

# Public Document Pack



To: Members of the Communities  
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 May 2024

Direct Dial: 01824 712554

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

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 9 MAY 2024** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE.**

Yours sincerely

G. Williams  
Monitoring Officer

## AGENDA

### 1 APOLOGIES

### 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Pages 3 - 4)

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

### 3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

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

### 4 MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)

To receive the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 (copy enclosed).

### 5 HOUSING MAINTENANCE VOIDS PROCESS (Pages 15 - 46)

To consider a report by the Housing Property Lead Officer (copy attached) regarding the voids maintenance process, in conjunction with the increasing budget challenge, with particular focus on voids re-let times.

**6 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 47 - 66)**

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

**7 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

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

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Councillors**

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

Brian Jones  
Delyth Jones  
Merfyn Parry  
Cheryl Williams  
Huw Williams

**COPIES TO:**

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## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

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### Code of Conduct for Members

### DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

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

**Denbighshire County Council**

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

*(\*please delete as appropriate)*

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)\**

Signed

Date

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

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## COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 14 March 2024 at 10.00 am.

### PRESENT

Councillors Michelle Blakeley-Walker, Karen Edwards (Vice-Chair), James Elson, Jon Harland, Carol Holliday, Alan James, Brian Jones, Cheryl Williams and Huw Williams (Chair)

The Lead Member for Environment and Transport (Councillor Barry Mellor) for agenda item 5 and the Lead Member for Economic Growth and Tackling Deprivation and Leader of the Council (Councillor Jason McLellan) for agenda item 6.

### PRESENT AS OBSERVERS

Councillor Joan Butterfield, Councillor Justine Evans, Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Councillor Hugh Irving, Councillor Terry Mendies, Councillor Gareth Sandilands and Councillor Andrea Tomlin

### ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Economy and Environment (TW), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (KE), Head of Highways & Environmental Services (PJ), Principal Manager - Catering & Cleaning (HJ), Senior Committee Administrator and Zoom Host (KJ) and Committee Administrator (SJ).

#### 1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Merfyn Parry and Councillor Delyth Jones.

#### 2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest raised.

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

No items of an urgent matter had been raised with the Chair or the Scrutiny Co-ordinator prior to the commencement of the meeting.

#### 4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Special Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 January 2024 were submitted.

Matters arising – Councillor Brian Jones asked if there was any update regarding alternative funding streams to support keeping libraries open.

In response the Corporate Director - Economy and Environment informed the Committee a Task and Finish group had been established to look at all the issues and concerns raised by Members, including alternative funding streams. Further updates would be shared with the Committee following that group meeting. The group had not yet met or agreed to terms of reference or planned work including timescales. It was stressed Members would be made aware of the work and timescales once determined.

***RESOLVED***, that the minutes of the Special Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 January 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

The minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 February 2024 were submitted.

Matters arising – Page 18 - Feedback from Committee Representatives - The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed the officer responsible for Adult Social Care and Homelessness had circulated the actions and notes from the service meeting to the representatives.

***RESOLVED***, that the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 February 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

## **5 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES SAVINGS PROPOSAL**

The Lead Member for Environment and Transport along with the Corporate Director: Economy and Environment introduced the report on Public Conveniences Savings Proposal (previously circulated).

The Lead Member reminded Members that this report formed part of the Council's major savings plan. The report was with regards to the potential transfer or closure of the public toilets within Denbighshire.

The Corporate Director: Economy and Environment continued by introducing Paul Jackson, Head of Highways & Environmental Services and Hayley Jones, Principal Manager - Catering & Cleaning.

The report presented provided Members with the proposal to remove the budget from the public conveniences function and in doing so withdraw from operating public conveniences in the future. Members were reminded the proposal presented had always been included in the major savings ideas for 2024/25 budget and discussed in the budget workshops held over recent months. It had also been the subject of a specific Member workshop on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

It was made clear to Members that no formal decision had reached on this proposal. The proposal would be subject to Cabinet decision, however as it has always formed part of the savings proposals for 2024/25 there was a clear expectation that this saving would be delivered. If the saving did not materialise, it

would create an unplanned pressure for the authority to source from alternative areas of the council.

The final decision would be made by Cabinet, prior to the report being presented to Cabinet, Members heard appropriate scrutiny and consultation had to take place. This included corresponding with Members and City, Town and Community Councils to ascertain if there was any appetite for the provision to be taken over by City, Town and Community Councils.

Members heard there were two types of public toilets in Denbighshire, brick building facilities or pod facilities. The majority of the pod facilities were needing attention or replacing which would also cost the authority money. It was therefore mainly the toilet buildings that officers were looking at when discussing transfer of ownership. All options would be discussed and considered.

Members heard the intention was to relaunch the Community Toilet Scheme as a way of mitigating against the impact of any public toilets that's do have to close. Details of which were included in the report.

It was stressed the service was a non-statutory service that the authority did not have to provide. The net budget taking income into consideration was around £270k. Members also heard there was often an over spend on this budget due to number of different reasons.

Responding to members queries, officers advised that: –

- City, Town and Community Councils would be provided with information and facts and figures including costing levels when options were discussed with officers. Officers had been collating the data and information as it engaged with councils and would present all the findings to Cabinet once collected.
- Members suggested that officers could look at alternative solutions such as keeping certain conveniences open in areas of higher tourism such as Rhyl and Llangollen.
- It was stressed that officers did not find the decision to propose the closure of public conveniences easily. Numerous difficult decisions would have to be reached in order to balance the budget.
- A needs analysis was currently being undertaken based on the population of every area and visitor numbers to determine how many toilets would be sufficient. That data would provide the information required to analyse how many Community Toilet Scheme / businesses would be required in an area. There was currently one business in Denbighshire that had signed up to the Community Toilet Scheme. It was stressed that priority was ascertaining how many public toilets could be transferred into the community.
- Members reiterated the need to have more information and facts/ data to discuss the proposal in greater depth.
- It was highlighted that one of the Council's core policy objectives was the promotion of tourism to grow the regional economy. Tourism played a vital part in Denbighshire's economy with 6.03 million visitors in 2022. It was felt the impact of closing toilets in tourist areas would have a negative impact on businesses and the economy.

- Members heard the toilet situated in Market Street in Llangollen generated an income of £171,396.61 in 2022/23 which equated to 43% of the total income from car parks with public conveniences. The public toilets were an essential support of tourism in the town.
- If portable toilets were required as part of an event, it was the responsibility of the event organiser to make provision of such toilets available as part of their event management.
- Officers stated there was no increase in reporting of street fouling during the covid pandemic. There was no reported increase due to public toilets being closed during the pandemic period.
- The plan for any toilet buildings that were closed would be bespoke to each particular build, including any alternative uses. The short-term position for many of the toilet buildings would be to lock the buildings up until a plan was known.
- The Community Toilet Scheme was a Denbighshire County Council scheme which enabled the authority to shape what that scheme looked like in the future. Officers stated they could look into whether a City, Town or Community Council would be eligible for the £500 compensation. The terms and conditions of the asset that was transferred would have to be discussed during the transfer discussions. The revised scheme would be brought back to scrutiny for discussion when the review was completed.
- Officers had looked at all avenues of potential savings including part year savings and reducing opening times. If that was a consideration it would reduce the amount of savings that would be made by the service. Officers confirmed further detail on the work explored would be included in the future report presented to Scrutiny.
- The proposal formed part of the major savings proposal for the financial year 2024/25. It was already assumed prior to the additional ideas to balance the budget. The service had put forward £250k saving to retain a small percentage of the budget to remain for any ongoing costs.
- Officers advised it was yet unknown whether the potential closures would cause or create any redundancies in the service, further detail and work would need to be undertaken before that could be provided to Members.
- It was made clear that the toilets listed in appendix 3 did not generate any income. They were a cost to the authority for opening and closing etc.
- Discussions with City, Town and Community Councils was due to commence imminently. The communication had been delayed due to ensuring the procedure followed a legal and proper course.
- Members shared their concerns on the level of detail within the report and stressed the importance for further detail to be provided to Communities Scrutiny Committee prior to a report to Cabinet.
- Members were informed the budget around public conveniences was £270k, the income generated by toilets was around £70k per year which was reinvested back into the service. The service often went over budget at around £30k per annum, thus officers had to source that additional cost from other budget streams in the service.

The Chair summarised some of the points raised during the discussion. He stressed Members requested a further report which provided the committee with



greater detail including facts and figures in relation to asset transfer, Community Toilet Scheme information and suggestion of winter closure. It was reiterated that it was important to have all the information available before a final decision could be made. All Members were in agreement that a further report be presented to Communities Scrutiny at a future meeting.

Councillor Karen Edwards thanked Members and officers for the detailed discussion. She proposed the following:

Proposed that a further report be produced recognising that the budget for Public Conveniences should not be removed in its entirety and would identify -

- a) The take-up of third-party management of toilets.
- b) All costs of accommodation work prior to transfer, or decommissioning, and redundancies.
- c) The on-going budget required to operate those toilets to be retained as essential tourist infrastructure.
- d) Revenue costs for retained toilets to be supported by savings made in the Tourism marketing budget and a review of the charges made for the use of Public Conveniences.

Councillor Brian Jones proposed to accept the proposal stated by Councillor Edwards. Councillor James Elson seconded the recommendation.

Members sought clarity on what the Committee were being asked to vote on. Councillor Alan James proposed that a further report be presented to the committee with the information as discussed during the debate to allow a deeper scrutiny of the service with the requested information. Councillor Jon Harland seconded the proposal.

Members of the Communities Scrutiny Committee voted for the proposal suggested by Councillor Alan James which resulted in a tied outcome. The Chair Councillor Huw Williams had the casting vote and supported the proposal by Councillor Alan James that a supplementary report be provided to the Communities Scrutiny Committee, detailing all the points raised by Members during the meeting's discussion. The follow up report would be added to the forward work programme.

***RESOLVED*** that the Communities Scrutiny Committee note the content of the report and request a further report providing greater detail on points raised during the discussion be presented back to Communities Scrutiny Committee prior to the report to Cabinet for decision.

At this juncture (11.20 a.m.) there was a 15 minute comfort break.

The meeting resumed at 11.35. a.m.

## 6 RHYL REGENERATION PROGRAMME AND GOVERNANCE

Lead Member for Economic Growth and Tackling Deprivation and Leader of the Council, Councillor Jason McLellan introduced the report (previously circulated). He informed the Committee the report was a high level overview of the projects and governance arrangements around the delivery of those projects. He thanked his predecessor Councillor Hugh Evans for having the vision to begin the programme and regenerating Rhyl Town Centre.

The Corporate Director: Economy & Environment echoed the statement by the Lead Member. In addition, he stated the report also included details of future plans to allow Members to debate how the programme would be delivered.

Although each project had individual highly detailed planned programmes the report presented to the committee provided an overview of full programme of works. Appendix 2a provided Members with a copy of the overview dashboard, which detailed the current status of each project.

He advised that the Rhyl Regeneration Programme had focused on the physical regeneration projects in the Town Centre of Rhyl. The overall ambition had been to deliver projects which acted as a tool for economic development and growth in the town. The ambition had been to create the environment for residents to have access to good quality employment and a developing economy.

It was anticipated that the programme had almost reached a point where the Town could stand by itself and not rely on public investment in order to support the economy and regeneration. It was hoped the town would attract ongoing inward investment.

Members were informed that the Authority had been successful recently in securing the Vale of Clwyd Levelling Up bid. Work was on going to secure that funding, a range of projects had been proposed through that funding stream. It was also advised that since the time of writing the report, confirmation had been received that £20million had been allocated to the regeneration of Rhyl from the Levelling Up agenda. The funding would be provided over a 10-year period and would provide officers the opportunity to be strategic with the use of that funding over that time period. The requirements and arrangements of the additional funding was still in its infancy and officers had to work through the details involved in the agreement.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and Corporate Director: Economy & Environment for the detailed introduction.

During the discussion the following areas were discussed in greater detail:

- The detailed completed projects should all read as completed. It was stressed if the project was listed as completed there was no outstanding elements that required to be done.
- The term light touch review referred to officer's intention to review and offer information on a smaller scale than what had been offered at the initial stages of the scheme. It was felt the themes of the regeneration programme remained the same.

- The Leader advised that the work of the Board was filtered heavily through all the democratic processes.
- The Rhyl Vision document was just that, a vision, it did not include detailed design and costs of schemes. It was a long-term strategy of the intention to move Rhyl forward. The detail could only be generated through the process and development of specific schemes. The vision provided a vehicle to lever in the funding.
- The Board was seen by officers as a delivery mechanism for the schemes to be developed. It was focused and involved key officers responsible for those schemes. It was felt the involvement of local knowledge and the community would be vital in shaping the development of future projects. The Rhyl Reference Group would be used more to receive the projects listed in the dashboard for discussion.
- The additional £20m funding being allocated was a different funding stream from the UK Government Towns fund. There was a requirement for a board to be established. It would be specifically established for that funding stream, officers were still working through the details of the funding and what was required by the authority.
- The Corporate Director: Economy & Environment was happy to discuss with Members any ideas for the regeneration of Rhyl outside of the meeting.
- The completion date for the Levelling Up Fund round 3 projects was listed and could not be adjusted. The projects had to be completed by end of March 2026. Some of the projects were more advanced than others, each project had a team of officers developing the work on each element. It was advised that there was a budget for Levelling Up Funding round 3, with the schemes being reviewed and designed around the available budget. Members were made aware of a UK wide concern regarding the strict timescale imposed by the scheme. It was confirmed that the imposed timelines were challenging.
- Resources across the whole of the Authority was challenging. Members were aware of the current financial requirements and restrictions faced by the Authority. The department would have to remain highly organised and focused to deliver the projects to the deadline. Each of the projects would be delivered to each individual need, with different mechanisms to work through each project. Officers were confident the projects would be delivered successfully on time.
- Communication with residents and local businesses to engage and inform of the works was vital.
- The Corporate Director: Economy & Environment stressed there were no requests for any additional financial resources to deliver the projects the authority was delivering in Rhyl.
- The Prestatyn Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme was included in the report as the scheme itself was located in Rhyl. It would protect properties in Prestatyn once completed.
- One of the overall outcomes of the programme was to promote Rhyl as being an area that attracts private investments and was a place people want to invest. In the long term it was hoped that the need for public money would not be required for public projects to start economic growth in Rhyl. The

Queens Market Project would allow the private sector to operate from that premises to support and kick start new and small businesses.

- Discussions around the empty Sea Aquarium Property were on going. There was no decision to report to Members currently.
- Communication and work with residents and businesses would be important in the future regeneration and continued development of Rhyl.

The Chair thanked the Corporate Director and Lead Member for the detailed responses to Members questions and comments. Members asked if a further update report could be presented to the Committee in October 2024. The Officers and Leader were in agreement that an update would be available for later in the year.

**RESOLVED** that the Communities Scrutiny Committee receive the Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance Report and a further update report be included on the forward work programme for the October Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting.

## 7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

The next Communities Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 09 May 2024, proposed items for that meeting were –

- Tree Maintenance & Management
- Second Homes and Short-term Holiday lets
- Draft Sustainable Transport Plan

Members heard that the Tree Maintenance & Management have had a change in officers and the Second Homes and Short-term Holiday lets report was awaiting further information from Welsh Government, therefore the Committee were awaiting confirmation that they would be ready for the next meeting.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator encouraged Members if they had concerns on any matters to complete and return the Members Proposal Form (Appendix 2) for deliberation at the next Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting on the 18 March 2024.

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme was presented for Members attention (appendix 3). Members were encouraged to raise any issues they felt warranted Scrutiny prior to Cabinet via the completion of a Member proposal form.

**RESOLVED:** that further to the above that the Communities Scrutiny Forward Work Programme be agreed.

## 8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

There was no feedback from Member representatives.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 p.m.

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<b>Report to</b>	Communities Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date of meeting</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Lead member for Housing and Communities, Councillor Rhys Thomas
<b>Head of Service</b>	Head of Housing and Communities Service, Liz Grieve
<b>Report author</b>	Lead Officer: Housing Property, Mark Cassidy
<b>Title</b>	Housing Maintenance Voids Process

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report and presentation will inform members of the current voids process, the challenges faced and budgetary pressures.

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

- 2.1. To provide information regarding the Housing Maintenance Voids Process
- 2.2. Void property management is a critical aspect of property management that involves the effective handling of properties that are temporarily vacant between tenancies. This scrutiny report aims to allow members to evaluate the void property management processes and procedures employed by Housing Maintenance to ensure efficiency, security, and compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

## 3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee notes the report contents.
- 3.2. That Committee challenge and share its views on this report and the voids process.

- 3.3. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 1]) as part of its consideration.

## 4. Report details

- 4.1. A 'void' can be defined as a property, which does not have a current, sitting tenant. There are many reasons why voids occur. Sometimes a property may be awaiting a new tenant; or a previous tenant may have given notice and vacated the property.
- 4.2. The Council's Housing Service manages and maintains circa 3,480 tenanted properties. Tenant movement results in approximately 220 properties becoming void annually (empty while new tenants are allocated).
- 4.3. In 2017 a new lettable standard was introduced, which transformed the way the department viewed the standard of the homes we let.
- 4.4. The Council takes this opportunity to refurbish the units to the new lettable standard resulting in expenditure in the region of £4M Million p/a. split between capital and revenue spend.
- 4.5. It is vital when dealing with the management process for void properties that void management is efficient and effective in order to:
- Reduce turnaround times to a minimum so that potential tenants can access properties quickly;
  - Maximise rental income by reducing rental loss by minimising void periods through good management;
  - Ensure void works are of a high quality, whilst driving cost down wherever possible; and
  - Ensure void property improvements are necessary, timely, sustainable, environmentally friendly and cost effective.
- 4.6. In recent times, the service budget has come under mounting pressures, either from the effects of Covid or changes in legislation. These pressures are detailed in Appendix 2.



4.7. A copy of the current Void standard is included in Appendix 2.

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

### **Sub-heading (delete as needed)**

1. The theme that is most impacted by the voids work is theme 1., [A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs](#). Our homes have been developed over time, to meet the needs of the original Welsh Housing Quality Standard, which detailed the minimum standard our tenants could expect and included items such as kitchen and bathrooms, minimum requirements for outdoor space etc.
2. The recent launch (October 2023) of the revised standard (referred to as WHQS 2023) set out further expectations such as an affordable warmth agenda, introducing whole house flooring upon tenancy handover amongst others. This new standard is welcome, but presents technical, physical and financial challenges. Further detail in appendix 2.
3. [A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire](#). Having a house that our tenants can proudly call home along with minimum standards for their homes with the affordable warmth, suitable ventilation etc. promotes healthier living (e.g. eliminating mould and condensation) and in return will make people happier in their homes.
4. [A Greener Denbighshire](#). An overarching requirement of WHQS 2023, is decarbonising our homes, by utilising renewable energy sources such as Solar PV, External Wall Insulation etc. These form part of a Target Energy Pathway (TEP), referred to in the standard, further detail in appendix 2. We always attempt to consider if decarbonisation measures are suitable at the time of refurbishing a void property.

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

- 6.1. The annual void budget has been set in recent times at £2.5M capital and £1.5M revenue.
- 6.2. To support us going forward to meet maintenance needs as well as void works, the new standard (WHQS 2023) is quite explicit in expecting landlords to utilise

suitable software to develop the long term plans e.g. an Intelligent Energy Software system and a suitable Asset Management software package.

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

### Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
<a href="#">A prosperous Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A resilient Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A healthier Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A more equal Denbighshire</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of cohesive communities</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A globally responsible Denbighshire</a>	Positive

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

8.1. We meet regularly with the Denbighshire Tenants and Residents Forum (DTARF), where we discuss any changes to the standard, amongst other plans and seek their feedback.

## 9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Not required.

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

10.1. The biggest risk to the service is financial. With the introduction of WHQS 2023, the renting Homes Wales Act. and the very nature of an ageing housing stock, means we need to look at doing the same but with less money.

10.2. We have engaged with the Corporate Strategic Planning team to hold workshops to review our process to find ways of turning voids around quicker to bring in rental income in a more timely fashion.

## 11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Not Required.

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## **The re-tendering of the Void Housing Maintenance & Refurbishment Framework :**

### **Well-being Impact Assessment Report**

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

**Assessment Number:** 1171

**Brief description:** The re-tendering of the Void Housing Maintenance & Refurbishment Framework

**Date Completed:** 21/02/2023 14:23:58 Version: 2

**Completed by:** Mark Cassidy

**Responsible Service:** Finance and Audit Services

**Localities affected by the proposal:** Whole County,

**Who will be affected by the proposal?** Denbighshire Housing Maintenance, Contractors and DCC Housing team and Tenants

**Was this impact assessment completed as a group?** Yes

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

### **Score for the sustainability of the approach**

**3 out of 4 stars**

**Actual score : 30 / 36.**

### **Summary for each Sustainable Development principle**

#### **Long term**

As the new Framework is being developed, we will be ensuring contractors and ourselves plan for carbon reduction and the protection of bio-diversity, by specifying such in the specification.

#### **Prevention**

Contractors will be engaged with to use methods of working to support DCCs climate change and biodiversity policies e.g. encouraging the use of electric vehicles and plant etc.

#### **Integration**

We will develop the framework specification to link with Well-being goals. In practice, the principles of well-being, and an assets-based approach to ensure DCC tenants have quality housing that meets their needs, as defined in the Corporate Plan.

#### **Collaboration**

We have consulted with our colleagues in housing and contractors about the best way to develop this framework.

#### **Involvement**

## The re-tendering of the Void Housing Maintenance & Refurbishment Framework

We won't be expecting contractors to tell us how to develop this framework, however feedback from those using the current framework will be incorporated.

### Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
<a href="#">A prosperous Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A resilient Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A healthier Denbighshire</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A more equal Denbighshire</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of cohesive communities</a>	Positive
<a href="#">A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</a>	Neutral
<a href="#">A globally responsible Denbighshire</a>	Positive

### Main conclusions

We will be using the corporate business plan as the driver for the framework, particularly item 1, A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs.

## **The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.**

### **A prosperous Denbighshire**

#### **Overall Impact**

Positive

#### **Justification for impact**

It is positive because we expect to spend about £10M over the life of the framework, which will be invested in good quality homes and jobs.

#### **Further actions required**

N/A

#### **Positive impacts identified:**

##### **A low carbon society**

We will require contractors to demonstrate they are helping DCC achieve the relevant climate change initiatives. We will be seeking guidance from Roberta Bailey - Procurement Business Partner - Decarbonisation on acceptable measures, we should expect to see.

##### **Quality communications, infrastructure and transport**

We will ensure that our gardens are in a condition that is conducive with a good quality of life.

##### **Economic development**

We will be offering the opportunity for local contractors to join the framework, we will also be including community benefits as part of the tender. The CBs we'd like to see are around job creation or training, helping with talks in schools about entry into the construction industry, but also physical works to such places as community halls and spaces, similar to the CB work completed at the Phoenix Centre in Rhydwen Drive.

##### **Quality skills for the long term**



## The re-tendering of the Void Housing Maintenance & Refurbishment Framework

We expect that contractors will provide upskilling qualifications as part of their plan.

### **Quality jobs for the long term**

By offering a relatively stable workflow, we trust contractors will be able to provide good, quality jobs for residents of Denbighshire.

### **Childcare**

N/A

### **Negative impacts identified:**

#### **A low carbon society**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Quality communications, infrastructure and transport**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Economic development**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Quality skills for the long term**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Quality jobs for the long term**

[TEXT HERE]

### **Childcare**

[TEXT HERE]

### **A resilient Denbighshire**

## **Overall Impact**

Positive

## **Justification for impact**

Biodiversity in the natural environment won't be affected. We will be encouraging recycling and reuse with our contractors.

## **Further actions required**

N/A

## **Positive impacts identified:**

### **Biodiversity and the natural environment**

No impact

### **Biodiversity in the built environment**

No impact

### **Reducing waste, reusing and recycling**

Contractors will be expected to manage waste responsibly and within the law. Contractors will be encouraged to send rubble, timber etc. for recycling.

### **Reduced energy/fuel consumption**

Any identified insulation or poorly maintained properties will be made good. Also we will be encouraging contractors to reduce travel or find an improved method to do this, such as electric vehicles if possible.

### **People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity**

Tenant packs including explanations of how to operate the heating system efficiently are available to tenants.

**Flood risk management**

Small maintenance works will have no impact.

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Biodiversity and the natural environment**

[TEXT HERE]

**Biodiversity in the built environment**

[TEXT HERE]

**Reducing waste, reusing and recycling**

[TEXT HERE]

**Reduced energy/fuel consumption**

[TEXT HERE]

**People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity**

[TEXT HERE]

**Flood risk management**

[TEXT HERE]

**A healthier Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Positive

**Justification for impact**

## The re-tendering of the Void Housing Maintenance & Refurbishment Framework

The refurbishment of homes will have some positive impacts on our tenants, however with regards to lifestyle and access to fast food etc. this framework will have little or no effect.

### **Further actions required**

N/A

### **Positive impacts identified:**

#### **A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being**

We will provide our residents with a safe, quality home to live in, adding to their emotional and mental wellbeing.

#### **Access to good quality, healthy food**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **People's emotional and mental well-being**

We will provide our residents with a safe, quality home to live in, adding to their emotional and mental wellbeing.

#### **Access to healthcare**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Participation in leisure opportunities**

[TEXT HERE]

### **Negative impacts identified:**

#### **A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **Access to good quality, healthy food**

[TEXT HERE]

### **People's emotional and mental well-being**

[TEXT HERE]

### **Access to healthcare**

[TEXT HERE]

### **Participation in leisure opportunities**

[TEXT HERE]

### **A more equal Denbighshire**

#### **Overall Impact**

Neutral

#### **Justification for impact**

Whilst properties will be updated with modern heating systems, windows, insulation etc., this does not necessarily mean that tenants on low income could actually afford to run the heating systems.

#### **Further actions required**

N/A

#### **Positive impacts identified:**

**Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation**

[TEXT HERE]

#### **People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage**

[TEXT HERE]

### **People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes**

The refurbishment of properties will include sheltered accommodation, with adaptations where required. We will provide tenants with modern, safe heating systems and insulated properties to aid with tackling fuel poverty.

### **Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage**

[TEXT HERE]

### **Negative impacts identified:**

**Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation**

[TEXT HERE]

### **People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage**

[TEXT HERE]

### **People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes**

Modern heating systems may prove to be too expensive to run for some tenants to use regularly.

### **Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage**

[TEXT HERE]

### **A Denbighshire of cohesive communities**

### **Overall Impact**

Positive

**Justification for impact**

New let properties will look presentable with manageable gardens, new fence lines where deemed necessary. Shared spaces will be addressed as required.

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**Safe communities and individuals**

Refurbished homes will be safe and secure when handed over to incoming tenants. Tenant forums DTARF, do contribute to the running of the service. Feedback on newly let homes is gathered and used to improve standards. Refurbished homes will be handed over in a smart, tidy appearance. Gardens will be made manageable for incoming tenants. New fences will be provided where necessary.

**Community participation and resilience**

[TEXT HERE]

**The attractiveness of the area**

[TEXT HERE]

**Connected communities**

[TEXT HERE]

**Rural resilience**

[TEXT HERE]

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Safe communities and individuals**

[TEXT HERE]

**Community participation and resilience**

[TEXT HERE]

**The attractiveness of the area**

[TEXT HERE]

**Connected communities**

[TEXT HERE]

**Rural resilience**

[TEXT HERE]

**A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**

**Overall Impact**

Neutral

**Justification for impact**

We have no influence over the use of Welsh Language in the voids process.

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**People using Welsh**

[TEXT HERE]



**Promoting the Welsh language**

[TEXT HERE]

**Culture and heritage**

[TEXT HERE]

**Negative impacts identified:**

**People using Welsh**

[TEXT HERE]

**Promoting the Welsh language**

[TEXT HERE]

**Culture and heritage**

[TEXT HERE]

**A globally responsible Denbighshire**

**Overall Impact**

Positive

**Justification for impact**

Use of carbon reduction initiatives in the supply chain and use of local contractors.

**Further actions required**

N/A

**Positive impacts identified:**

**Local, national, international supply chains**

The framework will hopefully attract local contractors. We already have a supply agreement from a local builders merchant.

**Human rights**

[TEXT HERE]

**Broader service provision in the local area or the region**

[TEXT HERE]

**Reducing climate change**

We will be encouraging prospective contractors to provide support to Denbighshire's climate targets.

**Negative impacts identified:**

**Local, national, international supply chains**

[TEXT HERE]

**Human rights**

[TEXT HERE]

**Broader service provision in the local area or the region**

[TEXT HERE]

**Reducing climate change**

[TEXT HERE]

<b>Report to</b>	Communities Scrutiny
<b>Date of meeting</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> May 2024
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Cyng. Rhys Thomas
<b>Head of Service</b>	Liz Grieve
<b>Report author</b>	Mark Cassidy
<b>Title</b>	Housing Maintenance Voids Process – Appendix 2

### Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
1. Current Voids Maintenance Steps and Categorisation.	2 - 3
2. Impacts of the new WHQS 2023 requirements for voids and the wider property maintenance expectations.	4 - 5
3. Renting Homes Wales Act.	6
4. Financial Pressures and what we can do to mitigate.	6 - 8

## 1. Current Voids Maintenance Steps and Categorisation

The following maintenance process starts from when the Neighbourhood Housing Officer advises maintenance that the keys are available.

Step	Action	Timeframe
1	Keys in/returned which the Neighbourhood officer (NHO) notifies via email that the keys are in the keysafe	1-3 days
2	Building Surveyor (BS) inspects the property for the following a. Health and safety b. Clearance c. Gas capping (where appropriate) d. Asbestos check/report e. Suitability for any disabled adaptations f. Takes photos g. Takes meter reading	1-5 days
3	BS will once reports have been received complete a full inspection/survey internally and externally and complete a schedule of works	1-5 days
4	The schedule of works will then be sent out via a framework of approved contractors	5 days
5	Any Asbestos removals required will be undertaken (depending on product)	1-14 days
6	The tenders will be reviewed and awarded	1-3 days
7	Contractor from being awarded the works to start on site within 5 days	5 days
8	Internal works can vary for minor works 25 days to major works 50 days (BS doing weekly progress visits)	25-50 days
9	External works can vary from 5 days to 60 days depending on geographic location and weather	5-60 days
10	BS on notice from the contractor once property has been signed off possible snagging/variations	1-5 days
11	Handed over to NHO to allocate/let	1-14 days

\*The main thing to consider is that re-let times is not just the time sat with maintenance, but with the letting process also.

We currently categorise voids into 4 types, to help with planning, costing etc. Table below.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Typical Work</b>
1	15 Working days	Partial House Clearance, General repairs internal and external Redecoration Replace kitchen or bathroom
2	23 Working Days	Full rewire Central Heating Bathroom renewal Kitchen renewal Partial Plastering Minor gardening works
3	35 Working Days	Full House Clearance Redecoration General repairs internally and externally Full rewire Full central heating install Bathroom renewal Kitchen renewal Extensive re-plastering Structural works including replacing lintels Damp works
4	42 Working Days	Major structural works including room alterations Full re-plastering Major garden works Excavation of floors

## 2. Impacts of the new WHQS 2023

The table below details the new requirements placed on landlords. One item that has significant impact on the voids process is 6b, the provision of flooring in all habitable rooms. We anticipate that this measure alone will have a £300k knock on effect to the budget.

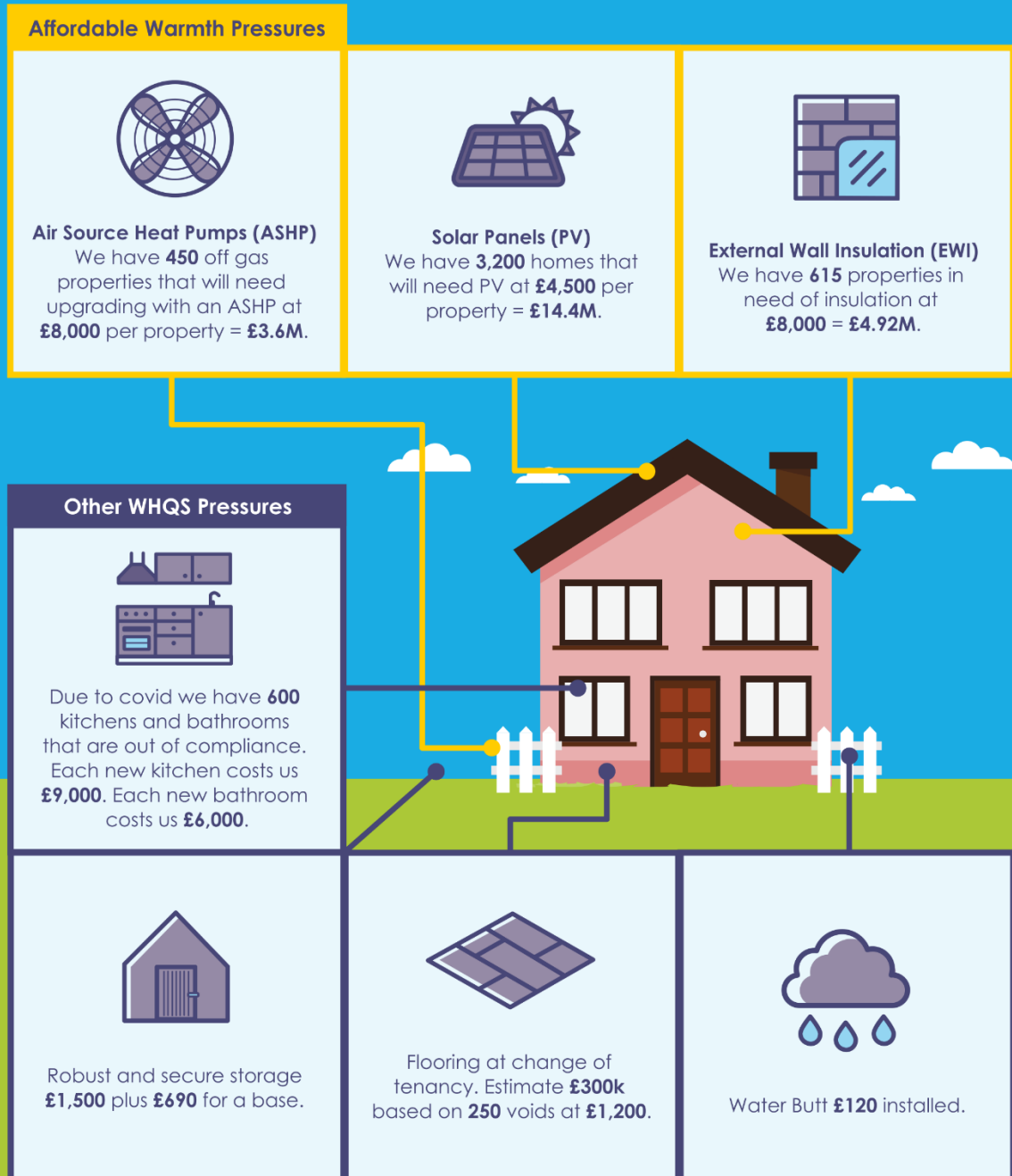
Element	Compliance date
Heating systems must be reasonably economical to run and capable of heating the whole of the home to a comfortable level in normal weather conditions (minimum of SAP 92 – EPC A)	Set by the Target Energy Pathways
In the interim, all homes must meet a minimum of SAP 75 – EPC C	31 March 2030
Carbon emissions from homes must be minimised (minimum of EIR 92)	Set by the Target Energy Pathways
Landlord's must carry out a Whole Stock Assessment and produce Target Energy Pathways for their homes	31 March 2027
Landlords must make arrangements for a smart meter to be installed in each home	1 April 2024 onwards
Measures to improve water efficiency and alleviating water poverty must be installed when replacing fittings and fixed appliances	1 April 2024 onwards
Water butts to be installed	1 April 2024 onwards
Homes must have adequate space for local recycling requirements	1 April 2024 onwards
Homes must have adequate facilities for washing, drying and airing clothes	1 April 2024 onwards
At change of tenancy all habitable rooms (bedrooms and living rooms), staircases and landings located within the home should have suitable floor coverings	1 April 2024 onwards
Exposure to noise should be minimised	1 April 2024 onwards
External lockable storage for cycles and equipment must be made available	1 April 2024 onwards
Biodiversity opportunities should be introduced by landlords who own or manage verges, parks, grounds and open green spaces by changing their management of these areas to make them more wildlife friendly	1 April 2024 onwards

The additional demands above, particularly the Target Energy Pathway (towards decarbonisation) will be costly and stretch the maintenance budget even further.

# WHQS 2023

WHQS 2023 focuses on Affordable Warmth. The Target Energy Pathway of EPC C 75, is our biggest and most costly new pressure (see below). To meet this target by 31/03/2030, we will need an additional £3.8M per year.

To be compliant with WHQS 2023 we also have a number of other new budget pressures (see below).



### 3. Renting Homes Wales Act

Under the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, landlords (private and social sectors) must ensure that the dwelling satisfies Fitness for Human Habitation (FFHH) obligations on the date of occupation by tenant/s, and throughout the term of the occupation contract (tenancy agreement). The FFHH Act sets out the 29 matters and circumstances to which regard must be had when determining whether a property is FFHH.

### 4. Financial Pressures

The chart below details the extent of the mounting costs in delivering homes to the most recent voids standard.

Void Costs		Actual	Actual	***	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Forecast	Budget	Variance between 2022/23 & 2023/24
		2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
HR2017 - REV	Internal Voids	490,546	1,323,160	1,730,929	1,667,984	1,980,746	1,982,136	1,933,873	2,310,400	1,851,396	-459,004
HR2517 - REV	External Voids	0	0	0	0	0	112,956	1,941	0	0	0
HR2017 - CAP	Internal Voids	0	30	551,059	832,820	920,700	1,061,658	1810509	2,337,923	1,870,339	-467,584
HR2517 - CAP	External Voids	0	0	68,158	100,233	68,291	83,191	558,645	690,998	500,000	-190,998
HR2607 - CAP	Rescheduled Omissions	507,261	834,694	309,904	221,507	179,687	156,855	157,889	318,138	0	-318,138
<b>Total</b>		<b>997,807</b>	<b>2,157,884</b>	<b>2,660,050</b>	<b>2,822,544</b>	<b>3,149,424</b>	<b>3,396,796</b>	<b>4,462,857</b>	<b>5,657,459</b>	<b>4,221,735</b>	<b>-1,435,724</b>
Increase since new lettable standard					6.11%	18.40%	27.70%	67.77%	112.68%	59%	
<b>No. of Voids</b>		257	275	263	201	277	217	221	221	221	
<b>Average Void Cost</b>		<b>3,883</b>	<b>7,847</b>	<b>10,114</b>	<b>14,043</b>	<b>11,370</b>	<b>15,653</b>	<b>20,194</b>	<b>25,599</b>	<b>19,103</b>	
					38.84%	12.41%	54.77%	99.66%	153.10%	88.87%	

\*\*\* New Lettable Standard

Budget Per month	351,811.265	2023-24
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Why are costs escalating? Variety of reasons:

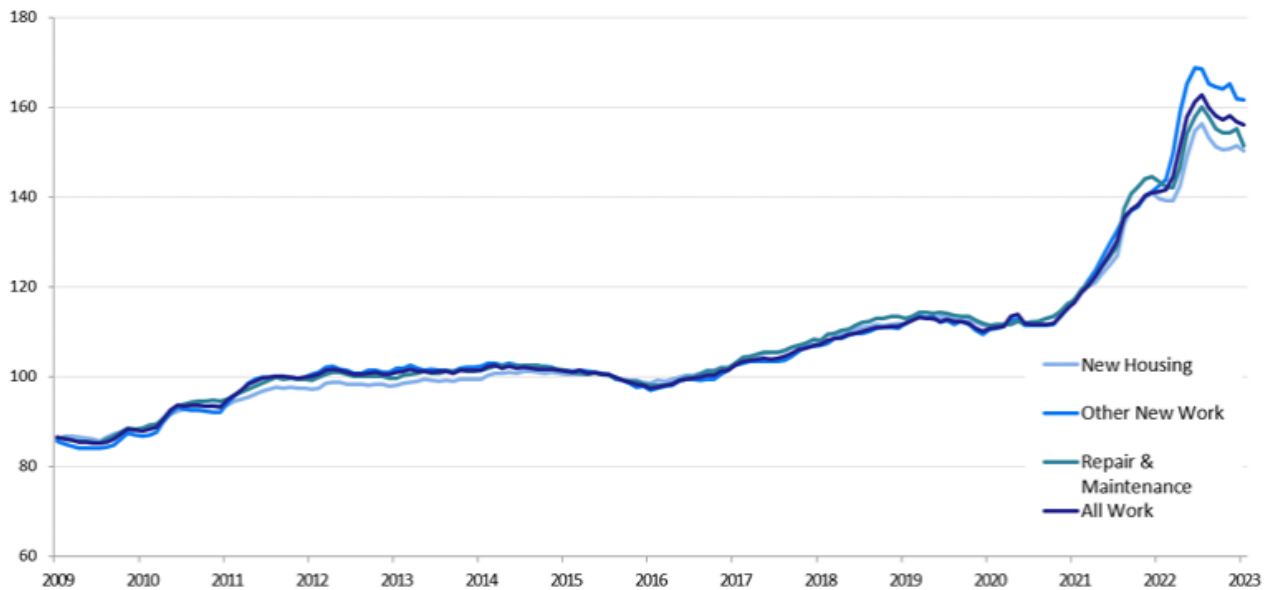
- The combined impact of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented materials shortages within the UK construction sector. However, in more positive news, the Construction Leadership Council have suggested the availability of many materials, including bricks, blocks and timber products may finally be returning to pre-Covid levels.
- Between 1997 and 2020, Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation was an average of 2%. As many businesses are all too aware, it started to rise rapidly in 2021 and reached a peak of 11% in 2022.

It fell in 2023 but may not reach what the Bank of England termed “more normal levels” of around 2% again until the end of 2025.

This means that although the construction industry, like many others, has navigated what are strongly hoped to be the worst challenges of inflation, there are still concerns about the current rate and a return to normality remains at least 18 months away.



**Chart 1: Construction Material Price Indices, UK**  
Index, 2015 = 100



Source: Monthly Statistics of Building Materials and Components, Table 1

- The cost of maintaining the voids standard. The time is approaching, where we'll have to take a collective view of the voids standard, it is extremely high but we also think that over time (when money wasn't so tight) we've had the view that, 'well as we're here, we may as well do....' So the extra then becomes the norm.

#### What Can We do to Mitigate Costs?

- We'll be tendering an updated Voids Maintenance Framework in May 2024. We hope to bring more local contractors on board with the expectation that having more competition will bring costs down.
- We are looking into how we can utilise our own DLO to carry out minor voids works.
- We have engaged with the Strategic Planning Team to set up a Task and Finish group to discuss potential support they may be able to offer with regard to housing voids in the DCC housing stock, and potentially a way to look at alternative or complimentary processes to speed up this work, using the new Insight approach.
- we have put a couple of practical actions into place, such as providing a skip for the departing tenant, to encourage them to clear the house out before leaving. This is actually cheaper than, paying for the contractors to do it.
- We also give an allowance (£300 B&Q decorating voucher) for decorating to incoming tenants, who tell us they want to decorate as they wish, so rather than us do the whole house in magnolia and white, they can buy their own paint, wallpaper etc. This also reduces our costs.
- We've introduced a process where we look at each void coming up, then consider location, demand etc. so if there's an undesirable property, we can park that and divert funds elsewhere, until we can afford to do it, or sell it.

High Demand	Green
Medium Demand	Yellow
Low Demand	Red

	Rhyl	Prestatyn	Meliden	Dyserth	Rhuddlan	Bodelwyddan	St Asaph Rural	St Asaph	Trefnant	Denbigh	Denbigh Rural	Ruthin	Ruthin Rural	Corwen	Corwen Rural	Llangollen
1 bed (GN)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	N/A	N/A	N/A	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	N/A	Green
2 bed GFF (GN)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	N/A	Yellow	Green	N/A	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2 bed house/FFF (GN)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	N/A	Yellow	Green	N/A	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
3 bed house (GN)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
4 bed house +	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	N/A	Green	N/A	Green	N/A	Green	N/A	Green	Green	Green
1 bed GFF/Bung (SH)	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	N/A	Yellow	Green	N/A	Green	Yellow	Green	N/A	Yellow	Yellow	Green
1 bed FFF (SH)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yellow	N/A	Yellow	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2 bed GFF/Bung (SH)	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2 bed FFF (SH)	Red	Red	Red	N/A	N/A	N/A	Red	Red	N/A	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	N/A	Red

- Finally, there is evidence to suggest that in a lot of cases where houses have been through the voids process since 2017 (new lettable standard) they are returned to us in a better condition and need less investment the next time round. N.B. Not in all cases though.

Address	Void Dates	Void Costs
1 Llys Offa, Victoria Road, Rhyl	2019	£19,368.85
	2021	£2,097.6
11 Trem Y Foel, Ruthin	2019	£7,835
	2020	£960.05
118 Victoria Road, Rhyl	2019	£6,873
	2020	£972.68
15 Arfon Grove, Rhyl	2022	£65,871.93
	2023	£3,397.57
10 Glyn Avenue, Rhyl	2018	£11,344.75
	2021	£1,760

## Void Lettable Standard Checklist

Lettable standard item			
<b>External</b>			
The roof shall be intact without any missing, cracked or slipped tiles, slates or ridge tiles. Inc fascias gutters & chimneys.			
The brickwork, render and external joinery should be of a sound structural nature showing no signs of major defects.			
The damp proof course (DPC) level to be inspected to ensure external walls are clear of any obstacles, mounds of earth, etc, which could cause rise to penetrative or rising damp internally by breaching of the DPC. Wherever noted, this shall be removed.			
Any damaged satellite or terrestrial aerials to be removed, along with any external DIY coaxial wiring. ( Visual check only) maybe rechargeable.			
Any damaged garden structures considered not safe or of benefit to the incoming tenant will be removed. The base will be left as long as it isn't dangerous and will become the responsibility of the new tenant.			
Fences and gates should be inspected for safe installation and be free from damage. Boundaries, whether fences or walls, are continuous and in a reasonable and safe condition Where possible we will provide a plan showing your boundary responsibilities and the area of your garden. Where there is a potential to fall from height, a suitable barrier will be installed.			
Gardens should be cleared of all rubbish and left in a maintainable condition any rubbish to be recharged to previous tenant.			
Trees, tall hedges, including Leylandii, will be reduced and left in a maintainable condition or removed for new tenant to take responsibility of, if over grown rechargeable to previous tenant.			
Planters and garden features left by the previous tenant will be removed where possible, only to be left in place if they are easily maintainable and of good quality. If to be removed recharge to apply. A washing line-preferably 2posts and line will be installed with suitable access path			
<b>Security</b>			
New front and rear door locks will be fitted, we will provide 2 keys per lock and, where appropriate, a minimum of 2 window keys. Unless suited lock fitted.			
<b>Cleanliness</b>			
White goods will be removed from the property and recharge will apply.			
All rubbish, carpets, furniture etc should be removed including clearance of the loft spaces and outbuildings with floors swept and left ready for recovering. (Where carpets or laminate have been left in place by the previous tenant, are well fitted, in prime condition and may benefit the incoming tenant, these shall be left in position. Where carpets are removed, gripper rods to be removed.			
Particular attention should be given to kitchen work surfaces, tiles and splashbacks, kitchen cupboards, storerooms, bathrooms and toilet areas they should be thoroughly cleaned to remove grease, mould, dirt and dust.			
All DIY works deemed inappropriate, unsafe or surplus to the requirements of the incoming tenant, unless otherwise directed, will be removed from the property and recharged to previous tenant.			
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>			
Gas check			
Check all banisters and fitted handrails are secure and firmly fixed, and that no obvious and visible sign of damage is apparent. Ranch style balustrade to be removed and replaced with spindles and handrail. Minimum of one handrail fitted to every stairway.			

Where PVCu windows have been fitted, it is important to ensure that the restrictors are operational to the first floor windows, and that the designated egress window in the event of an emergency is adequately identified and marked. (Green Button). A rod for opening, trickle vents will be supplied were appropriate.			
Where floor coverings have been removed, or are to be removed, floor boards and fitted coverings should be inspected to ensure they are secure, without signs of distress or possible imminent failure.			
Where fitted, hard wired smoke detectors and careline equipment should be checked to ensure it is fully operational and functional, with any battery detectors fitted by the previous resident removed from site.			
<b>Sanitary Goods</b>			
All installations for the supply of water and sanitation should be in good repair and working order. All taps and plugs should be operational. WCs should have a secure seat and lid, and should flush correctly. Sinks, WCs, baths, shower trays and wash hand basins should all be firmly fixed in position and be free from chips, leaks and bad staining. Any required replacements of sanitary goods should match existing wherever possible; however any replacements will be provided in white all properties to be fitted with non-slip flooring.			
<b>Kitchens</b>			
The kitchen will have space for a cooker (electric only-gas to be capped off) and a tall fridge / freezer where possible (under counter where not). Where there is sufficient space within the kitchen, there will be plumbing for an automatic washing machine; this will not be provided where there are communal laundry facilities. Non-slip flooring fitted.			
<b>Windows &amp; Doors</b>			
All windows and doors shall be checked for: ease of operation, lubricated, with handles fully tightened as required all types of glass internal doors to be removed.			
Double glazed units should be inspected for misting or cracks and replaced as required, conforming where appropriate with safety glass.			
All internal doors shall, open and close with ease and have functional door furniture fitted. Minimal damage should be made good where possible (if doors are of good quality). If doors need replacing, 6 panel white grained to be installed. Flush doors to be replaced. Damaged doors to be recharged to previous tenant.			
<b>Floors</b>			
Any loose or defective flooring should be secured or replaced as needed. Missing vinyl tiles shall be replaced to match as near as possible existing. Vinyl sheet covering should be sound and free from signs of damage a good level base to be provided.			
<b>Walls</b>			
Loose and defective plaster shall be made good. Missing wall tiles should be replaced were possible to match existing.			
Any alterations by tenant to be checked in house file for consent.			
Full decoration to all properties, white ceilings, magnolia walls, white satinwood to all woodwork .			



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<b>Report to</b>	<b>Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>09 May 2024</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Services: People</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Karen Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>

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

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

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

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

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

That the Committee

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate;
- 3.2 determines whether any key messages or themes from the current meeting should be publicised via the press and/or social media.

## 4. Report details

- 4.1 Section 7 of Denbighshire County Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, as well as the rules of procedure and debate.
- 4.2 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must set, and regularly review, a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.
- 4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work programme report. The aim of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.
- 4.4 In recent years the Welsh Government (WG) and Audit Wales (AW) have highlighted the need to strengthen scrutiny's role across local government and public services in Wales, including utilising scrutiny as a means of engaging with residents and service-users. From now on scrutiny will be expected to engage better and more frequently with the public with a view to securing better decisions which ultimately lead to better outcomes for citizens. AW will measure scrutiny's effectiveness in fulfilling these expectations.
- 4.5 Having regard to the national vision for scrutiny whilst at the same time focussing on local priorities, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) recommended that the Council's scrutiny committees should, when deciding on their work programmes, focus on the following key areas:
- budget savings;
  - achievement of the Corporate Plan themes (with particular emphasis on their deliverability during a period of financial austerity);
  - any other items agreed by the Scrutiny Committee (or the SCVCG) as high priority (based on the PAPER test criteria – see reverse side of the 'Member Proposal Form' at Appendix 2);



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

#### 4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms

As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above the Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. To assist the process of prioritising reports, if officers are of the view that a subject merits time for discussion on Scrutiny's business agenda they have to submit a formal request to the SCVCG seeking Scrutiny to consider a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of scrutinising suggested subjects.

- 4.7 With a view to making better use of scrutiny's time by focussing committees' resources on detailed examination of subjects, adding value through the decision-making process and securing better outcomes for residents, the SCVCG decided that members, as well as officers, should complete 'scrutiny proposal forms' outlining the reasons why they think a particular subject would benefit from scrutiny's input. A copy of the 'member's proposal form' can be seen at Appendix 2. The reverse side of this form contains a flowchart listing questions which members should consider when proposing an item for scrutiny, and which committees should ask when determining a topic's suitability for inclusion on a scrutiny forward work programme. If, having followed this process, a topic is not deemed suitable for formal examination by a scrutiny committee, alternative channels for sharing the information or examining the matter can be considered e.g. the provision of an 'information report', or if the matter is of a very local nature examination by the relevant Member Area Group (MAG). No items should be included on a forward work programme without a 'scrutiny proposal form' being completed and accepted for inclusion by the Committee or the SCVCG. Assistance with their completion is available from the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

## Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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

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

5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group's next meeting is scheduled for 20 May 2024.

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

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

6.2 Whilst the decision on the Committee's forward work programme itself will have a neutral contribution on the Council's aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030, the Committee by effectively scrutinising all matters examined by it can help support the delivery of this ambition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

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

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## Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

**Note: Items entered in italics have not been approved for submission by the Committee. Such reports are listed here for information, pending formal approval.**

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
9 May	<b>Cllr. Rhys Thomas</b>	1 Housing Maintenance Voids Process	To consider the voids maintenance process and increasing budget challenge, with particular focus on our voids re-let times.	To gain an insight into the wider voids maintenance process and challenges with particular regard to voids re-let times.	Mark Cassidy	SC&VCG 18/03/24
5 September	<b><i>Cllr. Barry Mellor</i></b>	1 Public Conveniences Savings Proposal	To consider an updated report on the public conveniences savings proposals.	To provide observations / recommendations	<i>Joanna Douglas / Hayle Jones / Paul Jackson</i>	24/04/24
	<b>Cllr. Barry Mellor</b>	2. Tree Maintenance & Management (tbc)	To examine the Council's policy(ies) relating to tree maintenance and management along with the resources allocated for tree maintenance and management work across Denbighshire	An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Council's current work in relation to tree management and maintenance with a view to securing sufficient resources to ensure the delivery the Council's Corporate Plan themes of a greener, and a fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire whilst also supporting the ambition of becoming an ecologically positive and net carbon zero authority by 2030.	Andrew Cutts/Joel Walley/Emlyn Jones	By SCVCG July 2023

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
	<b>Cllr. Win Mullen-James</b>	3. Second Homes and Short-term Holiday lets and their impact have been fully assessed)  (timing tbc – once the full details of the WG proposals are known (incl. Licensing Scheme proposals)	To report the findings and conclusions of the Welsh Government’s study in relation to addressing the impact of second home ownership in Wales, including its proposals for reviewing the regulatory framework and system as they apply to holiday accommodation, along with national and local taxation systems (the WG’s “three-pronged approach to address [the] second homes crisis”	(i) An assessment of the proposals’ anticipated impact on Denbighshire County Council, residents, businesses, and local economy  Formulation of recommendations with a view to realising maximum benefits for the Council, residents businesses and the economy, or for mitigating the impact of any risks that may arise from any proposals	Emlyn Jones/Angela Loftus/Lara Griffiths/Paul Barnes/Gareth Roberts	June 2022 (rescheduled November 2022/ March 2023/ October 2023)
				(ii)		
24 October	<b>Cllr. Barry Mellor</b>  (check if any WG reviews/legislation outstanding in relation to	1 Draft Sustainable Transport Plan	To consider the initial findings following the consultation of the draft plan	Pre-decision scrutiny to enable the formulation of recommendations to Cabinet in relation to approving and adopting a Sustainable Transport Plan for the county that will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan themes of a better connected and	Emlyn Jones/Mike Jones	By SCVCG July 2023

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
	sustainable transport at present)				greener Denbighshire, whilst also contributing to the Council's ambition of becoming net carbon zero and ecologically positive by 2030		
	<b>Leader/Cllr. Barry Mellor</b>	2	Rhyl Promenade Masterplan	To examine the proposals contained in the Rhyl Promenade Masterplan to be implemented following the completion of the coastal flood defence schemes	Consideration of the draft masterplan and the public's views on its contents will enable the Committee to formulate recommendations with respect of the final masterplan that will support the Council, business community and residents' aspirations to realise the sustainable economic regeneration of Rhyl and Denbighshire by linking the beach/promenade to the town. Delivering a prosperous and better connected Denbighshire	Tony Ward	By SCVCG July 2023 (in response to a Notice of Motion to County Council)
		3	Update on the Draft Tourism signage Strategy	To provide an update on progress in regard to brown tourist direction sign projects within Denbighshire		Mike Jones/Peter McDermot	SC&VCG
12 December							
<b>2025</b>							
Feb 2025 (date tbc)		1	<i>Car Park Investment Plan 2024 - 2029</i>	<i>To review the last 12 months progress of the Investment Plan</i>		<i>Emlyn Jones / Mike Jones</i>	<i>February 2024</i>

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered

For future years

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## Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

### Information/Consultation Reports

Information / Consultation	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author(s)	Date Entered
<b>INFORMATION</b>				

### Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

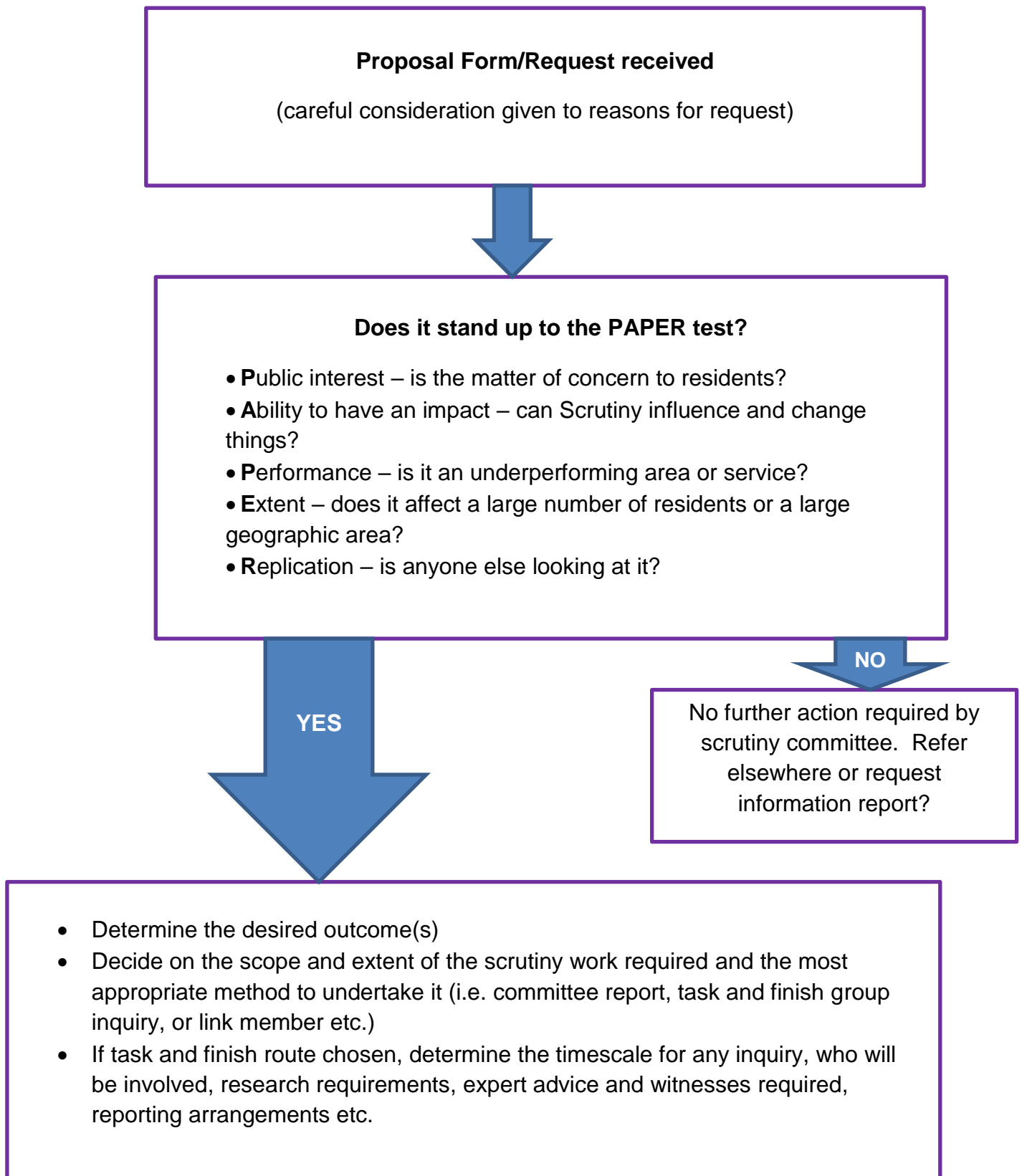
Meeting	<b>Deadline</b>	Meeting	<b>Deadline</b>	Meeting	<b>Deadline</b>
9 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>25<sup>th</sup> April</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> June	<b>13<sup>th</sup> June</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>21<sup>st</sup> August</b>

19/03/24 KE

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

## Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny



## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
<b>21 May</b>	1	Denbighshire's draft Local Housing Market Assessment	To seek Cabinet approval of the assessment for submission to Welsh Government	Yes	Cllrs Rhys Thomas & Win Mullen James Lead Officer/Report Author – Angela Loftus/Sue Lewis	02.04.24 KEJ
	2	Asset Management Strategy 2024 - 2029	To seek Cabinet approval of the updated Asset Management Strategy for formal adoption	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Report Author – Bryn Williams	15.04.24 KEJ
	3	Long Term Plan for Towns: Rhyl	To delegate authority to submit the information required by UK Government so that DCC remain in the process to access £20m for Rhyl over the next 10 years.	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Tony Ward	15.04.24 KEJ
	4	Finance Report (Financial Outturn 2023/24)	To present the final revenue outturn position for 2023/24	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	21.03.24 KEJ
	5	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	6	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
<b>25 June</b>	1	Council Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024 (year-end)	To consider a report by the Strategic Planning Team for Council to approve the Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024.	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Iolo McGregor, Emma Horan	
	2	Reviewed and updated Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030)	To consider the reviewed and updated Climate and Ecological Change Strategy prior to its submission to Council for approval	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Gary Williams / Liz Wilcox-Jones / Helen Vaughan-Evans	
	3	Corporate Joint Committee Governance Arrangements	To approve updated governance arrangements	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Gary Williams	26.04.24 KEJ
	4	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	5	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>30 July</b>	1	Panel Performance Assessment Arrangements	For Cabinet to approve the arrangements for the upcoming Panel Performance Assessment	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer – Helen Vaughan-Evans /	12.04.24 KEJ

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
					Report Author – Iolo McGregor	
	2	LUF Clwyd West: St Peter's Square & Cae Ddol projects	To share the concept designs for the St Peter's Square and Cae Ddol projects along with the public consultation report, and to seek Cabinet's authorisation to proceed with the detailed design phase.	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer – Mike Jones / Report Author – Sian Lloyd Price	12.04.24
	3	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	4	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>24 Sept</b>	1	Public Conveniences Savings Proposal	To consider the Public Conveniences Savings Proposal	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Paul Jackson/Joanna Douglass	23.04.24 KEJ
	2	Denbighshire's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)	To present the LAEP to Cabinet for endorsement	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans/Liz Wilcox Jones	22.04.24 KEJ
	3	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis	Standing Item

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
			financial position of the Council		Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	
	4	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>22 Oct</b>	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>19 Nov</b>	1	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	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans/lolo 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	Standing Item
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item



## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
<b>17 Dec</b>	1	Panel Performance Assessment Response	For Cabinet to approve the Council's management response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Report Author – Iolo McGregor	12.04.24 KEJ
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item

Page 65

### Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Deadline</b>	<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Deadline</b>	<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Deadline</b>
<i>21 May</i>	<b>7 May</b>	<i>25 June</i>	<b>11 June</b>	<i>30 July</i>	<b>16 July</b>

Updated 26/04/2024 – KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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