the section 106 legal agreement is obtained, and the full funding is achieved. The project team continue to meet regularly to progress matters relating to planning and viability funding.

The Queen's Buildings Rhyl project continues to be 'Experiencing Obstacles'. There is a delay in the sub-station work being carried out which has pushed back the handover date for construction. However, this is not expected to impact on future operation. The development will provide a mixed-use hall offering a collection of artisan eateries, retail, and events space.

As part of the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme, the council is co-ordinating funding streams and developing town regeneration summaries (formerly referred to as Town Centre Place Making Plans). Both of these activities are 'On Target'.

As an indicator of economic activity, the percentage of out-of-work benefits claimants has shown marginal improvement up until August 2023 (September data is not yet published), though this remains higher than the Wales average, and is a 'Priority for Improvement' at 3.5%.

Develop an economic strategy

We previously reported that a significant activity for the future within this theme will be to develop the council's new Economic Strategy. It is encouraging to see that this activity is 'On Target', with a specification being developed for procuring a consultant. The Strategy will focus on areas such as growing the green economy, supporting rural businesses, regenerating town centres, and enhancing tourism.

The development of Rhyl's town centre is an ongoing programme of work for the council, and a number of projects are being managed in this area. Plans to redevelop the Victorian Post Office are 'On Target.' The project to reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach remains 'At Risk' due to a funding shortage following the unsuccessful Vale of Clwyd Levelling Up Fund bid. We will ensure future proposals are well-developed in readiness for Levelling Up Fund 3 and that there is continued communication with the Rhyl Member Area Group. Two further projects to progress the Rhyl Public Realm Strategy and improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. The obstacles facing the former relate to a shortage of funding, and regarding the latter, recruitment issues have resulted in delays. Two projects are in the process of being developed and are at project brief or business case stage, as seen in the tables below.

County Council was presented with a Notice of Motion in July, in respect of the potential reinstatement of [Rhyl Promenade kiosks](#), which are due to be demolished as part of the central Rhyl Flood Defence Scheme. It was agreed that the report would be taken to Scrutiny Committee in spring 2025 to consider an updated masterplan for the Rhyl Promenade including the option of creating new kiosks.

The tourism offer in Denbighshire is an important aspect of its economy. The delivery of Denbighshire's Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is 'On Target', as is the development of the AONB Sustainable Tourism Plan, which has been drafted. [STEAM](#) (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) data evaluating the economic impact of tourism for Denbighshire has been published showing that £628 million was generated in 2022, which is considered 'Excellent' and is a significant increase from the £432 million in 2021.

Figures shown in July regarding [Rhyl's town centre footfall figures](#) indicated an improvement in visitor numbers to the town's shops. An increase of over 110,000 visits were recorded for 2022, compared with figures for 2021. Rhyl's total figure for 2022 was 850,663 with the busiest period being between July and September.

Provide advice and support

The council supports business growth in Denbighshire in a number of ways. Through its Working Denbighshire service, the council runs a project working with employers to identify hard to recruit jobs and develop sector routeways to fill the gaps. The project has been 'Experiencing Obstacles' though it is expected that from October, the team will be in a strong position to implement sector routeways, especially as the training co-ordinator vacancy has now been filled. The number of paid and unpaid work experience placements offered through Working Denbighshire for the quarter is 33, which is an increase from the last period, and represents 'Excellent' performance.

In September, the Working Denbighshire [employability service](#) offered free support and help to high school and sixth form leavers. Services included well-being activities and support to improve confidence and skills, as well as career development guidance such as CV writing. This is evidence of the council's commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. By supporting young people to plan for their futures, the council is taking action to benefit its citizens in the long-term, preventing future problems from occurring and benefitting those at a socio-economic disadvantage.

Denbighshire's business community receives regular advice and support through the council's Economic and Business Development newsletter. The council is also 'On Target' towards taking action to raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for adults who work in the business community.

We continue to await national data that will give an indication of the rates of business births and deaths in Denbighshire for 2022 to 2023. As soon as those figures are published, they will be reported under this theme.

In September, the [Rhyl Business Improvement Districts](#) (BID) Business Plan was approved by Cabinet. The BID second-term proposals were thoroughly [scrutinised by the Partnerships Scrutiny](#) Committee in July. [Backing the Rhyl BID](#), Cabinet confirmed it would

be using a single vote in the ballot to support a second term. The reason for supporting the Rhyl BID is that it is hoped it will contribute to the regeneration of the town.

The council strives to secure local community benefits wherever possible. The activity to develop a Community Benefits Framework has been upgraded in status and is now 'On Target'. The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire has decreased from 33% to 15.9% (a 'Priority for Improvement') during this period. The percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits has also fallen from 66% to 53.3%, which is now considered 'Good'.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment please see our [learning and growing theme](#); for community development and benefits, see our theme for a [better connected Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further themes connected to the local economy, see [A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) and [A well-run, high performing council](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of working age people who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit - Benchmarked Nationally	3.5% Priority to Improve Same	3.7% Priority to Improve Worse	3.8% Priority to Improve Worse	3.6% Priority to Improve Better	3.5% Priority to Improve Better
The number of paid and unpaid work experience placements offered through Working Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	19 Acceptable Better	38 Excellent Better	16 Priority to Improve Worse	26 Good Better	33 Excellent Better
The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	35% Good Worse	35% Good Same	35% Good Same	33% Good Worse	15.9% Priority to Improve Worse
The cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits – Benchmarked Locally	64% Excellent Worse	64% Excellent Same	66 % Excellent Better	66 % Excellent Same	53.3% Good Worse

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Average gross annual pay for people who live in the area and work full time (£) - Benchmarked Nationally	26,780 Priority to Improve Better	27,121 Priority to Improve Better
External funding (in pounds) secured for economic development – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of available funding awarded by Economic Business Development (EBD) for commercial property grants - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) - Benchmarked Locally	£432m Priority to Improve Better	£628m Excellent Better
The number of businesses taking part in training events - Benchmarked Locally	No data. Suspended due to the pandemic	390 Excellent Better
Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	78 Good Better	National data pending
Deaths of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	89 Priority to Improve Worse	National data pending

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has a prosperous economy that provides access to the right skills, jobs, and income - Benchmarked Locally	32%	49%	19%	40% Priority to Improve

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as

they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government's next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Income (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Same	12% Priority to Improve Better

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Overall, good progress has been made with the twenty-three projects and activities identified in support of this theme. Twelve are 'On Target' and seven projects are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. Two projects are in development: one is at business case stage, and one is at project brief stage. Two projects are 'At Risk'.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Programme: Shared Prosperity Fund	On Target Same	No exception
Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd South	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Overall, the Denbighshire Round 1 Clwyd South LUF projects are making good progress. There have been some challenges to delivery identified by the 3 partners (Wrexham County Borough Council as lead applicant and Canal and Rivers Trust) which has led to an invitation from UK Government to submit a Project Amendment Request (PAR). This includes an extension of time, correction to some output targets and a change to the prioritisation of the phasing of the Active Travel Route project. An outcome is imminent and once

Title	Status	Exception
		approved would change the delivery status to 'On Target'.
Corwen High Street Project (Clwyd South LUF)	On Target Same	No exception
Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd West	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Overall, round 2 Clwyd West LUF projects are making good progress. Following a formal request from UK Government, all projects have been required to undertake a full review of their delivery and financial profiles. This has identified some projects which would benefit from an extension of time. The LUF Programme Board is working with the UK Government to formalise the changes. No other issues to delivery are identified at this stage.
Develop funding bids for future rounds of Levelling Up and Growth Deal funding	On Target Same	No exception
Enabling and supporting North Wales Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Issues faced include the withdrawal and rescoping of three projects and the overall impact of cost inflation. A portion of funds released has been redirected to progress the Former North Wales Hospital project in Denbigh. Approval was obtained for three outline business cases, including the "Last Few %" project to provide minimum superfast broadband to poorly connected communities across North Wales.
Former North Wales Hospital	At Risk Same	Until the section 106 agreement is obtained, the project remains 'At Risk'.

Title	Status	Exception
		The Project Delivery Group continue to meet regularly to progress matters relating to planning and viability funding.
Queen's Buildings Rhyl	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There is a delay in the sub-station work being carried out which has pushed back the handover date for construction. However, this is not expected to impact on future operation.
Coordinating Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding programme streams	On Target Same	No exception
Develop Town Regeneration Summaries	On Target Same	No exception
Develop the council's new Economic Strategy	On Target Same	No exception
Victorian Post Office (Rhyl)	On Target Same	No exception
Progress the Rhyl Public Realm Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Discussions continue to take place with the relevant Programme Board to agree a way forward in view of the unsuccessful LUF bid.
Reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach (Rhyl promenade)	At Risk Worse	Progress has halted and the team is considering how to fund pre-construction works which would have been funded through the LUF bid.
Seeking to improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There have been delays to this project resulting from recruitment issues. New temporary posts have been approved and await funding. Two main sites are the focus of

Title	Status	Exception
		improvement works in the meantime.
Rhyl Gateway	At project brief stage	No exception
Co-Relocation of Rhyl Tourist Information Centre and Rhyl Museum	At business case stage	No exception
Develop the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Tourism Plan and integrate into Local Tourism Plans	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver the Denbighshire Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027	On Target Same	No exception
Work with employers to identify hard to recruit jobs and develop sector routeways to fill the gaps	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Employment co-ordinators have been working with employers to ensure that we are on target for work start placements. New sector routeways have not been developed due to the vacancy for the Training Co-ordinator and the late confirmation of funding from SPF for Years 2 and 3. The work with employers places us in a strong position to implement sector routeways from October 2023, now that the Training Co-ordinator has been recruited and started work.
Raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for adults who work in the business community	On Target Same	No exception
Complete feasibility report for move-on accommodation at St Asaph Business Park	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a Community Benefits Framework to align with the Social Partnership and Procurement (Wales) Bill	On Target Better	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In July of this year, the council announced it was prepared for the [increase of visitors](#) into the county during the summer holidays, with extra park rangers and increased street cleaning provision at key tourism areas and events. In August, the council reminded [bank holiday visitors](#) to respect the countryside and act responsibly. A series of measures was introduced by the council to reduce congestion at popular sites such as Moel Famau and Horseshoe Falls.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Ensure that the council's social care offer is of a high standard

At its meeting in July, Partnerships Scrutiny received the [Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report](#) which reviewed the effectiveness of the authority's social care services for both children and adults during the financial year 2022 to 2023. It was noted that the demand on social care services had increased, and that performance had not progressed as well as the services would have liked due to national challenges and budgetary constraints. Recruitment and retention continued to be a challenge within the social care sector.

The council aims to promote a strong culture of safeguarding children, young people and adults in the county. In July, Partnerships Scrutiny were presented with Denbighshire's [annual performance report for safeguarding adults](#) for the financial year 2022 to 2023. Highlighted in the report was the high level of safeguarding enquiries completed within 7 days. The quarterly figure for the period from July to September 2023 was 99% and is considered 'Excellent'. An area of concern in the report was the increase in referrals made under Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (allegations about practitioners and those in a position of trust). Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications also increased (by 11%) from the previous year. Court proceedings had continued to increase and were noted to be impacting the capacity of operational teams as well as the legal team.

A project to undertake a review of independent professional advocacy for all service provision continues and remains 'On Target'. The percentage of young people offered the active option of advocacy from Education and Children's Services during the period is a measure we are in the process of developing, and data for this reporting period is unavailable at present.

Providing care and support through its corporate parenting role is an important area of work for the council. At the end of September, there were 206 children looked after in Denbighshire. The percentage of those children experiencing three or more placements

during the year remained at a low rate of 1.94% which falls within the 'Excellent' threshold. Progress continues 'On Target' with implementing the requirements of Foster Wales, the national network of Local Authority fostering services.

The council plans to work with partners to develop a joint assessment centre for children in the region with complex needs. We also have a number of projects designed for supporting those with additional learning or complex needs, and updates on these are provided in the table below.

Recognising the importance of supporting unpaid carers, the council is working with its partners to provide enhanced respite opportunities and general advice and support. An activity in support of this aim is 'Experiencing Obstacles'. The total number of carers needs assessments for young carers undertaken during the period is data provided by a third party and we await up to date information. The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the period was 203.

From our Community Equipment Store records, we can report that from July to September 2023, 31 individuals were issued with specialist equipment that might enable single handed care. We have confirmed from cost of care records available that 11 of these individuals are now receiving full or partial single handed care, with potential cost savings of £1,500 per week. It is possible that care packages for some of these individuals are still in transition or under review.

Support the well-being, mental-health and resilience of individuals within communities

In August, Denbighshire County Council's [Play Ranger service organised a free event](#) as part of National Play Day. Rhyl's Oak Tree centre hosted the event, which was attended by over 2,800 people. The Play Rangers are running two projects designed to enhance child well-being and access to play. The projects remain 'At Risk' due to a shortage of funding, though efforts are being made to source alternative funding. The percentage of schools in the county embedding the 'Whole School Approach' to mental health and well-being for April to June 2023 was a 'Priority for Improvement' at 27%. An update for this measure for this reporting period is not yet available and will be reported in the next performance update report.

The council provides well-being support to all citizens in Denbighshire. The number of Single Point of Access (SPoA) contacts for information, advice and assistance decreased

slightly during this period to 4,911. The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care remained at a high rate of 87%. For enquiries relating to children, the number of referrals and enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway during the period is being calculated and will be reported in the next performance update report.

In July, the council hosted a drop in event at Denbigh Town Hall to promote the broad range of [support services on offer](#) to all its citizens, from mental health support to drug and alcohol well-being. Many projects and activities in support of this pledge - such as work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire; delivery of intergenerational activities through the Story Pals project; and the Nature for Health Programme for example - are all 'On Target'.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of housing and homelessness, please see our [Housing](#) and [Prosperous](#) themes respectively. For information about equality and deprivation, and safe environments, see our theme a [Fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further detail around our work to support education and well-being, see our [Learning and Growing](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse - Benchmarked Locally	98.85% Excellent Better	98.84% Excellent Worse	98.8% Excellent Worse	100% Excellent Better	99% Excellent Worse
The percentage of young people offered the active option of advocacy from Education and Children's Services - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending	Data pending

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of children looked after in Denbighshire – Count Only	Data pending	Data pending	200	203	206
The percentage of children looked after on who have had three or more placements during the year – Benchmarked Locally	3% Excellent Better	4% Excellent Worse	1% Excellent Better	2.46% Excellent Worse	1.94% Excellent Better
The total number of carers needs assessments for young carers undertaken during the year – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending	Data pending
The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year (cumulative) - Count Only	197	303	401	92	203
The number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with the right type of specialist equipment – Baseline Year	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	48	11
The number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready for citizen care and support needs – Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	20	22	25

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of schools in the county using the Public Health Wales Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Tool – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	27% Priority to Improve	Data pending
The number of referrals / enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	4,350	Data pending
The number of Single Point of Access contacts for information, advice and assistance – Count Only	4,988	4,586	5,134	5,307	4,911
The number of Talking Point contacts for information, advice and assistance (libraries, One Stop Shops and hosted by Community Navigators etc) - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	231	218
The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care - Baseline Year	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	87.5%	87%
The number of sport and recreation related projects / groups supported by the Community Resilience Team – Baseline Year	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	42	34

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally	76.59% Priority to Improve	76.7% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of child protection conferences held within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally	90.63% Priority to Improve	95% Good Better
The percentage of adults where independent professional advocacy was provided after assessment of need – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	72.5% Good
The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided - Count Only	1,037	1,159
The cumulative number of new micro-provider businesses created for citizen care and support needs – Benchmarked Locally	No Data. New to 2022 to 2023	30 Excellent
The number of schools that have achieved Trauma Informed School status by 2027 - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	1 Excellent
The number of young people who receive school-based counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	330 Acceptable	338 Acceptable Better
The average improvement in young people’s core score for children and young people who received school-based counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	8.5 Excellent
The number of projects supported by the Community Development Team, and funded, offering a positive impact upon loneliness and isolation - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of County Community Groups using in scope facilities Denbighshire Leisure Limited - Benchmarked Locally	137 Excellent	134 Excellent Worse
The number of alternative (out of scope) facilities/venues used for the delivery of services to DCC residents - Benchmarked Locally	107 Excellent	96 Excellent Worse

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that they can live safely, happily, and independently, in Denbighshire and also receive good support when needed to promote resilience and well-being - Benchmarked Locally	48%	39%	13%	55% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Health (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) - Benchmarked Nationally	10% Priority to Improve Same	17% Priority to Improve Worse

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Of the twenty-one projects and activities listed under this theme, fifteen are 'On Target', three are 'Experiencing Obstacles', two are 'At Risk', and one is at project brief stage.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures into all aspects of Children's and Adults Services	On Target Same	No exception
Work with partners to deliver the annual joint strategic plan for the North Wales Safeguarding Board	On Target Same	No exception
Undertake a review of independent professional advocacy for all service provision.	On Target Same	No exception
Monitor and implement requirements of Foster Wales and monitor effectiveness of national approach.	On Target Same	No exception
Implement Post 16 of Additional Learning Needs work	Experiencing Obstacles	Work has started with this activity. Regional and national discussions are ongoing to progress the implementation of the Act regarding Additional Learning Needs and young people who are post-16.
Develop an in-county residential short breaks and emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire	Update pending	No exception
County Residential Break Review	At project brief stage	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Implement and embed the Autism Code of Practice requirements at local authority level across Children's Services.	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The Autism Code of Practice is still in progress. The lead manager is working closely with partners to support the action plan. There is a North Wales Regional Working Group, of which the Denbighshire team is a member.
Bwthyn y Ddol Phase 2 (Activity) Develop and implement, including staffing, a new Children's Assessment Centre jointly with Conwy County Borough Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	On Target Same	No exception
Ysgol Tir Morfa - Hydrotherapy pool	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the intervention work at Plas Brondyffryn and Tir Morfa in terms of play opportunities from Play Rangers.	On Target Same	No exception
Work with local unpaid carers to identify the respite opportunities they need, and how barriers are overcome to enable this.	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The Carers Think Tank meetings have taken place every 6 weeks and have enabled a wide range of professionals to consider solutions. There have been examples of volunteers successfully supporting carers and Micro Providers providing respite breaks to carers.
Work in partnership regionally to embed the All Wales Dementia Pathway of Standards.	On Target Same	No exception
Embed the work of the Independent Living Team to support individuals through direct payments or Pre-Paid Cards, to increase efficiency	On Target Better	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Work to enhance and extend the Access to Play project throughout the county.	At Risk Same	A significant funding shortage continues to put this project at risk. Further external grants are being explored as demand for the service continues to grow.
Expand the Play Rangers offer Let's Play Out Programme throughout the county	At Risk Same	A significant funding shortage continues to put this project at risk. Further external grants are being explored as demand for the service continues to grow.
Work to reduce the Youth Services waiting list for support in Denbighshire.	On target Same	No exception
Work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire, with World Health Organisation, in partnership with Ageing Well in Denbighshire multi-agency group.	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the Story Pals Project and Arts programme to deliver intergenerational activities (delivered through the Denbighshire Arts Strategy).	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver a programme of activities and events to encourage children and adults to re-engage with their local library, to support engagement and wellbeing and to combat social isolation and loneliness.	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the Nature for Health Programme within Denbighshire which offers multiple benefit – reducing isolation, improve health, rural skills, health and nature walks, arts and crafts)	On Target Same	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

The national [NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day](#) took place on July 5, and the council marked the occasion by raising a flag at County Hall in Ruthin in honour of the staff involved.

This summer, Denbigh's Dolwen Care Home residents created a [memorial garden to honour the memory of residents lost](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the summer holidays, Denbighshire County Council's libraries launched the [free equipment loan programme](#) with a range of sports equipment provided by Denbighshire Leisure Limited.

At its September meeting, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee received a verbal report to update members on the progress of the [North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project](#). A representative from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board informed the Committee that the Royal Alexander Hospital redevelopment was a priority project which had an approved business case that was unchanged since its development. Approval for 20% funding via the Welsh Government's Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) was to be sought from the Regional Partnership Board before being submitted to Welsh Government as part of their Capital Plans in October 2023. There was no timescale available for receiving a response from Welsh Government.

The [North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Report](#) for 2022 to 2023 was also presented at September's Partnerships Scrutiny meeting, and in September, Cabinet approved the [North Wales Regional Partnership Board 10 Year Strategic Capital Plan](#) and agreed Denbighshire's capital priorities for improved integrated health and social care to meet future needs.

Meeting in September, Communities Scrutiny received an update from the Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service on their [engagement with Care Forum Wales](#) (CFW) and Care Providers in Denbighshire. The report provided an account of efforts that had made to promote a positive dialogue and encourage the reengagement of CFW with the regional fee setting process. The Service is planning a programme of visits to care homes to proactively engage them in the care fee setting process for 2024 to 2025.

In September, an event was held at Ruthin Market Hall to encourage the public to come and talk to [Denbighshire County Council's Community Resource Team](#). The team includes health, social care and third sector staff.

In September, the Council, in partnership with DVSC and Denbighshire Age Friendly Communities, hosted a free performance of 'Over the Garden Fence' at Denbigh's Twm o'r Nant Theatre. The event was designed to raise [dementia awareness](#) and promote understanding.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Promote the learning and development of our children and young people

Our Corporate Plan places a clear focus on support for early years development with a number of key measures in this area of work. The number of children taking part in the Childcare Offer in Denbighshire has continued to increase to 624. A new childcare facility was opened at [Ysgol Penmorfa](#), Prestatyn, in September. The extension has been funded by the Welsh Government Flying Start Capital Grant and has increased capacity of provision in the area, allowing more local families to benefit from high quality childcare.

Family Link workers continue their work to support families throughout the county, delivering language and play sessions and providing guidance to parents. The number of parents reporting a positive difference after working with the team has unfortunately fallen from 96% to 86% this quarter, but this is due to activities only taking place during term-time and not during the six-week summer holidays.

The number of Schools in Estyn review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures remains unchanged from the previous period (two schools). Following an Estyn monitoring visit in June, [Denbigh High School](#) has now been confirmed as having been removed from Special Measures, having made sufficient progress against the recommendations. Highlights of the [report](#) include the school having successfully refreshed its approach to rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour; teachers forming positive working relationships with their class; and a strengthened strategy to improve literacy skills. In September, [Performance Scrutiny](#) considered a report on progress made by Christ the Word School since being placed in Special Measures, following an Estyn inspection in May 2022. The committee resolved to be kept updated on progress.

At its meeting in [July](#) and [September](#), Performance Scrutiny also received a number of reports from the Head of Education Services concerning key pieces of work that seek to remove barriers to learning.

- The Curriculum for Wales – an update was provided on the progress made by schools on implementing the new curriculum since it became statutory in September 2022.
- Additional Learning Needs – a report providing information regarding the actions taken to ensure that schools were ready to meet statutory requirements under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.
- Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-Being – An overview into the way in which schools are implementing the Welsh Government statutory framework.

Having considered and accepted these reports, members requested that updates be provided in the latter half of 2024.

As previously reported, there is one project within our Learning and Growing theme currently 'At Risk'. The Modernising Education Programme is experiencing delays for several reasons, but particularly due to issues with site feasibility (as described in more detail in the table below). A site for a new build of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn was approved by Cabinet members in their [September meeting](#), with members agreeing to support the project's progression through the planning process.

In August, the council congratulated pupils across Denbighshire on their [GCSE](#) and [A Level](#) results.

Support schools to transition to being Community-Focussed Schools, providing a range of services and activities to help meet the needs of pupils, their families, and the wider community

A survey was undertaken during the summer to ascertain the number of schools within the estate that can provide community focussed spaces for events. Of the 25 schools that responded, 15 stated they were able to host activities. Further work will be done with those schools that did not respond to ensure a fuller picture emerges in relation to community focussed activities.

In the meantime, the Prestatyn High Pilot for Community Focussed Schools is 'On Target' and meetings to continue this progress are taking place each term. A growing number of projects have taken place during the pilot, including environmental projects to develop

green and eco spaces, adult mental health support groups, and summer holiday provision to provide free activities for over 12s in Prestatyn.

Several schools in Denbighshire are also part of a Wales-based research project, which includes developing an international partnership with the Centre for Community Schools in Florida. Funding has been secured to deliver future projects to support community engagement on school sites and work will continue throughout the school year.

Work with partners (including colleges and universities) to ensure that people of all ages, including those who are vulnerable or in our care, are resilient and prepared for employment, further education, or training

We are starting to receive encouraging data now as our new Llwybrau project gathers pace. Volunteering / work experience opportunities offered in this last reporting period increased to 13, which is excellent for this point in the academic year. Positive feedback has been received from learners and work is ongoing to secure future funding for the provision. However, only three opportunities have been offered by the council through its corporate website; and no employment opportunities were secured or jobs protected through our Community Benefits Policy during this period on the basis of there being no valid contracts. The percentage of businesses that have committed to work with Careers Wales to the benefit of our local schools and colleges also remains at none on the basis of there being no applicable contracts i.e. none over £1m.

The number of people with learning disabilities that have achieved a positive outcome as a result of support provided through the council's Work Opportunities services has fallen slightly from 43 to 40 during July to September. One person has also been supported into paid sustainable employment in this period as a result of the council's Work Opportunities Job Finding Service.

90% of people that are being supported through Working Denbighshire have travelled a positive distance on their journey towards or into employment during July to September, up from 82% in the last period. The team has been hosting a series of [free weekly drop-in sessions](#) across the county, to offer employment support and guidance. Support included CV skills, interview preparation, basic IT skills and support to fill in applications. A [free job fair](#) showcasing a wide variety of job opportunities was also held in September at 1891 Bar and Restaurant, following the success of three prior events

earlier in the year. Over 40 employers exhibited at the venue, including North Wales Police, Clwyd Alyn, Wynne Construction and the Armed Forces.

The cumulative percentage of young people reached by youth service interventions has increased to 4.4% during this period, down slightly on 5.1% for the same period the previous year.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring theme](#); for equity in education, including free school meal support, see our theme for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further detail around our work to support volunteering and employment, see [better connected](#) and [prosperous](#) themes respectively.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of children taking part in the childcare offer – Benchmarked Locally	477 Acceptable Worse	521 Acceptable Better	570 Acceptable Better	570 Acceptable Same	624 Good Better
The percentage of parents supported through the work of the Family Link Service that report a positive difference – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	95% Excellent	96% Excellent Better	86% Excellent Worse
The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures – Benchmarked Locally	2 Good Same	3 Acceptable Worse	3 Acceptable Same	2 Good Better	2 Good Same

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – Benchmarked Locally	No data. No Survey	81.8% Good Worse	No data. No Survey	82% Good Better	No data. No Survey
The number of voluntary / work experience placements offered through Llwybrau – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	1 Priority to Improve	13 Excellent Better
The number of volunteering opportunities offered by the council through its corporate website – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	8	9	3
The percentage of young people in Denbighshire reached by Youth Services (Cumulative) – Benchmarked Locally	5.12% Priority to Improve Better	6.39% Priority to Improve Better	20.93% Acceptable Better	2.82% Priority to Improve Worse	4.36% Priority to Improve Better
The number of people with learning disabilities that have achieved a positive outcome as a result of support provided through the council's Work Opportunities services (Y Bont, Popty, Meifod, Garden Control, and Golden Group) – Count Only	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	34	43	40

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of people with learning disabilities in paid sustainable employment as a result of the council's Work Opportunities Job Finding Service – Count Only	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	3	2	1
The percentage of businesses contracted over £1m that have committed to work with Careers Wales to the benefit of our local schools and colleges (through our Community Benefits Policy) – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	100% Excellent	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m
The number of employment opportunities secured / jobs protected through our Community Benefits Policy on projects over £1m – Count Only	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m
The percentage of people that, through Working Denbighshire, have travelled a positive distance on their journey towards or into employment – Benchmarked Locally	81% Good Worse	82% Good Better	82% Good Same	82% Good Same	90% Excellent Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally	81% Excellent	82% Excellent Better
The percentage of parents that have reported a positive impact through attending Bookstart / Rhyme-time – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	99% Excellent
The percentage of parents that travel a positive distance by attending structured learning events through Families First and Flying Start – Benchmarked Locally	53% Acceptable	58% Good Better
<i>Attainment measure(s) to be determined</i>	<i>No data</i>	<i>No data</i>
The percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools – Benchmarked Locally	No data. Covid-19	90.8% Priority to Improve Worse (than 2019)
The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools – Benchmarked Locally	No data. Covid-19	86% Priority to Improve Worse (than 2019)
The percentage of pupils engaged through Llwybrau that achieve a positive outcome, including level 1 or 2 qualifications – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	88% Acceptable
The number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D – Benchmarked Locally	27 Excellent Same	27 Excellent Same
The percentage of schools able to host community focussed activities – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Data pending
The percentage of Year 11 Leavers from schools know Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), at the preceding 31 August in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	1.7% Priority to Improve Same	2.3% Priority to Improve Worse

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of Year 11 pupils that do not have an identified Post-16 pathway in place – Benchmarked Locally	4.14% Priority to Improve	10.50% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of children or young people who are looked after that have a Personal Education Plan in place – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent	96% Good Worse
The percentage of initial Care Leaver Pathway Plans completed during the year that were within the statutory timescales, where the young person has care leaver status – Benchmarked Locally	20% Priority to Improve	71% Priority to Improve Better
The total number of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 13 -24 months since leaving care – Count Only	5	7

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that good quality learning and training is available in Denbighshire, allowing people of all ages to reach their personal and professional potential – Benchmarked Locally	48%	30%	22%	62% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as

they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government's next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Education (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	9% Priority to Improve Better	9% Acceptable Same
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Employment (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	12% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are sixteen projects and activities within this theme, eight of which are 'On Target', and five are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. As reported previously, the Modernising Education Programme remains 'At Risk'. The new Working Denbighshire Strategic Programme (a UK Shared Prosperity Fund project) is currently at the project brief stage.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Digital Platform	Complete	No exception
Flying Start Expansion	On Target Same	No exception
Recommissioning of Families First	On Target Same	No exception
Support the regional project on Emotional Health, Well-being and Resilience Framework, which will provide resources for parents	Experiencing Obstacles	Capacity issue – to be discussed with new principal education manager.
Review Early Years provision in the context of WG Early Years Transformation funding and the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) agenda	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There continues to be no progress due to current demand and a shortage of staff capacity.

Title	Status	Exception
Embed new posts in the Flying Start Childcare and Early Language Development Teams from January 2023 to support the Flying Start Childcare Expansion	On Target Same	No exception
In partnership with GwE, Support schools and non-maintained settings to deliver the new curriculum for Wales to ensure our learners become capable, ambitious, enterprising, ethical, healthy and confident adults.	On Target Same	No exception
Implement requirements of the of ALN Reform Act within Education and Children's Services to ensure compliance	On Target Same	No exception
Implement School Improvement Guidance: Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability	On Target Same	No exception
Support schools in developing digital competency through educational leadership of the EdTech project	On Target Same	No exception

<p>Modernising Education Programme</p>	<p>At Risk Same</p>	<p>A number of delays have affected the progression of Band B projects. Extensive feasibility work has continued on sites for Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn (which has also delayed the Denbigh High School project) and for Ysgol Pendref. Discussions on preferred sites have now progressed to allow these projects to move forward. The Ysgol Bryn Collen and Ysgol Gwernant scheme was shortlisted but ultimately unsuccessful in its application to Welsh Government as part of the Sustainable Schools Challenge. A revised design brief based on a reduced capacity has been prepared and will be developed during the autumn.</p> <p>The internal section of the Oaktree Centre is now complete with the external work due for completion by the end of September.</p> <p>The approval for a virement to enable the Twm o'r Nant project to progress has been received, and a contractor has been appointed, with work starting in the autumn.</p> <p>The project at Ysgol Dewi Sant remains stalled over drainage issues. The timescale for completing the drainage work is around 30 months, meaning the project is unable to be progressed within the next funding round.</p> <p>Business cases are being prepared for three new</p>
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Title	Status	Exception
		childcare projects (Ysgol y Llys, Clawdd Offa, Ruthin) and five Welsh Medium Capital projects.
Community Focussed Schools: Prestatyn High Pilot	On Target Same	No exception
Engage with the North Wales Ambition Board and the Regional Skills Partnership to ensure that skills and training secured through our Community Benefits Policy is fit for the future and / or transferrable	Experiencing obstacles Same	This is subject to some delays as statutory guidance and social clauses are not yet in place. We are working with Welsh Government to develop the statutory guidance that will inform the Statutory Instrument that will support the new Act. The new Procurement Strategy has though been approved and plans are in place for procurement to feature in the 2024 March for Business campaign.
Through our Community Benefits Policy, secure business led strategy workshops for the benefit of residents seeking to upskill	Experiencing obstacles Same	This is also impacted by statutory guidance and social clauses not yet being place. Balfour Beatty though has committed to deliver workshops. A full update can be found in our governance section on procurement .

Title	Status	Exception
Develop performance and monitoring systems for the Temporary Emergency Accommodation support contract as it develops, which will include various life, recreational and employability skills and benefits	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Statistics are reviewed though some key performance indicators are not possible to measure. We are working closely with the project to ensure we can monitor the performance through steering groups and operational groups. The Homelessness Prevention Team performance dashboard continues to monitor statistics across the service to ensure we can understand where projects are having an impact and where more focus is needed in line with Rapid Rehousing.
New: Working Denbighshire Strategic Programme (UK Shared Prosperity Fund Delivery)	At project brief stage	This has been affected by the delay in SPF funds being cleared. This has meant that for the first 2 quarters of the year staff were not in place and budgets were not available, so delivery was compromised. In the next reporting period, we will be able to give an assessment as to whether it is still possible to deliver this project given that the full funding will only have been available for roughly half the time it was originally planned for.

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In September, Denbighshire County Council reassured school staff, parents and governors that it had taken steps to ascertain the structural integrity of its buildings in the face of

nationwide concern about the use of [Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete \(RAAC\) in public buildings](#). Surveys had previously been completed in 2021 in response to the issue being raised by the Local Government Association. After reviewing these, the only school site identified as having RAAC planks was [Ysgol Trefnant](#). However, surveyors have reported that they do appear to be in a stable and acceptable condition. The school was closed for one day in September whilst further investigations were carried out. Denbighshire County Council will be undertaking a review of the information it currently holds to determine whether further surveys are required and to better inform any processes put in place by Welsh Government. Please also refer to our [governance section about assets](#).

A campaign was launched in July to encourage more people to apply for the role of [school governor](#). Schools across the county are looking for volunteers to become part of the governor team with successful applicants having the opportunity to use their skills and experience to make a positive difference to the lives of young people. Free online induction and training will be provided. Further information and guidance on how to apply to become a school governor can be found on the council's [website](#).

Over the Summer, Denbighshire County Council's [Working Denbighshire Team](#) created a new short film celebrating the people they support and the work of the organisation. Professional filming and editing equipment was provided during the shoot by arts and media charity, TAPE. The project gave aspiring filmmakers a chance to share their ideas and be involved in an exciting opportunity to experience working in the creative industries, that may lead to other opportunities in the future. The film will later be used in Working Denbighshire's promotional materials going forward.

A better connected Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Maintain a quality road network

Our annual road condition data for 2022 to 2023 for classified A, B and C roads was reported in our April to July report. We have now completed our annual Surface Dressing programme on a number of high priority roads where this represents the most cost-effective method of prolonging the life-span of the road. Our further annual Resurfacing Programme on a number of roads across the county where the life has expired is ongoing and we are on target to deliver the remaining 2023 to 2024 programme.

Throughout September we carried out [cyclic maintenance work](#) on a number of our roads which included grass cutting, litter picking, drainage cleansing and streetlight works. Advanced notice signage was installed and a letter drop to surrounding properties took place to inform residents of the works.

The average for the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) between July and September was 23.33% and remains a 'Priority for Improvement' and an area of concern. The service is working hard to improve performance in this respect.

Discussions with Welsh Government to secure funding to deliver the most viable option to replace Llannerch Bridge are ongoing. They are already supporting us in funding the detailed design part of the process, which has now started, however, funding for the construction phase still needs to be sought.

With the Welsh Government's default 20mph speed limit coming into force from September 17, we consulted with the wider public with the proposal to [retain five roads in the county as 30mph](#).

Working through the regional body, and within the context of the Wales Transport Strategy, we will enable people to access education, employment, services and activities

The project to Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (STP) has now developed annual and quarterly measures for inclusion in this theme, the Team is currently gathering baseline data for these measures which will be included once available.

In July 2023, in partnership with Transport for Wales we [extended the current Fflecsi scheme](#) (demand responsive public transport) across Denbigh by introducing a second electric vehicle, a wheelchair accessible Nissan Dynamo E-NV200 EV micro bus. This will provide people with a greater range of pick-ups and destinations along the new Denbigh 77 route and [extends the scope of public transport for the Denbighshire communities](#) of Nantglyn, Prion, Peniel, Saron, Tremeirchion and Rhuallt.

We wanted people to enjoy the great attractions Llangollen and the surrounding area has to offer and during the summer we worked collaboratively with police officers to [manage and promote safe and responsible parking](#). We also encouraged visitors to save parking spaces every Saturday by using the Dee Valley Picturesque Bus (which will run up until November 4, 2023) that provides a circular route, linking Llangollen and the surrounding villages to Horseshoe Falls and popular local attractions including Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Wenffrwd Nature Reserve, Valle Crucis Abbey, Plas Newydd Historic House and the Horseshoe Pass.

We are currently working with Sustrans Cymru to understand how to make travelling actively in the local area more accessible, safer, and more enjoyable for the whole community, encouraging more journeys to be taken on foot or cycle instead of by car. On September 26, a survey was launched on future improvements for local walking, wheeling, and cycling around [Ysgol y Castell in Rhuddlan](#).

A further three Clwyd West Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Projects will support this pledge, for which Project Teams are currently being established. All with an expected delivery date of March 2025. The St Peter's Square project will deliver a scheme of public realm improvements to enhance pedestrian and traffic flows around the square and to facilitate a more flexible central events space. The Ruthin Cae Dol project will improve connectivity through the park and between the park and the town centre. The project to improve Moel

Famau Facilities and Cycle Paths will see new and improved toilet and refreshment facilities, with extended and sustainably managed cycle routes.

Support our county's green infrastructure

As a result of funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF), enhancements to [Green Lane car park in Corwen](#) will be of benefit to residents and visitors with the installation of five electric vehicle (EV) charging points at the site due to come online. Further enhancements at the site are scheduled to commence in September with the refurbishment of the toilet block, signage works and a new bus layby and associated markings. This increased our total number of [charging points across the county](#) to 80.

We also took the opportunity to highlight this increased [network of chargers ahead of the August Bank Holiday](#) to local and out of county EV owners as to their availability across the county to help support visits to tourist attractions, events and businesses.

In August, following a comprehensive public consultation process to ensure that the final plans for [Llangollen's 4 Great Highways project](#), (also funded by LUF) reflected local thinking, we were pleased to have initiated the tendering process to find a contractor to complete the works with a view to appointing one in early to mid-September. The aim of the project is to enhance the landscape and improve accessibility, interpretation and signage in Llangollen. It's important to us to ensure that the signage in the area reflects how local people want the town to be portrayed and feedback on people's preferred [design options for the new interpretation and wayfinding](#) that is due to be installed is currently being sought with a closing date of October 8.

Support communities with improved digital networks and skills

With internet access becoming a vital part of everyday life, with many essential services and schemes now moving online, we urged anyone who may need some help in this area to contact or visit their local library for more information. We have been working with the Good Things Foundation, to help distribute free SIM cards and mobile data to local people [living in data poverty](#) through the National Databank Scheme in our Denbighshire's Libraries.

Telecare services are being digitised in readiness of analogue services ceasing in 2025. This theme includes an activity that reports progress towards achieving digitisation, and

we had previously intended on including a measure of the new digital service. However, a measure is no longer deemed necessary and has been removed.

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment, please see our [learning and growing theme](#).

Promote personal and community well-being

This theme also includes measures in relation to personal and community well-being. Our Community Resilience Team has seen the number of projects or groups supported steadily grow. In this period 73 groups and projects were supported which included 36 new enquiries and 37 receiving ongoing support from the previous reporting period.

The Gwyddelwern Community Hub LUF project has been included in this report this period. The project, with an expected completion date of March 2025, will provide a new energy-efficient community hub to increase the range of facilities available in the village.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Within this theme there are several nationally benchmarked measures that give an indication of performance compared to other local authorities in Wales. For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring theme](#); for community focussed school activity and developing digital competency please see our [Learning and Growing theme](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
Year to date average for the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) Benchmarked Locally	18% Priority to Improve Same	16% Priority to Improve Worse	16% Priority to Improve Same	29% Priority to Improve Better	23.33% Priority to Improve Worse
The number of projects or groups supported by	55	53	61	78	73

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
the Community Resilience Team - Benchmarked Locally	Good Better	Good Worse	Excellent Better	Excellent Better	Excellent Worse
The number of tenants involved in community projects – Count Only	6	6	6	6	6
Number of journeys using Fflecsi bus services	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending
Number of journeys on service buses	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending
Number of concessionary journeys on service buses	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Number of cycle journeys per annum on designated Active Travel routes (Sample)	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Baseline data being established
Number of pedestrian journeys per annum on designated Active Travel routes (Sample)	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Baseline data being established
The percentage of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	2.6% Excellent Better	2.2% Excellent Better
The percentage of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	3.8% Excellent Better	3.5% Excellent Better
The percentage of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	7.5% Excellent Better	16.4% Priority to Improve Worse

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of premises that receive less than 30Mbps - Count Only	No data	4.57%
The percentage of premises that receive less than 10Mbps - Count Only	No data	2.88%
The percentage of library users who say that using the library has had a positive impact on their digital skills and confidence - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	65% Good
The percentage of people who borrowed a digital device from a library who said it had made a positive impact on their digital skills and confidence - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of community projects co-produced with the community and third sector - Count Only	7	7
The number of volunteer hours supporting community resilience and development activity - Count Only	No data	700 (estimate)
The number of contacts provided through the council's Edge of Care volunteer service - Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	795

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the transport and road infrastructure to support thriving, cohesive, and well connected communities - Benchmarked Locally	30%	65%	5%	31% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the digital infrastructure (such as good broadband connectivity,	49%	45%	6%	52.2% Acceptable

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
good mobile internet or mobile phone signal) to support thriving, cohesive, and well connected communities – Benchmarked Locally				
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the social infrastructure needed to support personal and community well-being – Benchmarked Locally	56%	34%	10%	62% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government's next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Access to Services (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Same	14% Priority to Improve Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

This theme contains 18 projects and activities. Eight of which are 'On Target', three are 'Experiencing Obstacles', five are in development and two have now been completed.

Title	Status	Exception
Implement an annual Resurfacing programme on a number of roads across the county where the life has expired.	On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Implement an annual Surface Dressing programme on a number of high priority roads where this represents the most cost-effective method of prolonging the life-span of the road	Completed	No exception
Aim to deliver the most viable option to replace the Llannerch Bridge	On Target Same	No exception
Contribute to the development of the new Regional Transport Plan	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The Corporate Joint Committee is focussing on establishing appropriate governance arrangements before moving to delivery.
Review, develop and modernise rural, urban and inter-urban transport services, where appropriate, working with partners within the Metro project and alongside the emerging bus reform	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (to include Active Travel)	At business case stage	No exception
Four Great Highways (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target	No exception
Wenffrwd (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target	No exception
Corwen to Cynwyd Active Travel Route. Phase 1 (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception
2a Moel Famau country park new cycle paths & visitor facilities (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception
1a St Peter's Square (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception
Green Lane Car Park Corwen (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target Same	No exception
2d Gwyddelwern Community Hub (CW LUF)	At business case stage	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Traffic modelling and design traffic improvement works	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Project is on hold whilst funding is being sought to progress or develop it further.
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Public Charging Points	Completed	Awaiting two sites to become live.
Progress towards digitalisation of telecare services before the 2025 deadline for ceasing of analogue telephone services.	Experiencing Obstacles	Clear options appraisal will allow decisions to be made in order to progress.
Develop a community resilience action plan	On Target Same	No exception
Replace our current backup infrastructure to remove the reliance on legacy technologies and improve resilience.	On Target	No exception

A Greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Deliver our Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030.

Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021 to 2022 and 2029 to 2030) is scheduled to be reviewed and refreshed every three years. The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy will be carried out this year, 2023 to 2024. Delivery of the strategy does not stop whilst this review is taking place; work continues concurrently with the review to deliver a Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council and reduction in supply chain emissions.

Ensuring the strategy remains relevant, up to date and bought into is integral to delivering upon the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration (2019) which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030 and improve biodiversity in Denbighshire.

There are a number of key annual performance measures that are being used to judge the performance of the council in achieving its 2030 goals including: reducing carbon emissions the council emits from various sources; increasing carbon sequestration of land the council owns, leases and manages; and increasing the species richness of the land the council owns, leases and manages, all of which were reported in our [January to March 2023 report](#).

Data for reducing carbon tonnage from our supply chains measure for 2022 to 2023 is currently pending (as are previous years). The data collation methodology is currently being revisited in order to provide accurate annual figures. These figures will be reported as soon as they are available.

A round up of all the great project work and activities progressed during July to September can be found in our ["A round up of news" section](#).

Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

Throughout September, we invited school children to submit their [creative names for our 21 new recycling vehicles](#), including three electric vehicles in either Welsh or English. The new fleet has been bought to replace the old fleet and is part of a range of measures we are taking to reach the county's recycling target of 70%. We also sought more images to go on the livery for future vehicles in our waste and recycling fleet from [local photographers](#). We want our new vehicles to show our collective pride in the county.

Support communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change

The two Coastal Defence Improvement Schemes for Rhyl Central and Prestatyn Central remain 'On Target'. The new Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy for the county of Denbighshire is still in its early stages with a meeting of the Task and Finish Group of nominated Members to take place towards the end of October to discuss the initial draft of the strategy.

At the beginning of July, following the successful installation of new security gates, the part of the promenade that had been closed between the Pavilion Car Park and Old Golf Road to allow for coastal defence works was [re-opened at weekends](#). This allows uninterrupted access for both cyclists and pedestrians between Splash Point and SeaQuarium. However, access to the prom for heavy plant will still be required during the working week, including tidal working hours, therefore the gates will be closed Monday to Friday.

The Clwyd West Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Loggerheads project will deliver internal improvements to the existing building, with an extended external undercover area and crucially, additional natural flood management measures. The project has an expected delivery date of March 2025.

This pledge also includes supporting communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change by increasing allotments and community food growing opportunities. During the period, Countryside Services staff and volunteers linked up with [Incredible Edible Denbigh](#) to help prepare allotment spaces donated to the group for planting and growing. The group is aiming to grow food with help from the local community, allowing people to access locally produced fruit and vegetable.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of greener initiatives please see our [Housing](#) theme for energy efficiency and our [Better Connected](#) theme for sustainable travel and electric vehicle charging points.

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains) – Benchmarked Locally	12,205 Acceptable Worse	11,832 Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness – Benchmarked Locally	40.62% Acceptable Better	42.00% Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through fleet – Benchmarked Locally	2,699 Priority to Improve Worse	2,302 Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through business travel– Benchmarked Locally	163 Excellent Better	251 Excellent Worse
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains– Benchmarked Locally	Data pending	Data pending
Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed in our buildings (owned and operated) - Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	1MW
The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted - Benchmarked Nationally	67.67% Excellent	65.91% Good Worse
The number of properties with a high or medium risk of flooding (DCC wide) - Count Only	1,171	1,171
Area of moorland (heather, gorse and bracken) managed per annum – Benchmarked Locally	20 hectares	80 hectares Excellent Better

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is resilient against the impacts of climate change and nature’s decline - Benchmarked Locally	44%	40%	16%	52% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Physical Environment (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	2% Good Better	2% Good Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

This theme is supported by the overarching Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 to 2030 and a further 18 projects and activities. Eight are ‘On Target’, eight are ‘Experiencing Obstacles’ and one is in development. One project is as ‘At Risk’: the Behaviour Change Workstream- Climate Action and Nature Recovery. This is due to staff resource and capacity, which is currently impacting on the progress and delivery of the project.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Programme: Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 – 2030	Experiencing Obstacles Same	In year 2023 to 2024 status update: Delays in project delivery, which means benefit realisation will also be delayed.
Reducing carbon from buildings	Experiencing Obstacles Same	2023 to 2024 projects look likely to save approximately 300 tonnes of carbon which is less than the target figure of around 660 tonnes per annum (to meet the 60% reduction from buildings by 2030). Of the projects planned, preparations continue at pace to move these into delivery. There have been delays in mobilising projects even though work has taken place during school holidays.
Corporate Fleet EV Phase 2	On Target Same	No exception
Carbon sequestration on existing land holdings	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Delays in the purchases of Moel y Plas and Llys Brenig will impact on woodland creation.
Wildflower Meadow project	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Future of the project and plans for next year are to be finalised.
Nature Reserve at Green Gates Farm, St Asaph	Experiencing Obstacles Same	New cost estimates, resource capacity and availability constraints, could impact on project milestones, budget, scope of work and potentially funding.
Behaviour change for climate action and nature recovery	At Risk Worse	Staff resource and capacity is currently

Title	Status	Exception
		impacting on the progress and delivery of this project
Carbon reduction through procurement	On Target Better	No exception
Land acquisition for carbon and ecological purposes 2023 to 2024	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Three sites are in the process of being purchased and one new site is being pursued as a potential opportunity.
Implement Ash Dieback work as per the Action Plan across the county	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems in all of our Council service areas	Experiencing Obstacles	Our Ecological and Biodiversity Team are working hard across council services to improve biodiversity, however, instigating any change takes time.
Rhyl Green Infrastructure	On Target Same	No exception
Remodelling Waste Service Operations	Experiencing Obstacles Better	Operations at the new Waste Transfer Station are subject to the approval of a bespoke permit, which was submitted in January 2023 to Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The permit needs to be approved before the service change can take place.
We will work towards reducing the use of plastics within Denbighshire County Council, including School Catering and Procurement, along with any future work (including its Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) such as Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	We are continually looking for alternative drinks provision that would eradicate single use plastics. The trial period of selling drinks in reusable cups was unsuccessful.
Deliver improvement and expansion projects for Denbighshire County Council allotments	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Develop a new Flood Strategy for the county	On Target Same	No exception
Prestatyn Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	No exception
Rhyl Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	No exception
2b Loggerheads country park new visitor facilities and flood management (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

Denbighshire County Council's Property Section Energy Team has completed over 90 working measures into 47 council-owned buildings in a drive to [reduce building emissions](#). To date we have improved the efficiency of a range of buildings, from schools to leisure centres across the county, which has included complete mechanical, heating and ventilation overhauls, modifications to heating controls, heat recovery systems, heatpumps, solar PV (panels), LED lighting, battery storage, loft and wall insulation as well as emission reductions through behaviour change and ICT infrastructure. Work at Ysgol Dinas Bran was mentioned in the House of Commons and nominated for a national award.

Earlier this year the Energy Team oversaw the installation of two air source heat pumps at [Ysgol Tir Morfa](#) and during the summer holidays they completed phase 2 with the installation of two solar PV arrays and battery storage to help generate electricity to power the pumps and store any excess. This work not only further reducing the fuel bills but also saving a further six tonnes of carbon emissions per year. More schools are set to receive work over 2023 along with plans for drive through changes in other council buildings.

September also saw the completion of phase two of work to improve [energy efficiency at Csgod y Gaer care home](#) in Corwen. This has resulted in around three quarters less water heating energy use a day. The gas consumption has reduced from an average of 750kwh to 200kwh daily on top of the impact of the previous work. This is a further reduction of around another five to six tonnes of carbon emissions per year. The total emissions at the

care home are now around 10 tonnes per year lower than they were before the carbon reduction project work.

In August, Marine Lake in Rhyl [achieved the Green Flag Community Award for the 12th consecutive year](#). The Green Flag Community Award delivered by environmental charity Keep Wales Tidy is the benchmark for parks and green spaces, which are managed with the help of volunteers.

Volunteers supported by Nature for Health alongside Countryside Service staff completed a [new bridge at Brickfield Pond Nature Reserve](#) to allow a much needed wildlife habitat to develop. The bridge helps take the pathway and visitors over the new water vole habitat, an animal on the UK's endangered list. Countryside staff and volunteers carried out [identification work of moths](#) at the allotments near Coed Morfa, Prestatyn. Developments of the land at [Parc Bodnant in Prestatyn](#) culminated in the creation of a new pond and a new outdoor classroom, which has a bat roof to give the nocturnal mammal a place to roost. Countryside staff have continued to work closely with Rhuddlan Reserve Management Advisory Group and during the period, the Rhuddlan Nature Reserve celebrated achieving an Outstanding 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Award again for 2023, alongside another [RHS National Certificate of Distinction](#). Vital new work is also underway to help [protect and support Denbighshire's curlew population](#).

At the beginning of July, we reminded residents to be aware of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) rules. The TPOs protect trees from [unauthorised pruning or felling](#), and anyone carrying out such work on a TPO tree is committing an offence. In August, we launched an appeal to help [preserve the lineage of ancient Denbighshire trees](#). In July, we thanked the [vibrant volunteer community](#) that supports the Tree Nursery at Green Gates Farm, St. Asaph. The Tree Nursery has [exceeded last season's results](#): producing nearly 8,000 plants during its first growing season last year; growing 13,000 wildflowers this year; and increasing the number of trees grown from 1,000 last season to 11,500 for 2023. In September, the Tree Nursery took onboard [an electric Avant loader and an electric van](#) to help out with manual work at the nursery and support the low emissions delivery of trees and plants.

In August, our Countryside Services had support from a 15 year old Gypsy Cob, Bill, as a traditional [horse powered method to help resource wood](#) to use following ash dieback prevention work at Loggerheads Country Park. This type of forestry management, which has horses move trees from a felled location to a collection area, is more carbon friendly

and is kinder to the forest ecology. Trees deemed a risk due to the disease were cut down at the park and left-over wood will be reused to create benches.

We started preparations to introduce a [natural process across eight county wildflower meadows to control grass](#) length by preparing the meadows for seeding of yellow rattle seeds. With the flowering season finishing, our [seasonal maintenance of our wildflower meadow sites](#) began in August across the county with specialist mowing equipment to carry out the second cut, the first is carried out on the meadows during February and March each year. The Council's Biodiversity team, working with volunteers and groups across the county, started a [programme of plug planting and enhancement work across ten meadows](#). Most recently, in September they were joined by volunteers from an [award winning group, Denbigh in Bloom](#) to add more colour and variety to a Denbigh roundabout. Plants donated by the Council's Biodiversity team, which maintains the tree nursery, supported volunteers of the [Friends of the Ffrith with the development of their own wildflower planters](#).

Schools continued to play an important role in looking after biodiversity and helping tackle the climate and nature emergency, during the period July to September. We highlighted the work of pupils of [Ysgol Penmorfa](#) in creating a multitude of outdoor areas for wildlife to thrive. Pupils of [Ysgol Caer Drewyn, Corwen](#) and our Biodiversity team created a new wildflower meadow in the corner of the school grounds to help local nature. Our Countryside team supported Rhos Street school by carrying out [traditional hedgelaying](#) on their site. In September, [Streetscene members joined the Mayor of Ruthin for a visit to Ysgol Borthyn](#).

In September, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru together with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) held a farm walk at Cefn-y-fedw, Pen-y-bryn, Pen-y-cae, Wrexham to highlight the theme of [integration of conservation within a commercial farming enterprise](#).

In September, we issued a [Fixed Penalty Notice \(FPN\) of £250 to an individual for fly-tipping waste on the street](#), violating Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This demonstrates that such behaviour will not be tolerated and that action will be taken when it occurs.

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Foster community cohesion by ensuring people are protected from harm, abuse and exploitation

North Wales Police reported 368 repeat victims of domestic abuse for the period July to September 2023 (up from 99 between April to June), which compared to 266 for the same period last year. In terms of repeat offenders of domestic abuse reported for July to September, there were 73 offenders – up from 6 during April to June. The significant spike in volumes is also evident for the rest of North Wales. Further work is required to understand what has caused this anomaly. It is important to note that due to the way the repeat victims and offenders data are calculated means that volumes are liable to change as new offences are added to nominals, or as offences move out of the ‘last 12 months’ time period. North Wales Police has also revised the recording standards for these data, and the trend we are seeing (i.e. increased repeat offenders and victims), reflects these improvements.

[Denbigh town centre will have 5 new CCTV cameras](#) and upgraded existing ones as part of plans to enhance security, with funding from the UK Government’s Shared Prosperity Fund. Cameras across the Denbighshire CCTV Partnership, a collaboration with North Wales Police and the town councils of Prestatyn, Rhuddlan and Rhyl, and soon Denbigh, will benefit from 24-hour reactive monitoring.

Denbighshire’s Trading Standards team has been taking action to address [non-compliant vaping products](#) within the county. The council has urged business owners to be aware of the legal requirements that are in place to protect the health and safety of users as it is the responsibility of business owners to comply with the law. [Advice](#) is available from the Trading Standards team. In September, the team warned residents about [rogue traders and doorstep crime](#). Information about legitimate doorstep trading practices is available [here](#) on the council’s website.

Reduce inequalities

87% of staff have completed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e-learning module (not mandatory), which is considered 'Good'. Our measure of the percentage of staff that have completed our modern-day slavery (not mandatory) e-learning module is annual, and we previously reported it as a 'Priority for Improvement'. Despite a slight improvement since June, it remains a 'a 'Priority for Improvement'. This e-learning module is more pertinent to some job roles than others, and we need to ensure that the staff who need this training, access it. This is also the case for hate crime e-learning.

One activity to 'Support diversity and engagement by embedding the framework on a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being' continues to be 'At Risk'. Following notification of a reduction of Welsh Government grant fund to support this work, the team is taking a more targeted approach. A number of training courses were commissioned between July and September for schools to access in the autumn term, and two clusters of schools have been approached to pilot two particular interventions and we will provide an update on those through future reports.

A contacts list for advocates of groups of people with protected characteristics has been developed with the Regional Community Cohesion Officer and will be tabled at the next meeting of the council's Strategic Equality and Diversity Group, both for information and to collectively consider how best to promote this list across the organisation.

The council has supplied 15 public locations across Denbighshire with [in case of emergency period products](#) display units which the public can access for free, funded through the Welsh Government Period Dignity Grant.

In September, the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership visited the [Ty Pride project in Rhyl](#), which supports LGBTQ+ young people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The only one of its kind in Wales, the project is a partnership between Denbighshire County Council, homeless charity Llamau, and the charity West Rhyl Young People's Project and Viva LGBTQ+.

Alleviate poverty

As reported previously, according to the latest data from the National Survey for Wales, the percentage of people living in households in material deprivation has increased from

9.1% in 2019 to 2020 to 14.8% in 2022 to 2023. On the basis of this deterioration - using our standardised methodology for calculating what poor and excellent performance looks like - performance is 'Acceptable'. During 2022 to 2023, Neath Porth Talbot had the highest percentage of people living in households in material deprivation at 21.5% and Monmouthshire the lowest at 8.4%.

19.3% of children in Denbighshire were living in workless households in 2022 and is a 'Priority for improvement'. This has improved slightly since 2021, at which point 21.1% of children were living in workless households.

The national basic income pilot has commenced and 100% of Denbighshire's eligible care experienced young people are taking part in the scheme, which is considered 'Excellent'.

We reported in our last report that we have made enquiries with colleagues in Data Cymru for suitable national measures of fuel poverty reported at a local authority level; however, it currently appears that none exist that are routinely reported upon. We are exploring whether any local measures exist or can be easily captured.

Since September 2022, the [Universal Primary Free School Meals \(UPFSM\)](#) offer in Denbighshire has been successfully rolled out to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The [UPFSM offer has been extended to Years 3 and 4](#) from September 2023, and the phased delivery approach will see all primary pupils offered free school meals by 2024. In response to the UPFSM roll out, schools such as [Christ the Word in Rhyl have upgraded their dining capacity](#). The percentage of eligible primary and secondary school pupils taking Free School meals during the summer term of 2023 was 63% and 78% respectively.

Denbighshire County Council has been collaborating with the Design Council to 'design differently' and take preventative action to tackle issues such as waste. As part of the project, the council has been working with ReSource, the operators of [Ruthin community café Seconds](#). The café is sourcing local surplus food to prevent food waste and keep costs low for its customers, demonstrating an integrated approach to supporting people through the cost of living crisis whilst addressing long-term issues affecting the planet.

In July, the council reminded parents and guardians that the [School Essentials Grant](#) was open for applications. To qualify, parents needed to receive at least one benefit, such as income support, but they must not already receive Working Tax Credit. Up to £200 was available depending on the age of the child.

Continue to support and resettle refugees through the UK Global Resettlement Scheme, in support of Wales' declaration to be a Nation of Sanctuary

Working Denbighshire has continued to offer one-to-one support for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, including delivering the social group for English language skills practice for Ukrainian participants. We have also assigned employment co-ordinators to work with local employers on specific opportunities for those with the poorest English language skills. In addition, we continue to run workshops designed to provide refugees from all areas with information on UK 'employer expectations'.

In August, an [event held for resettled families in Denbighshire](#) was organised by Denbighshire County Council, the British Red Cross and the North East Wales Community Cohesion Service. The free multi-cultural event provided activities and performances for families from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

We have recalculated the number of families resettled within Denbighshire during 2022 and 2023 and have made an amendment to the total (cumulative) number from 75 to 41. This discrepancy relates to the different schemes of support available. For clarity, the revised figure does not include families hosted through the Super Sponsorship Scheme.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

The majority of the measures below are new to this Corporate Plan and to the 2023 to 2024 financial year. Some data is pending for this report and will be obtained for our next report. Other information, such as 'the number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools', is expected by November 2023.

For further measures and activity to support well-being, see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring](#) theme. There is additional information to support housing and homelessness in our [Housing](#) theme; measures and activities to support employment and deprivation our [Prosperous](#) theme and education and volunteering in our [Learning and Growing](#) and [Connected](#) themes.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse reported including non-crime occurrences (3 or more in 12 months, measured as year to date) - Count Only	266	386	537	99	368
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat offenders of Domestic Abuse reported (3 or more in 12 months) - Count Only	28	42	56	6	73
The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	70	Data pending
The percentage of eligible primary school pupils taking Free School meals (Denbighshire) – Count Only	No data: does not apply	68.3%	Data pending	Data pending	63%
The percentage of eligible secondary school pupils taking Free School meals (Denbighshire) - Count Only	No data: does not apply	80.52%	Data pending	Data pending	78%

Annual or Biennial Measures

2019 to 2023 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2022 to 2023
The percentage of people living in households in material deprivation – Benchmarked Nationally	9.1%	14.8% Acceptable Worse

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have undertaken the hate crime e-learning module (not mandatory) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	7% Priority to Improve
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have undertaken modern day slavery e-learning module (not mandatory) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	25% Priority to Improve
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have completed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e-learning - Benchmarked Locally	New to 2022 to 2023	87% Good Better
The number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools - Benchmarked Locally	No data	Data pending. Expected November 2023
The percentage of adults who say their library is an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place - Benchmarked Locally	93% Excellent Same	93% Excellent Same
The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	34.9% Priority to Improve	28.1% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of children living in workless households – Benchmarked Nationally	21.1% Priority to Improve	19.3% Priority to Improve Better

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Measures of all households and vulnerable households living in fuel poverty in Wales (placeholder) - Benchmarked Nationally	Data pending	Data pending
The percentage of eligible young people leaving care in receipt of the basic income pilot from the Welsh Government - Benchmarked Nationally	No data. Pilot Scheme across Wales to be undertaken	100% Excellent
The cumulative number of families resettled within Denbighshire – Count Only	6	41
The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of customer complaints received by the council related to race – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data expected April 2024

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agreed that people in Denbighshire are treated fairly and equally, and have access to opportunities to promote their well-being and community cohesion - Benchmarked Locally	36%	44%	20%	46% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Community Safety (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD) - Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Worse	10% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD) - Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Better

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are 20 projects supporting this theme of the Corporate Plan. 15 are 'On Target', 3 are 'Experiencing Obstacles' and one is 'At Risk', with exceptions for those reported below. One activity is being scoped.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Undertake preventative work, in partnership with the Police Licensing and Local Authority Licencing, in relation to business premises (including sales to minors, alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes)	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller awareness raising community events	On Target Same	No exception
Purchase of ANPR cameras - The purchase of six specialist ANPR specification redeployable surveillance cameras which will enable us to monitor and gather information in respect of environmental crime hotspots.	On Target	No exception
Commit to the Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan through Service Business Plans	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The detail of some actions and lines of responsibility is still being agreed with services.
Deliver upon the pledge to promote zero racism in Denbighshire	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Capacity pressure is slowing progress. This will

Title	Status	Exception
		be progressed during January and March.
<i>Promote to schools English as an Additional Language Programme in terms of tackling racism and ensure anti-racism policies at schools are up to date (this includes raising awareness of ARWAP)</i>	This activity is being scoped.	No exception
Engage and support tenants most likely to be experiencing social inequality to access services and take an active role in their community	On Target Same	No exception
Bruton Park, Rhyl (working with Bruton Park residents to maximise community well-being).	On Target Same	No exception
Develop Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the County.	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	No indication as yet from Welsh Government of any funding being allocated this year to support local groups to set up hubs. Libraries have continued throughout the year to offer warm spaces along with free tea and coffee facilities. We continue to work with local community groups to assist in setting up new hubs, supporting existing ones and with promotion and branding to promote these spaces. We are looking for further funding to support this work.
Support diversity and engagement by embedding the framework on a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being	At Risk Same	A number of training courses were commissioned between July and September for schools to access in the Autumn term, using the authority Wellbeing Grant. Interventions are chosen for their evidence base and impact. Given that the WG Wellbeing grant has been reduced this has impacted on the breadth of training and school activity that

Title	Status	Exception
		could be offered. Two clusters of schools have been approached to pilot two particular interventions.
Review and revise the Youth Council for Denbighshire.	On Target Same	No exception
Embed the DCC Anti-Bullying Strategy throughout all schools	On Target Same	No exception
Period Dignity	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a network to engage people and groups with protected characteristics (through the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group)	On Target Same	No exception
Universal Free School Meals for all Primary School Pupils	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver the county wide Food Strategy and Food Partnership Network (including social supermarket project – Cogog) around Denbighshire	On Target Better	No exception
Enhance the School Holiday Enrichment Programme to support children to eat well	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the offer, through Working Denbighshire, for all refugees who have settled in Denbighshire to gain support of an employment mentor (all adults are actively involved in English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes	On Target Same	No exception
In partnership with Denbighshire Leisure Ltd and the Third Sector, secure funding for creative and cultural activities to work with resettled families in the county	On Target Same	No exception
Greener community infrastructure: Accessible Play Area Provision to deliver play areas in strategic locations across the county that are accessible to all by installing specialist	Started On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
equipment and making improvements to footways and street furniture in the public realm and immediate vicinity		

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place between July and September in support of this theme:

[Emergency Services Day](#) took place on September 9, and the council marked the occasion by raising a flag in their honour at County Hall in Ruthin. Earlier in the month, Denbighshire County Council showed its support for [Merchant Navy Day](#) (September 1) by raising the Red Ensign flag.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Play our part in achieving one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050, by delivering the Welsh Language Strategy with partners and communities

We previously reported that the number of people who could speak Welsh (aged 3 or older) as at the end of March 2023 stood at 35,000, which was 38%, and that whilst the percentage had increased overall for the whole of Wales, this was not replicated in Denbighshire with 900 fewer people reporting they could speak Welsh (a 0.9% decrease) compared to the end of March 2022. It has been decided that it will be most helpful, going forward, to focus on the percentage of year one pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh, and so this indicator of self-reporting of Welsh will be removed henceforth from our Performance Management Framework. Furthermore, Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych is currently analysing the most recent Census data to determine the vibrancy of the Welsh language in smaller areas. We are also keen to gather examples where the language is thriving and is connected to our culture and our economy (for example, farming and agriculture), which better demonstrate people's experiences of a thriving language in their community. We will identify ways to capture these experiences.

28.4% of year one pupils received their education through the medium of Welsh during the academic year 2022 to 2023, a 1% increase on the previous year. Our ambition, according to our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), is to increase this to 32% by 2027 (the end of this new Corporate Plan), working towards 40% by 2032. Our ambition was based on projections, which included assumptions regarding growth in demand in existing Welsh medium schools and the transition of existing English medium schools to offer a Welsh medium foundation phase. The main area of concern is a reduction in the percentage of learners who received education in year 2 in 2022 to 2023, in part as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has reduced the baseline in the plan from 28% of learners receiving Welsh medium education in September 2020, to 26.4%. This reduction will make the ambitious targets of WESP very far-reaching. We had hoped to confirm our threshold for intervention, i.e. what will constitute a 'Priority for Improvement', in our previous report but the changing baseline has made determination of our thresholds

difficult. An additional issue is the expectation around schools' changing language category. At the time of developing the plan there was a greater expectation of the language outcome for schools transitioning from English to Welsh medium provision and it is unlikely that these pupils will contribute to this target now. Welsh Government is aware of the current position, and this will be kept under regular review. The council has also shared its annual progress report with the Welsh Government and we are awaiting their response. There is a clear, county-wide vision to develop Welsh in Education and effective collaboration is happening with committees working on specific projects and initiatives. The Welsh in Education Support Team now includes six members of staff who offer support and guidance to staff and schools in all sectors. The council's officers have met with school leaders and shared development plans with all primary schools to assist them in their endeavours to increase Welsh provision and develop Welsh oracy skills. Progress in relation to Welsh medium provision in schools was also discussed at [Performance Scrutiny](#) in September. The main area of concern (a reduction in the percentage of learners who received education in year 2 in 2022 to 2023) was discussed. However, positively, Welsh medium pre-school education was reported to be thriving and over the summer of 2023, the Council was invited to submit business cases for capital funding of £5.8m for five projects to assist with Welsh Medium provision. The projects in four primary schools and the development of an immersion provision in Ysgol Brynhyfryd will assist in progressing towards these targets. Strong retention of pupils in Welsh Medium schools throughout their education is key to delivery of the plan together with the expansion of provision either via re-designation of the language category of schools or the development of new Welsh Medium schools where appropriate. To support this, investment in training programmes to ensure there is sufficient capacity for Welsh Medium teaching provision, including enhancing the Welsh Language skills of current second language staff, is key to the delivery of the plan. We are in continual dialogue with Welsh Government and will review our targets regularly. Furthermore, we are developing a new webpage that will promote the benefits of Welsh medium education and offer support and resources to families, which include a list of schools under the new categorisation, Welsh medium education myth busting, case studies and videos. We are developing the website with the Welsh Language Forum, and we will include links to advice and resources from other organisations. Menter Iaith Sir Ddwyfach has agreed to fund the production of a postcard containing a QR code to link to the website. This is an action from our Welsh Language Strategy.

Following approval of the [Welsh Language Strategy 2023 to 2028](#) in June, officers have been developing ideas and guidance to inform recruitment of staff with Welsh essential and Welsh desirable skills. HR staff have attended a workshop with the Welsh Language Commissioner to get advice and guidance to help us comply with Welsh Language Standards. We would like to recruit more Welsh speaking staff, including more staff that are happy to identify some Welsh language skills and grow in confidence. The aim is to move to a position whereby every job has at least, as a minimum, a Level 1 Welsh language skills requirement (some positions will require a Level 5 skill). Guidance for managers is being produced and we are developing information for applicants outlining the skills required for each Level, and will outline the training and development opportunities we have in place to support and enable their progression. New starters and staff will be supported to develop their confidence and skills to achieve this. We want to see staff who would describe themselves as lacking confidence or fluency currently, having more informal conversations in Welsh and growing in confidence to write short emails in Welsh for example. Elected members and officers with fluent Welsh skills already discuss items at Committees through the medium of Welsh and we are seeing more members and officers who are learning making a commitment to introduce themselves and the item in question through the medium of Welsh. Furthermore, more staff have been learning entry level Welsh this year than any previous year, with 16 staff currently learning Welsh. Another course will start in October. Altogether there will be around 40 members of staff that have entered the entry level course. We have a learner's agreement for managers and staff, and we ask that these are signed before staff undertake additional training. We will bolster this agreement to include measures to encourage staff to ensure they use their new learning after their course has finished.

By the end of September 2023, 79.2% of staff had completed Welsh language awareness e-learning (a small decrease since June 2023) and is a 'Priority for Improvement'. New starters are required to complete the e-learning module within their six month probationary period. We have interrogated our data and based on the period January to July 2023, 499 staff had not completed the e-learning. 167 of those had joined in the period January to July 2023 and the remaining 332 had joined prior to 2023. This suggests that we need to ensure all staff undertake the training during their probationary period and support staff that have not yet completed it, to do so. Strengthening the induction process from a Welsh language perspective is a priority for the coming months.

During the period, we continued to run our 'Paned a Sgwrs' sessions, which are open, informal online meetings to give people an opportunity to practise using their Welsh. These will be suspended momentarily from October, due to staffing. On October 16, Diwrnod Owain Glyndwr, we created a fun quiz about Owain Glyndwr, Welsh, culture and heritage and shared a [video](#) we created about Owain Glyndwr and his association with Corwen and Denbighshire more widely. During the period, a meeting of the Welsh Language Champions took place. The Group has agreed to develop a video featuring children from across Denbighshire schools with the theme of the Rugby World Cup for [Shwmae Su'mae Day](#) on October 15.

A workshop, due to take place before the end of the financial year, is being planned for all elected members to brief them on what the council is doing to promote Welsh in the county, e.g. through the Welsh Language Strategy and the Welsh in Education in Strategic Plan.

Develop a cultural strategy and programme of events

Our pledge to 'Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events' remains on hold. We will develop a plan about how a cultural strategy, in the broadest sense, could connect and contribute to wider outcomes in terms of our economy and personal well-being for example. Despite this being on hold, the council continues to support and promote a wide range of cultural projects and events. For example, we are continuing to develop a planning application as part of the project to develop Bodelwyddan Castle as a Country Park and a gateway to Denbighshire.

From October, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will be inviting feedback on an initial Area of Search map for a proposed new National Park in North East Wales. The engagement period will run from October 9 until 23:59 on November 27, 2023. Welsh Government has commissioned NRW, as the Designating Authority in Wales, to evaluate the case for a new National Park based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The case for a new National Park will be considered within the existing Senedd term (2021 to 2026). A questionnaire to capture feedback is now live on the project [website](#).

We are also progressing with the Denbighshire Heritage Service Forward Plan for 2023 to 2026 and are about to start wider staff consultation on the draft Plan. The Plan sets out our objectives, the resources we need, links to current heritage projects (including those funding by the Levelling Up Fund, the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Heritage Lottery

Fund) and the costs of future projects. Throughout there is a focus on long term sustainability for all our heritage sites, in line with the Sustainable Development Principle. During the period, [Nantclwyd y Dre](#) was accredited as a Quality Assured Visitor Attraction and awarded, once again, Hidden Gem status following an assessment by Visit Wales.

The Denbighshire Tourism Ambassador scheme gave a presentation to Llangollen Eisteddfod Welcome Host students in July and plans are progressing for Wales Ambassador Week, which is due to take place during 20 to 26 November. Activities will include an online event and sponsorship of the Skills Award at the Go North Wales Tourism Awards 2023. There are now 375 Bronze, 290 Silver and 265 Gold Level Ambassadors. 6,030,000 tourists visited Denbighshire in 2022, which is a significant increase on the 2020 figures (reflecting the disruption due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions). The figure is the highest yet, since we started data collection in 2013. [Ruthin Gaol](#) has seen record high visitor numbers since its re-opening earlier in the year, with over 7,000 visitors so far (as at September 2023). The Gaol reopened on April 1st after two years' flood renovation works.

Whilst the activity to “Develop a new Library Strategy for Denbighshire reflecting the priorities and ambitions of the Corporate Plan and the Welsh Government Culture Strategy” is ‘Experiencing Obstacles’, Denbighshire Libraries continues to support this theme. At the start of the summer, Denbighshire Libraries launched an LGBTQ+ timeline, depicting important moments from history from the 1600s until the present day. The timeline was developed following training commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2021 to encourage the celebration of local stories of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Timeline is now available [online](#). During the summer holidays Denbighshire Libraries held another successful [Summer Reading Challenge](#), themed around play, sport, games and physical activity. The Summer Reading Challenge has been running since 1999 and helps to improve children’s reading skills and confidence over the summer holidays. Materials are available bilingually and the council encouraged families to take part to help children keep up with their Welsh skills over the summer holiday. In September, Denbighshire Libraries welcomed Waterstones Children’s Laureate (2022-2024) Joseph Coelho to Denbigh Library as part of his nationwide ‘Library Marathon’ mission. The tour included a special event at Denbigh Library, where Coelho became a member of Denbighshire Libraries, borrowed a book, and read and performed his works for pupils of Ysgol Pendref. Library users can now borrow five brand new ‘[Memory Boxes](#)’, all set in the 1950s, which can be borrowed just like a book. Created by Making Sense

CIO, and funded by Dementia Aware Denbighshire, these boxes contain carefully chosen items from the 1950s, designed to spark conversations and rekindle memories.

Of importance to this theme are some of the successful Levelling Up Fund Projects relating to culture and heritage. Clwyd South Round 1 projects are already underway. The majority of works as part of the project at Plas Newydd, Llangollen to 'Enhance the visitor experience to include improvements to the grounds' are complete. Some remaining path work, planting, signage and interpretation is in progress. The Horseshoe Falls project will be undergoing its procurement phase between September and October. Clwyd West projects continue to be under development and remain at Project Brief stage. All projects have reviewed their delivery and financial profiles, and this has provided a more realistic timeframe for projects as requested by the UK Government. Most projects have design teams in place, initial surveys are underway and, in some cases, complete and awaiting final reports. Project Boards are in place for each of the projects with first meetings due to take place over the next quarter. Public engagement is slightly delayed and will start in November to December. Expected construction start dates are noted below.

Working in partnership to deliver an improved and sustainable archive service for North Wales

The Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project continues to be 'At Risk', on the basis that funding has yet to be secured and therefore the funds are not in place to proceed as planned with the accommodation solution and the activity plan. Subject to the necessary approval from Cabinet, who now also wish to review alternative options in Denbighshire (Flintshire County Council's Cabinet has endorsed the project in Mold), a funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (Welsh capital grant funding) will be submitted in November 2023, and the outcome should be known some four months later. In the meantime, both archive services will continue to work collaboratively and develop the service under the North East Wales Archive brand.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of Welsh language and culture (for example, our pledge to be close to our communities), please see our [Well-Run, High Performing Council](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	73% Priority to Improve	80.3% Acceptable Better	79.26% Priority to Improve Worse
Measure: The number of Denbighshire Artisans supported (DLL Contract KPI) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	No data	55 (annual figure) Excellent	30 Excellent	39 Excellent Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

2019 to 2023 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2022 to 2023
Heritage income generated over the year (£) - Benchmarked Locally	44,224 Count only	12,861 Count only

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of year 1 pupils receiving Welsh medium education - Count Only	27.4%	28.4% Thresholds pending
STEAM - The number of tourists visiting Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	4,350,000 Acceptable Better	6,030,000 Excellent Better

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is a county where the Welsh language is a living, thriving language - Benchmarked Locally	55%	33%	12%	62% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the rich cultural heritage and natural assets of Denbighshire are being used to their full potential - Benchmarked Locally	44%	42%	14%	51% Acceptable

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

This theme contains 18 projects and activities. Four have not yet started and are at project brief stage; one is on hold; ten are 'On Target'; two are 'Experiencing Obstacles' and one is 'At Risk'.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implement the WESP to support 1 million speakers by 2050	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver the Welsh Language Strategy 2023-28 to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the county	On Target Better	No exception
Deliver the service delivery, policy making and operational standards of the Welsh Language Policy	On Target Better	No exception
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events</i>	On hold	To be scoped during 2023 and 2024
Develop phase 1 Bodelwyddan Castle as a Country Park and a gateway to Denbighshire	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The original planning application received objections from CADW and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for certain elements of the project. A revised planning

Title	Status	Exception
		application is being developed before moving the delivery of the project from Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 2 onto RIBA Stages 3 and 4. These stages are scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2024 so that work on the ground commences in April 2024 and is completed by December 2024.
Work with partners on the proposed designation of a National Park in North East Wales	On Target Same	No exception
Seek the designation of the AONB as a Dark Sky Community	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver the Denbighshire Heritage Service Forward Plan 2023 to 2026	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver the Ambassador Scheme in Denbighshire and across Wales in partnership	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a new Library Strategy for Denbighshire reflecting the priorities and ambitions of the Corporate Plan and the Welsh Government Culture Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Welsh Government's Cultural Strategy has not yet been published and is expected during 2024 to 2025.
Support and implement the National Music Service	On Target Same	No exception
Plas Newydd, Llangollen: Enhance the visitor experience to include improvements to the grounds (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 1)	On Target	No exception
Horseshoe Falls (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target	No exception
Ruthin Clock Tower: Renovation of Clock Tower exterior (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from May 2024.

Title	Status	Exception
Ruthin Gaol/46 Clwyd Street, Ruthin: Premises restoration including new access and improved public facilities (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from November 2024.
Nant Clwyd-y-Dre, Ruthin: Restoration to the Grade 1 listed building (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from November 2024.
Cae Ddol, Ruthin: Public Realm Upgrade and connect to the heritage theme (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from July 2025.
Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project	At Risk Same	Funding has yet to be secured. Funds are not in place to proceed as planned with the accommodation solution and the activity plan.

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place between July and September in support of this theme:

In August, the council showcased some of its campaigns and services at the [Denbigh and Flint 2023 show](#). The Climate Change Programme team were on hand to talk about how the council is working to tackle the impact of climate and ecological change. Tourism teams promoted their sustainable work in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Working Denbighshire promoted their role in helping young people get into work; and Archives staff offered people the opportunity to see how the county had changed over time. Flintshire County Council staff were also on hand promoting fostering, early years support and support for people with disabilities.

In August, families were invited to attend a free event to turn [marine sourced litter into artwork](#). The session was led by artist Tim Pugh, an environmental artist based in Flintshire who works with a wide range of mixed materials and media to create drawings and temporary installations.

An exhibition, part of the [Our Picturesque Landscape project](#) funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, opened at the Dory Gallery in Llangollen this September. Following a rich tradition of the Dee Valley inspiring artists, poets and tourists for centuries, the

exhibition will host over sixty contemporary works of art inspired by the picturesque scenery of the Dee Valley.

In August, a member of the public donated a [portrait of the family of Private Henry Jones, of Mwrog Street, Ruthin](#), who lost his life during The First World War. The North East Wales Archives in Ruthin already held a collection of postcards and letters sent by the Royal Welsh Fusilier from The Front and researchers can now put a face to a name with a picture of his wife and children.

In September, North East Wales Archives in Ruthin hosted a free '[open doors](#)' event welcoming visitors to explore some of the historical photographs in the collection. The event included activities for families, including Cyanotype printing with a local artist. A guest exhibition by local photographer Jac Williams was also held, named "Honest Agriculture".

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

This section relates to our Corporate Plan pledges for this theme. There is, inevitably, some cross over with the seven governance areas. For transparency, our self-assessment as to how well we are performing specifically in each of the seven governance areas can be found in the [Self-Assessment: Governance Areas](#) section.

As we explained in our previous report, we have held discussions to determine the right strategic set of measures and activity to monitor through these performance reports. There is though, still some work to do before a final indicator set, which should include qualitative measures better suited to this theme, which is about our organisational culture.

The new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board, providing governance for this theme, will be established in October 2023. At the time of writing this update, the Board had met and agreed a way forward to progress the theme's five pledges, which are aligned to our Council's five Principles. A full update on that will be included in our next update report, but for now, some changes to this theme's pledges have been requested. These changes offer an expansion and clarification on each pledge. Approval for these wording changes will be sought from County Council as part of our Self-Assessment Report for the year in spring 2024.

Embed a positive culture of ambition, transparency and continuous improvement

For this pledge, the Board is requesting to add additional wording (Instilling a "one council" ethos), which it believes captures the overall ethos of theme 9.

In July, the Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) attended [Governance and Audit Committee](#) to present the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2022 to 2023. The council has a statutory duty to publish an AGS and forms part of the Statement of Accounts. The AGS is drawn up following evaluation of the council's governance functions, using information from the self-assessment and reports presented to committees throughout the year. The following key improvement actions were identified:

- Review and update the Officers' Code of Conduct and the process for recording and capturing the response taken to declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality.
- Workforce capacity and resilience and reliance on key positions.
- Review the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Address exceptions, exemptions and variations from Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).
- Continuing budget pressures and uncertainty over funding. Also, address any actions arising from the review of the Financial Management Code.
- Uncertainty over future funding arrangements following EU Exit.

The delivery of these actions will be monitored by the Governance and Audit Committee, and the Corporate Governance Officers Group.

In September, the Corporate Director: Governance and Business presented a [draft annual report of the Governance and Audit Committee](#) for the same committee's approval, prior to the report being submitted to Council for approval in November 2023. The report covers the periods 2020 to 2021, 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 and summarises the composition of the committee and its work. The edition of this report to be presented next year (in respect of 2023 to 2024), as well as setting out how the Committee has met its terms of reference, will also include the results of the Committee's annual self-evaluation of its effectiveness against the 'Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police' and associated guidance, which was published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in 2022. This will enable the Committee to raise any concerns it may have had during the year, what it has done to escalate these and/or make recommendations as necessary.

Again in September, the annual report of the council's Scrutiny Committees 2022 to 2023 was presented to [Council](#) for approval. The report outlined processes, summarised the work undertaken during the year, outcomes from Scrutiny and requests from residents. One of the main objectives of the scrutiny process is to add value and to try and ensure that decisions taken by the Council have a positive impact on the lives of people who live, work and visit Denbighshire. The report gave an example of a positive outcome whereby a Moorlands Management Officer role was established as a direct result of a recommendation made by Communities Scrutiny Committee. This post was established in 2020 following the Committee's Review into the Llantysilio Mountain Fire 2019. An update report was presented to the Committee in March 2023 highlighting the positive impact of having a Moorland Officer fostering good relationships and co-ordinating multi-agency and

stakeholder working in relation fire response plans and habitat/fuel load management over key areas of the Clwydian Range, Llantysilio Mountain and Llandegla Moor.

Robust whistleblowing arrangements support good governance throughout the council, which in turn enables effective delivery of priorities. To support this the Monitoring Officer gave a report in September to the [Governance and Audit Committee](#) about the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy during January 2021 and April 2023. During this period, six new concerns had been raised. The report was sensitive and restricted.

We have, in this period, confirmed arrangements for the Panel Performance Assessment with Governance and Audit Committee. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on councils to arrange for a panel to undertake and respond to a corporate, organisational level assessment, of the extent to which the council is meeting its performance requirements. Responsibility for these assessments has been agreed as sitting with the Corporate Executive Team and a constitutional amendment is being sought to reflect the duty. We will be meeting with the Welsh Local Government Association in October to discuss practical arrangements for the Panel Performance Assessment.

Be close to our communities

The Board has requested that an additional sub-pledge be added here ("Empowering and enabling our communities by encouraging community leadership and community resilience"), to capture the support the council offers to communities across the county.

During the period, we have been finalising our draft Public Participation Strategy and Engagement Policy ready to seek approval from the Special Democratic Services committee in November. The Public Participation Strategy is a legislative requirement under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021, which requires principal authorities to have a strategy promoting ways to raise awareness of the council's functions, how to become a councillor, and how to get involved in local decision-making processes. Our Engagement Policy will set out best practice and the Strategy will focus our efforts on areas for improvement, which should complement other objectives such as equalities and diversity.

The council's new Procurement strategy was approved by Cabinet in September. Five collaborative procurements were awarded during the period, and no collaborative

procurement opportunities were missed. For more detailed information about performance in relation to procurement (the council's spend with local suppliers and contracts containing community benefits), please see our [prosperous theme](#) and [governance section about procurement](#).

Following the tranche review, thresholds for the percentage of negative news stories about the council have been reviewed and adjusted. 'Priority for Improvement' was previously considered to be 7% or below, which is felt to be unrealistic given news tends to have a negative bias. The threshold has therefore been changed to 31% or above. These new thresholds have been applied to data points since the start of the new Corporate Plan (October 2022). The percentage of negative news stories about the council (taken as a proportion of all news stories about the council) has decreased from 12.5% to 5.3% this period, and is considered 'Excellent'.

The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter has increased from 29% to 55%. This represents 33 from 60 complaints upheld or partly upheld and is considered 'Acceptable'. In July, the Head of Adult Social Care and Homelessness presented the Your Voice Complaints report for 2022 to 2023 to [Governance and Audit Committee](#). The report captures any compliments, suggestions and complaints received by Denbighshire County Council under the council's customer feedback policy. The report also included Social Services complaints received under its statutory complaints procedure. The Committee was briefed on the role of the Complaints Standards Authority, which has responsibility for monitoring all complaints received about councils in Wales. The council had recently received the Ombudsman's draft report for Denbighshire that stated they had received 32 complaints in the previous year but had only intervened in two of those complaints; both of which were resolved informally.

Whilst 'On Target', the activity to 'Implement the new requirements of the UK Elections Act 2022 and other electoral reform' is worth noting as challenging. The pace, scale and diversity of the electoral reform programmes from the Welsh and UK Governments pose a considerable challenge and risk to every principal council. The council has taken steps to strengthen its core electoral team and is keeping pace with the various timescales for implementation of the measures including voter identification and reform to absent voting and oversees voters. During this period, the electoral team has continued to undertake training and engage in national and regional discussions on electoral reform implementation activities. The second tranche of the Elections Act reforms will be implemented from October 2023, and these bring with them significant complications and

risks. For this reason, we will monitor this risk closely through our Corporate Support Service: People Risk Register.

Have clear performance expectations

Following resumption of our Service Performance Challenge, the Board has suggested we add delivery of those challenges to this pledge.

The challenges are instrumental in ensuring accountability of and support to services, and for shaping a collective understanding of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. An action to improve the way services work with our customer service system was agreed following the Service Performance Challenge for Highways and Environmental Services. Continuing to engage with members and ensure they are kept informed was identified as continually important during the Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Service Performance Challenge. These align with the other pledges within this theme and will be explored further by our new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board.

We have received no formal recommendations for improvement from external regulators (Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and Audit Wales). There have been no low assurance reports in this period from Internal Audit. Between April and September, seven of the ten Internal Audit reviews published had a high assurance level; the remaining three had a medium assurance level. The Annual Governance Statement for 2022 to 2023 found that none of the referrals made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during the year were upheld.

The Head of Education attended [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in September to discuss the [report](#) following the joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) that took place in Denbighshire in February 2023, involving Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn. The report was presented to the Committee as a confidential Part 2 item.

Audit Wales shared with [Governance and Audit Committee](#) its Assurance and Risk Assessment report for the audit year 2021 to 2022. The review focused on the implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (including self-assessment arrangements), and carbon reduction plans. Audit Wales made the following recommendation: "The Council needs to fully cost its action plan to ensure the plan is

achievable. This should include detailed costings for the period covered by the Medium Term Financial Plan and broader estimates for the remainder of the plan.”

Our measure on budget variance for the period (i.e. what we have and receive versus what we are spending) was £3.119million. The council's reserves remained at £5.531million.

As reported previously, we have started to monitor the revenue outturn expenditure per head of population, which we benchmark nationally. Data for 2022 to 2023 has not yet been published nationally and will be available in our next report. Whilst this is a single crude measure that could warrant being examined alongside council tax rates for example, it does offer a lens into a debate about value for money, which is one of the pledges within this theme; a pledge that will be scoped further by the new Board.

Our [Corporate Risk Register](#), as at February 2023, had a total of 20 risks on the register, 11 of which are inconsistent with our risk appetite (55%). This is considered to be a 'Priority for Improvement'. Our review of the Register commenced in September 2023, with reports scheduled to be presented to Cabinet Briefing, Governance and Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny in November. Whilst not yet signed off, as at September, 54% of our corporate risks are inconsistent with the council's risk appetite statement.

All projects were updated during the period, and performance is 'Excellent'. This is an improvement of 1.9% on the last reporting period. There were no projects presenting as 'Compromised'. Just under half (46.2%) of all Corporate Plan measures were showing as a 'Priority for Improvement' during July to September, which is considered 'Acceptable'.

Promote strong staff and elected member relations

On reflection, a fundamental element of this pledge is missing from our description and for this reason, the Board has requested the following additional wording: “Having good communication and close working relationships between elected members and officers”.

In July, County Council was asked for its view and direction on the requirements for [member training](#). The report asked for Council's support for mandatory training in respect of the Members' Code of Conduct, any other training that should be mandatory; timescales for completion; and sanctions for non-compliance (and exemptions). It was agreed that member training be added to the next Group Leaders meeting and be brought back to a future Council meeting.

The [Standards Committee](#) assured Council in September that it had taken a proactive role over the year in ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct and ethical behaviour along the Nolan Principles of Public Life, which also reflect our four values. A key role for the Committee going forward will be receiving an annual report from each Group Leader on the efforts being made that contribute to compliance with their new duty to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. A new group, the [Ethical Liaison Group](#), has been established and will meet regularly to discuss behaviour as part of the new duty placed upon political group leaders to promote ethical behaviour.

Ensure Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work

As at September 2023, the percentage of staff who were eligible for and who had at least one or three one-to-one meetings in the last 12 months stood at 56%, down from 58% in the last period. This is a rolling total. Following the Service Performance Challenges that have already taken place, it is apparent we need a wider action to ensure all staff have regular one-to-one meetings. It may be that these meetings are taking place but are not being recorded. This will be explored further by our new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board. Given the importance of one-to-one meetings the Board has asked for an explicit reference to “ensuring all staff have regular one-to-one meetings with their line manager” within this pledge.

Sickness absence data for the period April to June 2023 is now available and stood at 8.83 days per full time equivalent. Performance remains a ‘Priority for Improvement’ this period, at 8.82 days. We will review our performance thresholds once national benchmarking data is available with one year’s worth of data unaffected by Covid-19-related restrictions.

The percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules (excluding schools) stood at 49.8% at September (slightly less than the 51% in the previous period) and remains a ‘Priority for Improvement’. From this period onwards we will monitor this annually instead of quarterly. We are anticipating that this data will start to look very different as we start to look at whether courses are overdue and not just completed. For this reason, we anticipate that the percentage of staff that have completed the mandatory e-learning will dip. HR will monitor completion rates closely through their monthly reporting systems.

This theme has, up until now, included two measures of staff turnover: the percentage of employees who leave Denbighshire as a percentage of the total workforce excluding schools, and the percentage including schools. On the basis that the latter measure, which includes schools, has been harder to obtain national comparative data for, we will focus in future on the measure that excludes schools. As for sickness absence, we will review our thresholds for performance in relation to staff turnover in April 2024.

Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of procurement and community benefits, please see the [Prosperous](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of Corporate Plan Measures showing as 'Priority for Improvement' – Benchmarked Locally	51% Priority to Improve Same	No data: does not apply	49.5% Acceptable Better	48.3% Acceptable Better	46.2% Acceptable Better
The number of projects on the project register showing as 'Compromised' – Benchmarked Locally	2 Acceptable Worse	1 Good Better	1 Good Same	0 Excellent Better	0 Excellent Same
The percentage of projects whose delivery confidence was updated in the last three months – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent Better	95% Good Worse	96% Good Improved	96% Good Same	100% Excellent Better
The percentage of corporate risks inconsistent with the council's risk appetite statement – Benchmarked Locally	55% Priority to Improve Better	No data: does not apply	55% Priority to Improve Same	No data: does not apply	54% Priority to Improve Better

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The cumulative number of negative reports from external regulators – Benchmarked Locally	0	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same
The cumulative number of Internal Audit low assurance reports, financial year to date – Benchmarked Locally	0	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same
Corporate and Service Budget Variance (£k) – Count Only	2,661	2,189	1,585	3,348	3,119
Council reserves (£k) – Count Only	7,135	7,135	5,531	5,531	5,531
Negative news stories as a percentage of all news stories about the council – Benchmarked Locally	11% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Excellent Worse	14% Excellent Worse	12.5% Excellent Better	5.3% Excellent Better
The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter – Benchmarked Locally	67% Priority to Improve Worse	53% Acceptable Better	42% Good Better	29% Excellent Better	55% Acceptable Worse
The percentage of Members that have completed Code of Conduct training – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	100% Excellent	98% Excellent Worse

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The rolling average The number of working days / shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence – Benchmarked Nationally	10 Priority to Improve Worse	9.8 Priority to Improve Better	9.8 Priority to Improve Same	8.83 Priority to Improve Better	8.82 Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of staff who are eligible for one or three one-to- ones and who have had at least one or three one-to-ones in the last 12 months (by person) – Benchmarked Locally	52% Priority to Improve Better	53% Priority to Improve Better	61% Priority to Improve Better	58% Priority to Improve Worse	56% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of staff for whom we have equality monitoring information – Benchmarked Locally	76% Excellent Better	72% Excellent Worse	71.5% Excellent Worse	67% Excellent Worse	69.4% Excellent Better
The percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Locally	No data	No data	49% Priority to Improve Better	51% Priority to Improve Better	49.8% Priority to Improve Worse
The number of actual collaborative procurements – Count Only	2	1	2	0	5
The number of missed collaborative procurements – Count Only	0	0	1	1	0

Annual or biennial measures

2019 to 2022 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
The percentage of new appointees from applications where it was disclosed that they are either from a racial or religious minority group, have a disability, are gay or bi-sexual, or had their gender reassigned – Count Only	15%	4%	21%

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage difference in the mean hourly rate of pay for women – Benchmarked Locally	6.7% Acceptable	-13.4% Excellent Better
The percentage of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) that are women – Benchmarked Locally	79.3% Priority to Improve Better	80.7% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of attendance by elected members (expected and present), year to date - Benchmarked Locally	89%	84% Good Worse
The percentage of employees who leave Denbighshire as a percentage of the total workforce (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Nationally	10.6% Good Worse	12.4% Acceptable Worse
Revenue outturn expenditure per head of population (£s) - Count Only	2,913.25 Thresholds pending	Data pending. Available November 2023

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council is transparent, well-run, and high performing – Benchmarked Locally	41%	42%	17%	49% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council works well with partners – Benchmarked Locally	41%	15%	44%	74% Good
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is a good working relationship between political leaders and senior management – Benchmarked Locally	29%	24%	47%	55% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its performance well – Benchmarked Locally	42%	38%	20%	53% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its risks and challenges well – Benchmarked Locally	42%	34%	24%	55% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its finances well – Benchmarked Locally	37%	41%	22%	48% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council has effective long-term plans in place – Benchmarked Locally	38%	30%	32%	56% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats its workforce well – Benchmarked Locally	48%	16%	36%	76% Excellent
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council makes best use of its assets and resources – Benchmarked Locally	28%	52%	20%	35% Priority to Improve

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council purchases its goods and services in a fair and efficient way – Benchmarked Locally	28%	25%	47%	54% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council acts on the concerns of residents – Benchmarked Locally	39%	42%	19%	48% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats all people fairly – Benchmarked Locally	42%	31%	27%	58% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council's Corporate Plan and priorities reflect the needs of the local community - Benchmarked Locally	37%	36%	27%	51% Acceptable

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Projects Update

There are 20 projects of activities in support of this theme. Currently, nine activities are 'On Target', six are 'Experiencing Obstacles', two are complete and three are on hold. Our next report will include an update on progress of the Well-Run, High Performing Council Board in respect of the theme's five pledges.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Prepare for Peer Review for Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	On Target Better	No exception
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Develop and launch a new customer service framework (linked to our Welsh Language Strategy and Policy)</i>	On hold	This is on hold. Task and finish groups for each of the five pledges within this theme have been established and will be considering this over the coming six months.

Title	Status	Exception
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Procure a new corporate CRM (timescale 2025)	On hold	This is on hold. Task and finish groups for each of the five pledges within this theme have been established and will be considering this over the coming six months.
Implement the Public Participation Strategy	On Target	A draft strategy will be taken for approval to the Special Democratic Services committee in November.
Develop a co-production strategy (DCC wide)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Currently looking at models used by other local authorities and seeking to make contact with co-production network Wales from October 2023. We are looking at how this links to, and can support delivery of, the Corporate Plan themes.
Update the procurement strategy (to become a new project: Implement the new procurement strategy to deliver decarbonisation and the principles of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill)	Complete	No exception
Develop and secure Asset Management Group adoption of new Asset Management Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	The first revised portfolio plan was planned to be reported to the Asset Management Group in September but has been postponed until November. Portfolio plans will inform the development of the new Asset Management Strategy. It is anticipated that the next phase of the project will look at the council's office estate, i.e. what it needs and where, as part of the New Ways of Working project.
Develop and deliver portfolio plans to determine the shape, size and future use	Experiencing Obstacles	Work has commenced on the remaining portfolio

Title	Status	Exception
of assets for each of the council's asset management portfolios	Worse	plans and these will be presented to Asset Management Group over the remainder of the year. This is also subject to delay following postponement of the report to Asset Management Group from September to November.
Undertake an annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan 2022 to 2027	On Target	Workforce planning will commence once all new Heads of Service are in post, which is expected to be November 2023.
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Ensure value for money is embedded within our organisational culture, and that decisions are balanced by considering service quality and social value.</i>	On hold	This suggested activity is on hold. Task and finish groups for each of the five pledges within this theme have been established and will be considering this over the coming six months.
Establish the Ethical Liaison Group	Completed	The Group has been established and will be meeting on a regular basis.
Update the Members' Code of Conduct to include a timeframe within which Members are expected to have completed Code of Conduct training	Experiencing Obstacles Better	A report will be taken to Council in the autumn of 2023.
Develop a framework to guide councillors in handling harassment, abuse and intimidation	On Target Same	No exception
Implement the new requirements of the UK Elections Act 2022 and other electoral reform	On Target	No exception
Ensure that the Constitution is fit for purpose following the changes brought about by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	On Target	No exception
Raise awareness of mental health issues across the council through delivery and	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
embedding of the Time to Change action plan		
Embed the new agile working policy and support any learning and development needs from it	On Target Same	No exception
Improve the information we have about our workforce, including equality information, to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports	Experiencing Obstacles Same	A data collection survey will be launched during October to December to ensure that we have as much data in the HR system as possible.
Deliver the action plan of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Operational group	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Continuing to formalise 'Home grown' route for Occupational Therapy with partners, and working with colleges to provide local authority and provider placements as a route into employment. Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme Partnership Coordinator post is currently being advertised and some activity is on hold.
3rd Generation - North Wales Construction Framework	On Target	No exception

Self-Assessment: Governance Areas

The following is our self-assessment against the seven key governance areas and seeks to paint a picture of how well the council is performing, how we know that (linking to evidence where it is available), and what we can do to improve. Our news round up is included in each governance section.

Corporate Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Corporate Planning is about how the council sets out and makes arrangements to deliver on its strategic objectives.

Corporate Plan Governance Arrangements

Final arrangements concerning the governance of the 2022 to 2027 Corporate Plan were shared with [County Council](#) in July. Subsequently, the Strategic Planning and Performance Team have been working with the Chief Executive, corporate directors and cabinet members to agree programme definition documents and a forward programme of meetings for the five Boards, namely:

- Housing and Homelessness Board
- Prosperous Denbighshire Board
- Greener Denbighshire Board
- Fairer, Safe and more Equal Board
- Well-Run, High Performing Council Board

For those themes that are not overseen by a Board (Healthier, Happier and Caring Denbighshire; Learning and Growing Denbighshire; Better Connected Denbighshire; and A Denbighshire of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language) quarterly meetings have been arranged between Strategic Planning and Performance Officers and the relevant Cabinet member and Corporate Executive Team leads to monitor performance and identify areas for improvement. These arrangements are in addition to regular quarterly reporting through the Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny, our annual Self-Assessment to Governance and Audit Committee and County Council, and six monthly tranche reviews with all Heads of Service and Cabinet members.

Corporate Plan Tranche Review

In September, Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team held its second tranche review on the Corporate Plan, which focussed on reviewing performance information put forward in the annual Self-Assessment of Performance Report (the first report based on the new Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework). The meeting identified a number of actions for the new Corporate Plan Boards and strategic leads to explore and take forward, but discussion focussed primarily on the need to be clear about our performance expectations and the accuracy of our reporting. In the present financial context, it is important that the council keeps under review the relevance of the performance measures that it uses, the appropriateness of agreed thresholds, and particularly the viability of projects.

Senior Leadership Team

Further appointment panels took place in July for the three remaining vacant Head of Service posts. Catrin Roberts was confirmed as the new Head of Corporate Support Service: People; Helen Vaughan-Evans as the new Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance Digital and Assets; and Elizabeth Thomas as the new Head of Finance and Audit. These appointments conclude the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team. For more information on the new structure, [visit our website](#).

Agree and implement a whole council approach to New Ways of Working

Following the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team, responsibility for the New Ways of Working project has now moved to the Corporate Director for Governance and Business. It is anticipated that the next phase of the project will look at the council's office estate, i.e. what it needs and where.

Respond to the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Following the publication of the WLGA's methodology in June, and our initial discussions around arrangements for the Panel Performance Assessment with the Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet, we have in this period tabled a paper with the [Governance and Audit Committee](#) to seek their recommendation to amend the council's constitution. This is to provide clarity around the matter of local choice allowed in the legislation concerning responsibility for the assessment process - i.e. whether it sits with the Executive team or with County Council. The proposal that the Executive be responsible was accepted, and a recommendation for a constitutional amendment will be tabled with County Council in November. In the meantime, having also had a steer on preferred timetabling and approach, we can now progress discussions with the WLGA around practical arrangements. An initial meeting has been scheduled for late October. A procurement exception is also being sought through legal and procurement teams.

Financial Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Financial planning relates to the management of our income and expenditure.

Finance Update Reports

At its [meetings in July](#) and [September](#), Cabinet received an update on the council's financial position. The net revenue budget for 2023 to 2024 was £250.793million (up from 233.696million in 2022 to 2023). The position on service and corporate budgets was a forecast overspend of £3.119million (2.395million overspend last month). The increase was mainly due to additional pressures within children social care and homelessness. Services were prompted to review all the expenditure and income in their areas to mitigate the impact of the overall budget overspend. The budget mitigation reserve could cover this overspend in the current year, however that would reduce the resources available to meet unforeseen pressures in future years. The 2023 to 2024 budget required service savings and efficiencies of £8.172million to be identified and these are assumed to have been achieved. At the end of August, the council's borrowing totalled £264.454million at an average rate of 4.28%. Investment balances were £10.7million at an average rate of 3.53%.

In the report, the budget for Education and Children's Services remained as an area of concern as the forecast overspend was £1.041million, mainly due to pressures in children's social care. The Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service budget also remained a high-risk area; with the outturn prediction being £2.152million due to pressures in placement costs (£1.3million) and (£0.9million) in homelessness. For schools, the budget agreed by the County Council for 2023 to 2024 included a total net additional investment (excluding increases in Welsh Government grants) in schools delegated budgets of £3.03million. The latest projection for school balances to be carried forward into 2024 to 2025 is a net credit balance of £2.624million, which represents a decrease of £6.315million on the balances brought forward into 2023 to 2024 of £8.939million. The high opening balances were mainly due to receipt of one-off funding to be spent on catch-up and recovery programmes in school. There is a small underspend of £162,000 on non-delegated school budgets. Corporate budgets were projected to break-even in the report, however, risks around pay settlements, energy and other inflationary pressures were highlighted as requiring close monitoring in future months due to it being difficult to quantify them at this early stage of the year.

With regards to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the latest revenue position assumed a decrease in balances at year end of £804,000 compared to £922,000 at the time the budget was approved. The decrease related to a reduction in estimated rental income, offset by a reduced contribution to the HRA capital programme. HRA balances are

therefore forecast to be £764,000 at the end of the year. The Capital budget of £24million is largely allocated between planned improvements to existing housing stock (£12million) and new build developments and acquisitions (£12million).

The report also gives a summary of the council's Capital Plan. The approved capital plan is £113.2million, with expenditure to date of £25.1million.

Statement of Accounts

The council has a statutory duty to produce a statement of accounts that complies with approved accounting standards. As explained in previous performance update reports, the task of ensuring that the [Statement of Accounts for 2021 to 2022](#) could be signed off by Audit Wales had taken longer than expected. However, at September's meeting, an audited final set of accounts for 2021 to 2022 was approved by the Governance and Audit Committee.

The first draft of the Annual [Statement of Accounts for 2022 to 2023](#) has been submitted to the external auditors and was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee in September for information. After consulting with Audit Wales, it is currently planned that the audited accounts will then be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in spring 2024 for formal approval.

Annual Treasury Management

At [meetings in July](#) and [September](#), Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet reviewed the Annual Treasury Management report, which outlines the council's investment and borrowing activity for 2022 to 2023. The report also provides details of the economic climate during that time and shows how the council complied with its Prudential Indicators. The council's outstanding borrowing at 31 March 2023 was £261.5million at an average rate of 4.15% and the council held £24.2million in investments at an average rate of 3.41%. Members were reminded of the three priorities when investing funds, of these three, the key factors for Denbighshire were security and liquidity.

Governance and Audit Committee also scrutinised the Treasury Management Update Report, which provides details of the council's treasury management activities during 2023 to 2024 to June. The update set out the borrowing strategy of the authority, which would likely be required to take out additional borrowing. The main reason for the increase in borrowing was due to the Rhyl Flooding scheme. The project would have to be funded by

the council to later reclaim the funds from Welsh Government. Interest rates were currently high, this impacted borrowing costs. The council did try to borrow short term where possible from other authorities, and was receiving advice from Arlingtonclose Ltd Treasury Management consultants. The budget position and the Capital Plan would be monitored in the light of the worsening financial outlook for the medium term. A review of the money laundering policy had begun, with a draft of the new policy available.

Other developments in the last period

Budget pressures

The council is facing significant funding gaps in future years. This funding gap (or budget pressure) has come about due to high rates of inflation (everything is costing us more), pay settlements and increased demand for our services, particularly in relation to children's and adult's social care. The council's Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet are working closely to deliver a balanced budget so that the council is financially stable now and in the future. We are looking at all options as to how best to find the savings next year that can cover this funding gap, so we can set a balanced budget. Senior managers have been asked to identify potential efficiencies and savings within their services so that we can come up with a comprehensive list of potential savings across everything we do. This is going to involve many difficult decisions about the level of services we currently offer. We are no different to all other local authorities in this regard. We have invited staff to contribute ideas for areas of savings or efficiencies that could help contribute to ensuring that the council can set a balanced budget over the coming years. The suggestions will be considered by the Finance and Audit Service, the Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet during October and November. During the period we implemented a series of measures to introduce corporate budget controls including vacancy control procedures, and a requirement for Head of Service authorisation for use of agency staff, overtime and credit card payments.

Performance Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Performance management means the structures and processes we have in place to ensure that we deliver what we said we would, whilst encouraging active involvement and challenge from across the council, our elected members, and residents.

Internal Audit Reviews

The Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) attended [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in July, to update the committee on the Internal Audit Team's progress as well as providing summaries of Internal Audit reports. The report confirmed that seven audits had been completed since April, none of which received a low assurance rating. Please also see our section on [clear performance expectations](#).

Self-Assessment of Performance

At its meeting in July, [County Council](#) approved its Self-Assessment report for 2022 to 2023. Identified Improvement Actions will be taken forward through Service Plans and, where appropriate Corporate Plan Boards or strategic leads. Progress will be monitored through our quarterly reports. Additionally in this period, the Strategic Planning and Performance Team has published the council's first quarter Performance Update Report for 2023 to 2024, which will be available to view with our earlier reports on denbighshire.gov.uk/performance. Combined with this present report, these are the first two of four that make up our ongoing Self-Assessment for the year.

Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: Performance Management Framework

By the time of this, our third report on the new Corporate Plan performance management framework, the flow of data and information is becoming steadily smoother as the framework becomes more embedded. The Strategic Planning and Performance Team continue to work closely with Services to address any gaps or aspects still in need of development.

Update the Performance Management Guide

Following agreement of the new Corporate Plan's Performance Management Framework and governance arrangements, as well as changes to the Senior Leadership structure, it is timely to review the council's Guide to Improving Services – the guide that explains the council's approach to performance management. Work has been ongoing on this through the summer, and should be finalised by the autumn.

Annual Stakeholder Survey

In this period, we have launched our [Stakeholder Survey for 2023 to 2024](#), inviting feedback on how the council is performing. The Survey will run until February 29, 2024,

and may be completed online or through paper copies available on request at our libraries. It will also be promoted through our partner networks, social media and the press. The results of the survey will again feed into our end-of-year Self-Assessment report, and will be shared with our managers to inform service improvement.

Service Performance Challenge

The Service Performance Challenge Programme continues, with Education and Children's Services having been through the process in this last period. Some challenges were also rescheduled in this period to accommodate newly appointed Heads of Service. Key actions arising from these discussions are discussed in the [clear performance expectations section](#) and will be noted with the [Improvement Actions](#) below, and progress will be captured in future performance update reports.

Risk Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Risk management refers to our planned approach to identify, assess, control and monitor risks and opportunities facing the council.

Corporate Risk Register

As reported above, our review of the Register commenced in September 2023. Whilst not yet signed off, as at September, 54% of our corporate risks are inconsistent with the council's risk appetite statement. The current review has included a significant rationalisation of the Register with some risks being merged and removed, some being deescalated back to be managed through service risk registers and two new risks being added. This has enabled a greater focus on the risks associated with not being able to deliver a balanced budget, or where insufficient funding leads to a withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered.

Workforce Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Workforce planning means the process by which we analyse, forecast and plan workforce supply and demand, and assess gaps to ensure that we have the people and skills - now and in the future - to deliver our services and fulfil our strategic objectives.

Staff Training, Development and Mental Health

Since the [Agile Working policy](#) was approved in July, four training sessions for managers have taken place, which have been attended by over 60 managers. HR Business Partners have attended all service management team meetings to discuss the new policy.

The Time to Change action plan is nearly complete. The only remaining action is to ensure that Mental Health Champions are in place. The Champions will have a role in ensuring that support for mental health and well-being is embedded across the council. We have also changed our Employee Assist Programme to a new provider, to ensure we can offer support services through the medium of Welsh.

Improve the information we have about our workforce

This information includes equality information to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports. Due to continual changes in staff, the equality information we have about our workforce tends to fluctuate. By the end of September, we had equality information for 69.4% of staff. A data collection survey will be launched during October to December to ensure that we have as much data in the HR system as possible. It should be noted however that some staff choose not to disclose information about themselves.

Workforce planning

As reported previously, workforce planning was identified as a continually important area of work for the Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Service, during its Service Performance Challenge. HR Business Partners work closely with all services on a regular basis by issuing monthly reports.

A fresh workforce planning process will commence in the new year, by which time the new senior leadership structure will be in place, with all new Heads of Service in post from November. Furthermore, a follow up review of the Internal Audit Review of workforce planning undertaken in May, is due to take place between January and March 2024.

In the meantime, there continues to be a significant focus on recruitment, especially in social care and health roles. In July, a report was presented to [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) providing information and progress on the workforce plan including recruitment and retention activities, together with turnover and sickness absence data for 2022 to 2023. A further report will be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time detailing the progress made in relation to workforce planning and recruitment and retention. The

Committee requested that Heads of Service for those services where staff recruitment and retention are proving to be a persistent challenge be invited to that meeting to discuss the potential impact of those challenges on service delivery and how they are addressing staff shortages in the short to medium term, until long-term solutions are found.

As reported for our [Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language theme](#) above, following approval of the [Welsh Language Strategy 2023 to 2028](#) in June, officers have been developing guidance to inform recruitment of staff with Welsh essential and Welsh desirable skills. The aim is to move to a position whereby every job has, as a minimum, a Level 1 Welsh language skills requirement (some positions will require a Level 5 skill).

Progress in delivering the action plan of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Operational group continues. Two places have been awarded on the Open University full BA (Hons) programme, and a further three candidates are starting the Higher Certificate pathway. Furthermore, several care homes are employing Ukrainian refugees with great success and both Denbighshire County Council care homes are providing placements to Working Denbighshire citizens.

Service Challenge Action: DBS Compliance

Safer recruitment remains a high priority for the council and continued efforts to increase compliance means this action is now complete. We will continue to monitor compliance on a monthly basis as part of our core HR business as usual work.

Assets

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. By assets we are referring to our management of the council's estate (including office buildings and highway infrastructure owned and / or controlled by the council) and digital assets.

Asset Management Strategy

During this period, the council has taken steps to ascertain the structural integrity of its buildings in the face of nationwide concerns about the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in public buildings. Discussion about RAAC in relation to school buildings has been reported in our [Learning and Growing theme](#). The Asset Management Team has been reviewing data from previous RAAC Surveys and this has been prioritised

above all other work. Welsh Government has asked for information about the presence or risk of RAAC in non-school buildings.

The first revised portfolio plan was planned to be reported to the Asset Management Group in September but has been postponed until November. Portfolio plans will inform the development of the new Asset Management Strategy. The New Ways of Working project was established to look at the capacity and use of offices to seek ways to maximise the use of space across the council's portfolio. This will be reviewed with the Corporate Executive Team over the coming months.

ICT strategy

Having a good robust ICT infrastructure that can innovate as well as handle growing pressures from across the council was discussed during the Highways and Environmental Service Performance Challenge. It was agreed that the service should work with ICT to improve the way the service delivers its functions and that the ICT Strategy should prioritise service needs in the face of limited resources.

Procurement

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Procurement is the process by which the council meets its needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money and good outcomes for society, culture and the economy, whilst contributing to decarbonisation and nature's recovery.

Denbighshire Procurement Strategy

A new and updated Denbighshire Procurement Strategy was approved by [Cabinet](#) in September. It reflects and supports the council's corporate priorities and the seven well-being goals and aligns with the upcoming UK Government Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. Expectations about what we buy and how we buy it are increasing, and we will be expected to deliver not only value for money but also have a positive impact on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities, known as socially responsible procurement.

New procurement regulations, that streamline over 300 current individual regulations, will be introduced and we need to prepare, raise awareness and train all officers affected. New powers, responsibilities and obligations are included in the Procurement Bill and this

currently includes obligations to consider small businesses, including local businesses; produce a pipeline of future procurements that is visible and easily accessed; and publish contract reports.

A joined up and streamlined approach to commissioning, procurement, contract management and reporting will be required to ensure Denbighshire gains the best possible outcomes from new procurement regulations. This will involve working across the council to support Denbighshire's local supply chain.

Governance arrangements to manage implementation of the new strategy are being determined.

Decarbonisation Procurement Expertise

The Business Partner – Carbon, funded by Denbighshire and Flintshire Councils including Denbighshire's Climate Change Team, commenced in post on Sept 4. The postholder will revisit regional contracts as they expire with the aim to, where possible, reduce carbon emissions in the future and identify community benefits in council contracts that reduce carbon and increase carbon absorption. They will also work with business and suppliers in the county to encourage lower carbon practice, starting first with the Design and Print framework. The postholder has been attending Service's management team meetings to raise the importance of reducing carbon in our spend. They are working on a more robust methodology to enable us to accurately report on (and impact) actual carbon emitted via procurement, rather than use the Welsh Government model that aligns carbon emissions to spend. Future reports will focus on decarbonisation via procurement, and progress in implementing our new Procurement Strategy.

Biodiversity Protection and Decarbonisation in Procurement

As reported previously, biodiversity protection and improvement is considered in all council procurements, and to enhance this we are working with our Climate Change team to develop specific questions to include in procurement notices. Biodiversity protection and improvement also forms part of our approach to community benefit 'asks' of contractors, which can range from improved planting schemes to protect or improve biodiversity to working with school children to raise awareness of ecology and biodiversity. To this end this is considered business as usual and the Procurement and Climate Change teams will continue to work closely together to determine the 'asks' we seek via procurement.

Contract Procedure Rules

It remains the case that Contract Procedure Rules will be updated to reflect new UK Public Procurement legislation, which is due in 2023 to 2024. We will continue to report on progress through this report in the meantime. We are planning a cross-council workshop to take place in October, which will include a presentation from an official from Welsh Government on the changing procurement landscape, followed by a shorter presentation from the same official to our Senior Leadership Team in November.

Supporting Businesses and Partners to Adapt

As reported previously, the new and developing legislation from Welsh and UK governments will represent a change on current practice for the council and its procuring services, businesses and the supply chain. The aim is for smaller local businesses to be more engaged in, and to benefit from, procurement. To this end, procurement will feature in the 2024 March for Business campaign, planning for which is already underway. A communications plan is also being developed and will be shared with the council's Senior Leadership Team in October.

Balfour Beatty, as part of the coastal defence schemes, has committed to deliver workshops to community-led organisations on how to develop strategy early in 2024. They will be supported by Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council to deliver a workshop in the north of the county and are aiming to work with the South Denbighshire Partnership to offer an additional workshop in the south.

North Wales Construction Framework Phase 3

In May, Cabinet approved the initiation of a project to procure the North Wales Construction Framework Phase 3 (phase 2 is due to end in May 2024). The project is now live. The tender period finishes on October 2 and we will seek Cabinet's approval in December to appoint successful contractors. This is a framework for all North Wales local authorities. The Framework has been a catalyst for engagement and upskilling of local contractors operating within the regional supply chain, and this will encourage local contractors to become part of phase 3.

Improvement Actions

There have been no improvement actions identified through this report.

A Service Performance Challenge took place for Education and Children's Services and no new improvement actions were identified.

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	30 November 2023
Head of Service	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
Report author	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report seeks Performance 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; 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 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.

Economic and Business Development

- 4.8 The above item was originally scheduled for presentation to the Committee at its next meeting on 25 January 2024. However, in response to a request from officers, the Chair has permitted its deferral until the following meeting on 7 March. Enquiries are currently underway to establish whether an item currently listed for March's meeting can be brought forward to January's meeting in place of the above report. Members will be advised of the outcome of those enquiries at the meeting on 30 November.

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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

Progress on Committee Resolutions

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

5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

- 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 met on 3 October 2023. At that meeting it allocated one item for this Committee's consideration. It relates to an Audit Wales report titled '*Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?*'. The report is provisionally scheduled for presentation to the Committee at its March 2024 meeting (see Appendix 1 attached).
- 5.2 The Group's next scheduled to meet on 28 November 2023. Any matters referred to this Committee for future consideration will be reported verbally at the meeting on 30 November.

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?

10.1 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

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.

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
25 January 2024	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	1. Library Service Standards 2022-23	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 corporate themes in relation to a learning & growing; healthier, happy and caring; better connected; fairer, safer and more equal Denbighshire; a Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language as well as a well-run and high performing Council.	Liz Grieve/Debbie Owen	March 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	2. Ensuring Engagement in Education [Education]	To examine the work being undertaken to promote attendance and engagement in education, as well as the actions taken/sanctions applied where pupils are not engaging	Ensuring that all possible steps are being taken to monitor pupils' engagement with education, to provide appropriate encouragement and support for vulnerable and hard to reach pupils to re-engage with their education and to help them understand the long-term implications of not engaging.	<i>Geraint Davies/Wayne Wheatley</i>	<i>By SCVCG April 2023</i>
7 March	Cllr. Gill German	1. 2018 Estyn Inspection Recommendations	To detail in full the work undertaken to fully address the recommendations made in the	Ensuring that all of the regulators recommendations have been complied with and	Geraint Davies	<i>By SCVCG April 2023</i>

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
		[Education]	2018 Estyn Inspection report of the education services provided by Denbighshire County Council, including how the measures taken to address the recommendations were received and monitored.	regularly monitored with a view to delivering a learning and growing Denbighshire that is fairer, safe and more equal to all pupils		
	Cllr. Gill German	2. Elective Home Education [Education]	To examine the Authority's policies and procedures in relation to supporting and monitoring the delivery of Elective Home Education	Ensuring that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities with regards to pupils who elect to be educated at home, whilst also ensuring they are appropriately supported and safeguarded.	<i>Geraint Davies/Joe Earl</i>	<i>By SCVCG April 2023</i>
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	3. 'Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?'	<i>To consider the progress achieved to date in addressing the two recommendations made by Audit Wales in its May 2023 report along with the Council's future plans for sufficiently resourcing its wider corporate support services' functions</i>	<i>To ensure that the Council complies with AW's recommendations, the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and is adequately resourced to deliver its Corporate Plan 2022-27</i>	<i>Gary Williams/C atrin Roberts/Helen Vaughan-Evans</i>	<i>By SCVCG October 2023</i>
	Leader	4. Economic & Business Development	To: (i) consult with the Committee on the draft new Denbighshire Economic & Community Ambition Strategy for 2024 onwards; (ii) detail how the current and proposed new Strategy dovetail with the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Welsh & UK Governments and other economic development partners to support the	Formulation of recommendations in relation to the new Strategy that will help secure the delivery, in partnership with all stakeholders, of a more prosperous Denbighshire that provides employment and business opportunities for residents to improve the quality of lives and support thriving, cohesive communities	Emlyn Jones/ Gareth Roberts	By SCVCG November 2022 (rescheduled November 2023)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			delivery of a thriving economy in Denbighshire; and (iii) outline the work being undertaken to mitigate against the potential outcomes identified in Risk 36 of the Council's Corporate Risk Register			
18 April	Cllr. Julie Matthews	1. Corporate Risk Register: February 2024 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	<i>Helen Vaughan Evans/Iolo McGregor/ Nicola Kneale/Heidi Barton-Price</i>	<i>February 2023</i>
(Possibly invite a representative from Openreach?)	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	2. Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire	To consider the progress made to date, and future plans, for increasing and improving/upgrading internet connectivity for all areas of the county (including the latest position in relation to Fibre Community Partnerships and the UK Government's Project Gigabit roll out along with any other potential support/voucher packages that may be available for businesses and residents to access)	Support accessibility for all businesses and residents in the county to fibre broadband speeds that meet their individual needs, that will in turn support the delivery of the Council's corporate themes of a 'better connected Denbighshire', 'a prosperous' county that is 'fairer, safe and more equal' as well as a learning and growing county.	Liz Grieve/Barry Eaton/Cathy Taylor/Fran Williams/Philip Burrows	June 2023 (rescheduled October 2023)
	Cllr. Barry Mellor	3. Denbighshire's Revised Draft Climate & Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22 – 2029/30	To present the Committee with: (i) the findings and conclusions of the consultation exercise undertaken to revise the Strategy; and	(i) Pre-decision scrutiny of the revised draft Strategy with a view to seeking Scrutiny's support for its adoption and implementation; and	Helen Vaughan-Evans/ Nicola Kneale	June 2023 (rescheduled November 2023)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			(ii) the revised draft Strategy for detailed scrutiny	(ii) For Scrutiny to determine whether it wishes to monitor its delivery going forward with a view to supporting the Council to deliver its net carbon zero ambition by 2030		
6 June	Cllr. Elen Heaton	1. Cefndy Performance Report 2023/24	To consider Cefndy's annual performance report for the 2023/24 financial year, including the delivery of its financial, business and social well-being objectives	To ensure the future financial and business sustainability of Cefndy in order that it effectively supports the delivery of the Council's corporate themes of learning and growing; healthier and happier, caring; and prosperous Denbighshire	Ann Lloyd/Nick Bowles	January 2023
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (Q4 & Annual)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	Helen Vaughan-Evans/Emma Horan/Nicola Kneale	June 2023
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	3. Recruitment, Retention & Workforce Planning	To provide details of: (i) the work underway to recruit, develop, support and retain staff (ii) interventions put in place to support and strengthen recruitment, retention & workforce planning across the Council; and (iii) identification of any hard to recruit services/positions across the authority and interim measures taken to alleviate the pressures caused	Identification of potential future workforce pressure areas and the formulation of recommendations with a view to alleviating those pressures and secure the Council's ability to sustainably deliver its services in future	Gary Williams/Louise Dougal	July 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			within those services (Heads of Service for those services to be invited to attend to discuss the impact of staffing pressures on operational service delivery)			
18 July	Cllrs. Gill German & Elen Heaton	1. Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24	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/Ann Lloyd/Rhian Morelle/David Soley	June 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	2. Christ The Word [Education]	To consider the progress made in delivering the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and the joint local authority & GwE school support plan following the 2022 Estyn inspection of the school, along with the consequential impact of the plans' delivery on the school as a whole	Regular monitoring of the arrangements in place to address the recommendations contained in the Regulator's report will: (i) secure continual improvement in all aspects of the school's work to ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential; and ensure that the lessons learnt by all stakeholders are applied across all schools in Denbighshire as they introduce the new curriculum; and (ii) support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities of a learning and growing Denbighshire as	Nicola Stubbins/Geraint Davies/James Brown/GwE/Christ the Word staff & Governing Body	September 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				well as a fairer, safe and more equal county.		
26 September	Cllr. Gill German	1. Curriculum for Wales [Education] (School staff to be invited to attend)	To detail the progress made in relation to implementing and embedding the new Curriculum for Wales: (i) in primary schools and in year 7 and 8 in secondary schools – what worked well, areas for improvement and lessons learnt by all stakeholders during the initial implementation phase; and (ii) provide an evaluation of the implementation process across all key stages, the Curriculum’s impact on staff recruitment and retention, along with feedback from headteachers, teachers and school-based staff on their experiences of the implementation process and the advantages and/or disadvantages of the new Curriculum for learners.	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, 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	July 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	2. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation (School staff to be invited to attend) [Education]	To analyse: (i) the effectiveness of the funding provided to schools to meet the Act’s requirements; (ii) progress made in recruiting and supporting Educational Psychologists; (iii) school-based educational practitioners’ feedback on the resources and support	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 whilst ensuring that school-based staff are adequately	Geraint Davies/Ruth Thackray/Joseph Earl	July 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			provided to schools with a view to meeting the Act's additional requirements; and (iv)staff recruitment and retention matters relating to the implementation of the Act's requirements."	supported and equipped to deliver the required support.		
	Cllr. Gill German & Cllr. Emrys Wynne [Education]	3. Delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in the County's Schools	To report on the progress made to date in delivering the WESP in all of the county's schools in line with the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh language provision	To ensure that all schools are appropriately resourced and supported to achieve their statutory targets in relation to the delivery of Welsh-medium provision whilst also supporting all pupils to realise their full potential	Geraint Davies/Marc Lloyd Jones/James Curran/Carwyn Edwards	September 2023
28 November	Cllr. Rhys Thomas	1. Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan <i>(1st business item on agenda)</i>	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 Theme of quality housing that meets people's needs and ultimately the Corporate Plan.	Emlyn Jones/ Angela Loftus/Jane Abbott	September 2023
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (July – Sept)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	<i>Helen Vaughan-Evans/Emma Horan</i>	November 2023
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	3. Corporate Risk Register: September 2024 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	<i>Helen Vaughan-Evans/Iolo McGregor/Heidi Barton-Price</i>	November 2023

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<p><i>Learner Travel Measure (Wales)</i></p> <p>[Education]</p> <p>TBC – once outcome of WG Review available (review autumn 2023 & report considered by CET)</p>	<p><i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i></p>	<p><i>Identification of potential changes to the Council’s learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications</i></p>	<p><i>Geraint Davies/Ian Land</i></p>	<p><i>January 2021 (rescheduled Sept 2022 & Jan & May 2023)</i></p>
<p>Denbigh Health and Social Care and the Rebalancing of Social Care Agenda <i>(now widened was Dolwen Residential Care Home (now to be considered as part of the future vision for health and social care services in the Denbigh area)</i></p> <p><i>Sometime during 2024/25 (tbc)</i></p>	<p>To review the future provision of services at Dolwen to meet the growing demand and complexity of need, whilst supporting people to live in a home that meets their needs and allows them to live an independent and resilient life.</p>	<p><i>Pre-decision scrutiny of the task and finish group’s findings and the formulation of recommendations for presentation to Cabinet with respect of the future provision of services at Dolwen with a view to ensuring that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs and are able to live independent and resilient lives</i></p>	<p><i>Task and Finish Group/Ann Lloyd/Katie Newe</i></p>	<p><i>July 2018 (delayed due to COVID-19)</i></p>
<p>Post 16 provision at Rhyl College (suggested for scrutiny during service challenge)</p> <p>Date tbc following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions</p>	<p><i>To examine the post 16 provision at Rhyl College</i></p>	<p><i>The development of an effective working relationship between the College and the Council to secure the delivery of courses required to support the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and improve the future prospects of the area’s students</i></p>	<p>Rhyl College (and invite Geraint Davies & John Evans – post 16 officer from DCC)</p>	<p><i>By SCVCG July 2020</i></p>

Information/Consultation Reports

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
<p>March & September 2024 [Information]</p>	<p>Council Performance Self-Assessment Update Q1 & Q3</p>	<p>To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives</p>	<p>Emma Horan/Nicola Kneale</p>	<p>September 2023</p>
<p>Feb/May/Sept/November each year [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>September 2023</p>
<p>Information Report (March 2024)</p>	<p>Management of the Council's Housing Stock</p>	<p>To review the effectiveness of practices in place to manage the Council's Housing stock, incl. dealing with complaints, reports of mould & condensation, provision of personal advice and support to tenants including those who reside in older persons schemes, the new</p>	<p>Liz Grieve/Geoff Davies</p>	<p>March 2023</p>

		working model for Housing Officers and the development of new ways of working with residents from the lessons learnt through COVID-19		
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Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

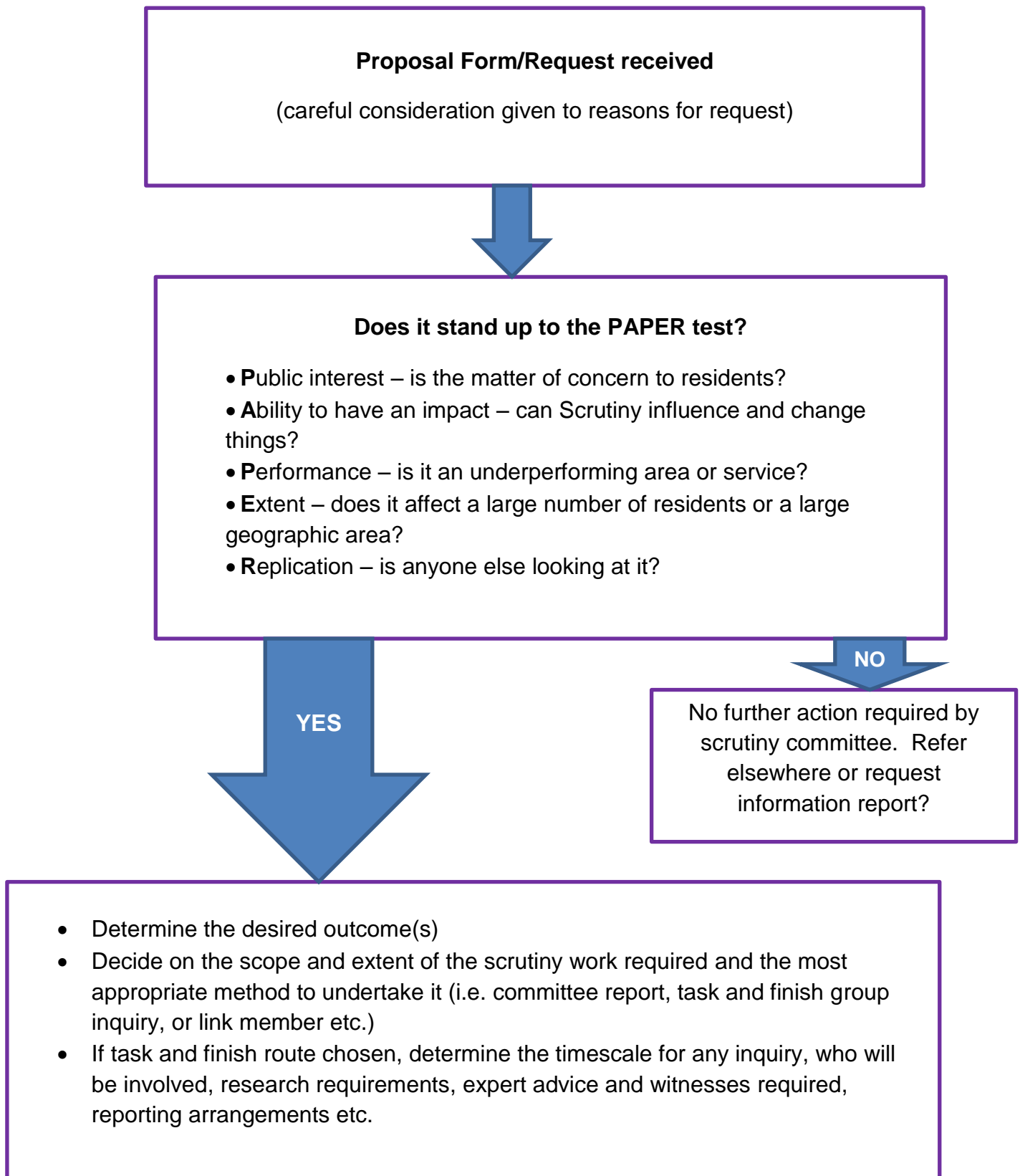
Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
25 January 2024	11 January	7 March	22 February	18 April	4 April

Performance Scrutiny Work Programme.doc

Updated 16/11/2023 RhE

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	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas
	5	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

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

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
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	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators

FUTURE ITEMS

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

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
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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>19 December</i>	5 December	<i>23 January</i>	9 January	<i>20 February</i>	6 February

Updated 21/11/2023 – KEJ
Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
28 September 2023	5. Christ the Word Catholic School Inspection Report Update	<p><u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above comments and observations –</i></p> <p><i>(i) to acknowledge the progress made to date in delivering the action plans and improve standards across the school; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) requested that a further progress report on the delivery of the Post Inspection Action Plan and the joint local authority and GwE school support action plan be submitted to the Committee at the end of the current academic year, in July 2024.</i></p>	Lead Member, Local Education Authority, GwE and Diocesan officers and relevant school staff informed of the outcome of the discussion. A further report has been listed on the Committee's forward work programme for July 2024's meeting (see Appendix 1) to enable members to continue monitoring the school's progress.
	6. Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-being	<p><u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above observations –</i></p> <p><i>(i) to acknowledge the work undertaken to date in implementing the Welsh Government's statutory framework on 'embedding a whole-school approach' to emotional and mental well-being across the county's schools; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) to support the efforts of all partners involved in developing appropriate levels of support across all of the county's schools.</i></p>	Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's observations and recommendations
	7. Delivery of Welsh Medium Provision	<p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p><i>(i) whilst acknowledging the unforeseen obstacles experienced as a consequence of the pandemic, to support the planning and implementation work undertaken to date in Denbighshire with respect</i></p>	Lead Members and Education Service officers informed of members' comments and recommendations. A further monitoring report on the delivery of the WESP has been

		<p><i>of securing the delivery of Welsh medium curricula and non-curricula provision across the county's schools in accordance with the Welsh Government's vision; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) request that a further progress report on the delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time.</i></p>	<p>scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting on 26 September 2024 (see Appendix 1)</p>
	<p>8. Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan</p>	<p><u>Resolved:</u> - <i>subject to the above observations to –</i></p> <p><i>(i) confirm it had read and understood the report, and acknowledged the progress made to date in delivering Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2021 to 2026; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) continue monitoring the delivery of the Strategy's Action Plan on an annual basis, unless significant risks or concerns regarding the Authority's ability to deliver it came to light which required Scrutiny's attention.</i></p>	<p>Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations. The next monitoring report has been scheduled into the forward work programme for presentation to the Committee at its meeting on 28 November 2024 (see Appendix 1)</p>