

To: Members of the Communities
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 6 December 2024

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 12 DECEMBER 2024** 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 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 - 10)

To receive the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 24 October 2024 (copy attached).

5 SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PLANNING COMPLIANCE FUNCTION (Pages 11 - 46)

To consider a report by the Development Manager (copy attached) to examine the Council's planning compliance enforcement activities across Denbighshire and their sustainability going forward.

6 HOUSING RENT SETTING AND HRA BUDGETS 2025/26 (Pages 47 - 92)

To consider a report by the Lead Officer – Community Housing (copy attached) to examine the process for determining the recommendations on the level of weekly rent increases for community housing tenants.

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 93 - 114)

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

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Huw Williams (Chair)

Michelle Blakeley-Walker

James Elson

Jon Harland

Carol Holliday

Brian Jones

Councillor Karen Anne Edwards (Vice-Chair)

Delyth Jones

James May

Merfyn Parry

Cheryl Williams

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All Councillors for information

Press and Libraries

Town and Community Councils

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, (*name*)

a *member/co-opted member of

(**please delete as appropriate*)

Denbighshire County Council

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

(**please delete as appropriate*)

Date of Disclosure:

Committee (*please specify*):

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

(*See the note below*)*

Signed

Date

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

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COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 24 October 2024 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Michelle Blakeley-Walker, Karen Edwards (Vice-Chair), James Elson, Martyn Hogg, Carol Holliday, Brian Jones, Delyth Jones, Merfyn Parry and Huw Williams (Chair)

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business/Monitoring Officer (GW); Corporate Director: Economy and Environment (TW); Head of Finance & Audit (Section 151 Officer) (LT); Head of Highways & Environmental Service (PJ); Scrutiny Co-ordinator (KE); Committee Administrator/Host (NH); and Committee Administrator/Minutes (RhTJ).

Observers – Councillors Justine Evans, Jason McLellan, Andrea Tomlin, and Will Price.

The Lead Member for Environment and Transport, Councillor Barry Mellor for agenda item 5.

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received by Councillor Alan James.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations were raised.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

The Chair allowed Councillor Brian Jones to query the Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance report, which had been delayed until March 2025. He raised concern that the projects funded by the levelling-up fund would need to be completed by March 2026. He believed that a year wouldn't be enough time to complete the projects.

Responding Corporate Director: Economy and Environment advised Councillor Jones that the Rhyl Regeneration Programme was more than the Levelling Up Fund Projects. It was a long term programme which did not end in 2025.

The Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance Programme had been presented to Scrutiny earlier in the year (2024) and an update would be provided in March 2025.

The Chair requested that Councillor Jones seek any further clarification with the Corporate Director outside the meeting.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the Communities Scrutiny meeting held on Thursday 5 September 2024 were submitted. There were no matters arising.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 September 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

5 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES REQUIRED FOR THE NEW WEEKLY TROLLIBOCS RECYCLING SERVICE AND ASSOCIATED WASTE COLLECTION FUNCTIONS

The Lead Member for Environment and Transport, alongside the Corporate Director of Economy and Environment and the Head of Highways and Environmental Services, presented the report (previously circulated). The report detailed the implementation of the new weekly trollibocs recycling service and associated waste collection functions and the adjustments required to ensure sufficient resources were allocated to ensure the new system could operate on a sustainable footing going forward and enable the Committee to scrutinise the proposal (appended to this report) that was presented to Cabinet on 1 October 2024.

Opening the discussion the Chair questioned whether there had been any additional information since the Cabinet meeting on October 1, in order to prevent repetition of the previous debate.

The Lead Member and officers clarified that further to Cabinet meeting in October the extra funding approved allowed the matter of missed collections to be addressed.

The Corporate Director reminded the Committee that upon introduction of the new service many rounds were failing to be completed and temporary additional resources were needed in terms of overtime, additional agency staff and vehicles.

The majority of residents were now getting the weekly recycling collection service although it was acknowledged that there were still issues with some specific properties not getting a consistent collection service.

The crux of the matter was that there was not enough rounds designed into the service to collect from 46000 properties across the county every week. The under resource of the service at the outset led to the service failure. Moving forward plans had been made to deliver a more sustainable service for the long term with the provision of additional vehicles and drivers.

Since the Cabinet decision Welsh Government had been approached to request additional support towards the capital spend. Welsh Government had indicated that they were willing to provide additional support – although the exact figure was as yet unknown. As a result the cost of purchasing the additional vehicles should be less than previously anticipated and two of those vehicles would be electric rather than diesel.

The service had started to implement the decision made by Cabinet with the procurement of vehicles – six of the eight vehicles had been ordered with anticipation of ordering the electric vehicles imminently. Recruitment for the staff was also underway. The new reorganised recycling rounds would commence on Monday 4th November 2024

Members had been invited to visit the Waste Station earlier in the week to review the revised recycling rounds and check that areas that had previously had problems were included. They were confident that normal service would be resumed.

Whilst the Committee welcomed the update regarding the sourcing of additional vehicles and staff they felt that it would be beneficial to bring a report back in spring 2025 to review how the revised rounds had influenced the service.

Responding to members questions the officers advised:

- Delivery of the diesel vehicles was anticipated in December but the ULEV vehicles were due in the new year, temporary arrangements were being implemented to cover that time frame.
- Recruitment of additional staff was due to begin the following week. There had been a high level of interest from the agency staff who had been covering the rounds so far.
- Any future missed collections should be logged through the C360 system.
- Collection round numbers varies day to day, the maximum number of rounds on any given day would be 28.
- The number of hire vehicles had been reduced once the back log of collections had been addressed, but a few were still being used until the new vehicles arrived.
- The rounds were being revised before receipt of the new vehicles to increase the efficiency of the service.
- Systems were now in place to pull through LPG data to include new build developments into the rounds.
- Consideration would be given to formalising a process around Absorbent Hygiene Product collections and urgent new subscribers, the service were able to be flexible under such circumstances.
- There had been substantial work with the In Cab technology provider regarding assisted collections prior to the roll out of the new rounds.
- All households receiving the assisted collections had been contacted to confirm that the service was still required, informal arrangements were being formalised.

- Problems associated with green bins and potential compensation were being discussed at Corporate Executive Team level and would follow the democratic process for resolution.
- The service would be happy to arrange another visit to the waste centre in the new year to show members how the logging system worked.
- It was expected that the Corporate Director's focus would be weaned off the waste collection service over the next few weeks.
- At least one person who had been assisting the service temporarily had applied for a permanent position.
- There was still one caged vehicle in operation for rural areas, that vehicle had been adapted to keep the various waste streams separate from each other.
- There would be an ongoing communication with residents regarding waste separation and cleansing etc.
- Routes for electric vehicles were planned predominantly around urban areas.
- Whilst the request to Cabinet was for resources up to a maximum of £1.299m dependent on the level of support from Welsh government it would not necessarily require that much.

The Committee requested that the level of support received from Welsh Government was shared with members as soon as it became available and that a review of the new rounds be presented to a member briefing shortly after they were implemented.

It was also proposed that a report be brought back to Communities Scrutiny Committee in February / March 2025 for review.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. an all member briefing be held two weeks after the roll out of the new route to review its progress;***
- 2. a report be brought back to Communities Scrutiny Committee in either February or March 2025 to assess the impact on the additional resources on the effectiveness on the Service and***
- 3. That the Committee confirms that it has taken account of the Wellbeing Impact Assessment (appended to this report) as part of its consideration.***

6 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator (SC) guided members through the Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme.

The SC advised that there had been significant amendments to the forward work programme over the previous few weeks. An email had been sent to Committee members on 1st October to explain which items had been rescheduled and the reasons for it.

There had been an agreement at the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Group that priority would be given to projects associated with the Transformation Programme – such as the Waste Service and Public Conveniences Proposal. However all items previously on the forward work programme were still included – albeit at a later date.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator sought approval from the Committee for those changes to the Communities Scrutiny Committee forward work programme along with the inclusion of the Waste report proposed earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED that subject to the above the Communities Scrutiny Committee forward work programme be agreed.

7 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Members had no feedback to relay to the committee.

Meeting concluded at 11:25am.

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Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	12 December 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr. Alan James (Lead Member for Local Development and Planning)
Head of Service	Emlyn Jones (Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Service)
Report author	Paul Mead (Development Manager)
Title	Sustainability of the Planning Compliance Function

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report examines: (i) the degree to which Denbighshire County Council's planning compliance function is fulfilling its purpose to investigate and remedy alleged breaches of planning control; and (ii) the future sustainability of the function.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. A decision on the adoption of a new version of the Council's planning compliance charter (Appendix 1) is required of the Committee.

2.2. To inform future decisions about the allocation of resources, the view of the Committee on the sustainability of the planning compliance function is sought.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee—

- (i) Establishes a view on the sustainability of the planning compliance function to inform future decisions about the allocation of resources;
- (ii) Endorses the new version of the charter;
- (iii) Supports officers' intention to present the final version of the charter for Lead Member approval;

4. Report Details

- 4.1. The performance of the planning compliance function generally requires improvement according to Welsh Government indicators (Appendix 2). Over the six quarters for which statistics are available (Q1 2023-4 to Q2 2024-5), approximately half of reports of alleged breaches have been investigated. Of these investigations, approximately two thirds were carried out within 12 weeks. During the same period, 48 enforcement notices were issued, but only two cases were taken to court and the Council did not carry out any direct action. This means that a number of cases remain unremedied even when an enforcement notice has been issued.
- 4.2. Accordingly, the Council is not fully meeting the expectations that customers might reasonably have, given what is stated within our existing planning compliance charter. (This is the document which advises stakeholders on how the Council investigates and remedies alleged breaches of planning control.) This leads to a high volume of enquiries, service requests and formal complaints, which compound the issue further by taking officers away from investigatory work. Formal complaints, if escalated to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, can also lead to the Council being fined where maladministration is found to have occurred.
- 4.3. From 2015 to 2024, the Council had either one or two officers dedicated to planning compliance. This is evidently insufficient to properly deal with the caseload of alleged breaches in Denbighshire, leading to a backlog which is significantly greater than those of neighbouring authorities (Appendix 3). This situation has become more critical in recent months, when certain recruitment decisions and officer resignations have left the Council with no officers dedicated to planning compliance.

- 4.4. Given the above, amendments to the charter are being proposed (Appendix 1). If adopted, these amendments would reduce the level of service offered by the Council's planning compliance function to the minimum level set out in relevant legislation and practice guidance. The level of service delivered may of course exceed the level offered in due course—if vacant officer positions are backfilled—but the proposed amendments would protect the Council against claims of maladministration in the meantime. They would also manage customer expectations more realistically, which should result in fewer requests for updates, allowing officers to focus more on investigatory work and remedial action.
- 4.5. While the proposed amendments to the charter would put the planning compliance function on a more sustainable footing in the immediate term, the years since 2016 demonstrate that backlogs will continue to increase without adequate resources. The view of the Committee on how the function should be resourced is therefore being sought, so officers can understand whether and how the medium- to long-term sustainability of the function can be secured. Extrapolating from the figures in paragraph 4.1 above provides an indication of the resources required: approximately four officers would be required to investigate all cases which are reported to the Council; approximately six officers would be required to carry out all investigations within 12 weeks; further officers still would be required to follow up investigations with remedial and/or court action; and yet further officers would be required to carry out these tasks whilst also reducing the existing backlog.

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

- 5.1. Effective enforcement underpins the whole planning system, and thus the planning compliance function is fundamental to the delivery of the Denbighshire We Want. It ensures that developments are located sustainably and benefit biodiversity. The function is also therefore fundamental to the Council's regulatory approach to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies. Unless and until resources are increased, continuing the function under the current charter risks it becoming largely ineffective, with the investigation of all

allegations, however minor, taking priority over the remedying of breaches which most impact the nine themes of the Corporate Plan.

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

6.1. The adoption of the amendments to the charter would not involve significant cost. The amendments are not anticipated to impact the interrelationship between planning compliance and other services, which are described in both the previous and proposed iterations of the charter.

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

7.1. N/A at this stage.

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

8.1. N/A.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. N/A.

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

10.1. There is a significant risk to both the built and natural environment from continuing to follow the terms prescribed in the current adopted Planning Compliance Charter with the lack of staffing resources the Council has.

10.2. This could lead to more upheld complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) that the Council is failing to follow its own adopted processes.

10.3. Adopting the proposed, revised Charter (which can be reviewed as resources allow) would protect the Council from risk of PSOW challenge and it would

enable limited resources to be focussed on the most harmful damage to the built and natural environment.

10.4. There are no risks to adopting the revised Charter as per the recommendation providing expectations are managed around staffing resources and priorities.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Local Government Act 1972, Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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Planning compliance in Denbighshire

Planning compliance charter

Adopted ~~April 2022~~ December 2024

Foreword

[New foreword to be added by Lead Member.]

~~As the Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection, Safer Communities and Domestic Abuse, I welcome the production and use of this very useful charter. This has been developed in consultation with our many City, Town and Community Councils across the County and aims to guide those involved in the planning compliance process. It is vitally important that the Council continues to take a proportionate approach to regulation, aiming to balance environmental protection with business support and growth. This charter provides helpful advice to those making complaints about potential breaches of planning control and to those who may have breached planning control. The planning compliance process is a complex and often time-consuming one. I hope that this charter guides those involved and manages expectations of the Council's role therein.~~



~~Councillor Mark Young, April 2022~~

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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the compliance charter

The planning regime exists to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. Planning policies are adopted both nationally and locally to make sure that land is used and developed in an appropriate and responsible way. Applications for planning consent are submitted to Denbighshire County Council and judged against these adopted policies.

Not everyone applies for planning consent when they should. This is where the planning compliance function comes in. This charter sets out how the Council seeks to deal with the harmful effects of unauthorised works by ensuring that planning policies are applied proportionately but robustly.

The charter's primary purpose is to help complainants, alleged contraveners and other interested parties understand how the planning compliance function operates. The Council wishes to work alongside local stakeholders to remedy unauthorised works, in the knowledge that working together is the most effective approach to dealing with breaches of planning control. Advice for complainants is provided in section 2, and advice for alleged contraveners is provided in section 3.

1.2 What is a breach of planning control?

A breach of planning control is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as:

“the carrying out of a development without the required planning permission, or failing to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted”.

The term 'development' is also defined in the Act, as follows:

“the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land”.

In other words, a breach of planning control is a ‘development’ which has occurred but which a) does not have planning permission, or b) is contrary to conditions imposed on a planning permission. These are the types of breach which the planning compliance function primarily deals with (see section 2.1 for more information).

It is not necessarily against the law to carry out a development without planning permission. In most cases, there is no legal obligation on developers to apply for planning consent prior to undertaking works—though it is usually simpler for all involved if they do. If they don’t, they run the risk of the Council pursuing enforcement action in order to remedy the breach. An offence may then be committed if a developer, upon receipt of an enforcement notice, fails to comply with it.

1.3 Development which does not need planning permission

It is quite often the case that building works or changes of use do not need the Council’s consent in the first place. Some development, typically small in scale, is classed as ‘permitted development’, meaning that it is exempt from the requirement for planning permission. Many extensions to houses, for example, do not need planning permission. Permitted development rights can also apply to changes of use, both temporary and permanent.

Further information about permitted development rights, and whether a development requires planning permission, can be found on the Welsh Government’s website—visit www.gov.wales/planning-permission.

1.4 Avoiding planning compliance involvement

It is the responsibility of the property owner (or, in limited cases, the person carrying out works) to comply with planning regulations. To avoid the potential involvement of the planning compliance officer, prospective developers should ensure that all of the

appropriate consents are in place prior to commencing works. Developers are also advised to inform neighbours about their plans from the outset.

The Welsh Government's website provides extensive guidance in relation to common projects which may need planning consent—see www.gov.wales/planning-permission. The Council has also published relevant advice, available via www.denbighshire.gov.uk/planning. Of this guidance, the Council's supplementary planning guidance ("SPG") documents, available via the link, are especially useful; covering a wide range of topics, they are tailored to different types of scheme. For example, business owners may find the SPG documents on advertising and shop fronts particularly useful. The documents on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas may be of use to developers who are carrying out works on a heritage asset. More detailed guidance can be obtained from a planning consultant; a list of agents who operate within Denbighshire is also available on the Council's website.

1.4.1 Lawful development certificates

The Council does not give informal advice on the need for planning permission. Developers who are unsure as to whether their project needs planning permission are recommended instead to make an application for a lawful development certificate. This process is not the same as making an application for planning permission; it is a less onerous process which will provide formal confirmation of whether a specified use, operation or activity is lawful for planning purposes. Further information about how to apply for a lawful development certificate is available on the Council's website.

1.4.2 Pre-application advice service

The Council also offers a pre-application advice service which enables prospective developers to get an informal opinion on the acceptability of the proposed works. To arrange this service, applicants must complete a pre-application advice form which is available on the Council's website. So long as all the necessary information has been provided, we aim to provide a written response to pre-application enquiries within 21 days.

2. Advice for complainants

2.1 What we do and don't investigate

The Council's planning department investigates matters which the law gives us powers to adjudicate over—typically matters which require planning permission. We do not have control over—and do not therefore get involved in—civil matters such as property disputes, property damage and trespass. Issues such as dangerous trees, blocked drains and inconsiderate parking are best resolved directly between the interested parties, as these are not matters which are overseen by the planning department.

In some cases—normally those involving larger schemes—a condition attached to a planning permission may control certain aspects of a development. For example, the planning department may have control over operating hours and mitigation measures, though this is not usually the case for smaller schemes. Complaints relating to the construction phase of developments should in the first instance be referred to the site developer, who may be able to resolve the situation with immediate effect. If this approach is unsuccessful, complainants may wish to consider whether the activity they are concerned about should be reported to the planning department.

The full list of matters which the planning department can investigate is as follows:

- Development (i.e. building works or a change of use of land) which requires planning permission but has proceeded without it;
- Development which has proceeded contrary to plans approved by the Council as part of a planning permission;
- Development which has proceeded contrary to conditions imposed by the Council as part of a planning permission;
- Unconsented alterations to Listed Buildings;
- Unconsented demolition of structures in a Conservation Area;
- Wilful damage to protected trees, i.e. those which are subject to a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area;

- Uprooting of non-domestic hedgerows;
- Advertisements whose display requires consent but does not have it; and
- Untidy properties which are having a detrimental effect on the wider area.

If an issue is not listed above, it may be listed in the table below with advice on how to resolve the matter.

Table 1: Non-planning issues

Non-planning issue	Resolution
Property disputes	Civil matter (consider the assistance of a solicitor)
Property damage	Civil matter (consider the assistance of a solicitor)
Trespass/theft of land	Civil matter (consider the assistance of a solicitor)
Breaches of covenant	Civil matter (consider the assistance of a solicitor)
Dangerous structures and buildings	Report to the Council using the appropriate form
Nuisances—noise, light, odour, etc.	Report to the Council using the appropriate form
Fly tipping/litter accumulations	Report to the Council using the appropriate form
Felling of non-protected trees	Report to Natural Resources Wales
Wildlife crime	Report to the Police
Obstructions of the highway	Report to the Police
Workplace health and safety	Report to the Health and Safety Executive or to the Council using the appropriate form
Vermin	Report to the Council using the appropriate form Hire a pest controller

2.1.1 Development which is immune from enforcement action

If a breach of planning control has existed for some time, it may have acquired immunity from remedial action. Planning law prevents the Council taking enforcement action against unauthorised development which has existed for:

- Four years in cases of building/engineering/mining operations;
- Four years in cases consisting of the change of use of any building to use as a single dwellinghouse; or
- Ten years in all other cases, including breaches of condition.

Breaches of planning control which do not involve 'development' (see section 1.3), such as breaches of Listed Building legislation or instances of untidy property, do not accrue immunity from enforcement.

2.1.2 Speculative reports

The planning department does not investigate speculative reports of activities which have yet to occur. This is because the resources which are available to the planning compliance function are solely dedicated to investigating and resolving unauthorised works which are ongoing or have already taken place. It is also the case that the scale and nature of a breach needs to be understood before the best course of remedial action can be identified.

2.1.3 Anonymous reports

The planning department does not investigate anonymous reports or reports made using a false **or incomplete** identity. This is because we may wish to correspond with complainants in order to gain a better understanding of the alleged breach or to discuss the progress of remedial action.

All personal details are confidential and will not be made public during the investigation phase. On rare occasions—those involving serious breaches which result in an appeal or a prosecution—we may be required to give details of the complaint to the inspectorate (Planning and Environment Decisions Wales) or the Courts. These details may include the complainant's name and address, though we would only divulge these with the complainant's express consent. Similarly, we may need to liaise with external agencies such as Natural Resources Wales, the police and the fire and rescue service in order to investigate an alleged breach effectively.

2.2 The role of complainants

The planning compliance function is most successful when it works collaboratively with complainants. The planning department cannot proactively monitor every street and property in Denbighshire, and this is where members of the public come in. By providing local knowledge and ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground, local residents and organisations are a key component in the process of securing planning compliance.

As well as providing a monitoring presence, local residents and organisations are uniquely placed to remedy the harmful effects of breaches before they need to be escalated to the Council. It is a regrettable fact that the intervention of a planning compliance officer can sometimes be greeted with hostility by developers who are alleged to be carrying out unauthorised works. It is often the case that developers find it unnecessary and antagonistic for the Council to get involved; they will often ask why the aggrieved party couldn’t have raised their concerns directly, in order to reach an amicable (and probably swifter) solution.

In order to maintain good community relations—as well as to ensure that our resources are directed at the most severe problems—the Council’s involvement should be treated as a last resort. Before reporting an issue to the Council, complainants should consider whether a solution to the problem could be reached more amicably and **quickly** without the use of limited Council resources.

2.2.1 The role of city, town and community councils

City, town and community councils have excellent links to the places they serve, and they can use their well-established connections to bring about quick and effective resolutions to local planning issues, to the benefit of all involved. It is also a priority of the Council to work with people and communities to build independence and resilience, involving local people and organisations in shaping their communities and improving services—and we recognise the crucial role that city, town and community councils can play in delivering these objectives.

The planning compliance function provides a regulatory mechanism through which improvements can be made to Denbighshire's communities. Shaping communities on a wider scale takes more than reactive regulation, though. City, town and community councils which have a generalised concern about their area's built environment should therefore consider how they can work in partnership with the Council to proactively enhance the public realm. For example, they may wish to consider the strategic benefits of commissioning appraisals which the Council could then use to introduce new planning guidance and/or place-specific controls. Localised controls such as Conservation Areas, Areas of Special Control of Advertisements and Article 4 Direction Areas can make a real difference to the public realm, but limits to resources mean that it is not always possible for the Council to implement them unaided. It is for this reason that it is now so important for partnership organisations such as city, town and community councils to work collaboratively with the Council to stimulate regeneration and enhance the built environment.

2.3 How to report an alleged breach of planning control

If other methods of remedying an alleged breach prove to be unsuccessful, complainants may wish to report the matter to the Council. We only investigate reports of alleged planning breaches which are submitted to us on the dedicated form, which can be found online by visiting www.denbighshire.gov.uk/planning and then following the link to the enforcement section. Alternatively, a hard copy of the form can be sent out to prospective complainants by post.

By completing the form, complainants are ensuring that the planning department has all the information we need to carry out any investigation as quickly, effectively and safely as possible. Quite often, the local knowledge that complainants and local organisations can provide on the form is what makes the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful investigation. For this reason, we may refuse to investigate an alleged breach until all of the necessary information has been provided.

Similarly, the success and speed of an investigation can hinge on the availability of corroborating evidence. Accordingly, complainants may wish to submit photographs, sound recordings, videos and activity logs. It is important for complainants to note that their reports might lead to a criminal investigation, so they must ensure that the information and evidence they provide is accurate and a true representation of the facts.

The Council will endeavour to acknowledge reports of planning breaches within ten working days. Complainants should inform the Council if they do not receive an acknowledgement within this timeframe.

2.4 The investigation phase

The Council receives around 250 reports of alleged planning breaches each year. Investigations must therefore be prioritised according to the level of harm being caused.

The highest priority is given to dealing with breaches which are imminently life-threatening or irrevocably harmful, especially if they are ongoing. Immediate attention is reserved for cases where prompt intervention would prevent irreparable damage to an irreplaceable asset such as a **Scheduled Ancient Monument**, Listed Building or protected tree.

Thereafter, priority is usually given to breaches affecting places which are recognised for their special qualities, such as Conservation Areas and the **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape** (“the AONB”).

Regard must also be paid to when the breach first occurred. If an unauthorised development is, owing to the passage of time, approaching immunity from enforcement (see section 2.1.1), the investigation into the matter might be prioritised accordingly.

The table below (continues overleaf) provides some examples of alleged breaches which the Council typically encounters, and identifies where they would normally fall in the order of priority.

Table 2: How the Council prioritises cases (continues overleaf)

Priority	Type of alleged breach
1 (Urgent)	<p>An alleged breach which is ongoing and causing severe, irrevocable damage to an irreplaceable asset, and therefore requires immediate attention.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing excavations at a Scheduled Ancient Monument ● The ongoing demolition of a Listed Building ● The ongoing demolition of a building within a Conservation Area ● The ongoing felling of protected trees
2 (High)	<p>An alleged breach which requires prompt attention, because it—</p> <p>(a) Has caused irrevocable damage to a special designated asset but is not ongoing;</p> <p>(b) Is posing an imminent risk to life; and/or</p> <p>(c) Is approaching immunity from enforcement owing to the passage of time.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An unauthorised alteration to a Listed Building which is not ongoing ● The creation of a vehicular access onto a blind corner on a fast A-road ● A harmful breach of condition which has persisted without interruption for nearly 10 years
3 (Moderate)	<p>An alleged breach which is having an adverse impact on a special place such as a Conservation Area or the AONB, or on a particularly prominent place, e.g. a gateway route to a town centre.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unauthorised quarrying within the AONB

Priority	Type of alleged breach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unauthorised shop sign in a Conservation Area • A dilapidated building on a high street
4 (Low)	<p>An alleged breach which is not causing severe harm to public amenity, the environment or to the health and safety of the public, e.g. works to buildings which are not Listed, within a Conservation Area or within the AONB.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised ‘householder development’ (works within the garden areas of houses) • Changes of use such as a bookshop which has started serving tea and coffee • Overgrown front gardens

2.4.1 Timeframes for investigation

While all reports of alleged planning breaches will be recorded, those that do not meet priority status will be investigated if and when workloads allow. The Council aims to investigate ~~50% of the reports we receive within 10 weeks, and~~ 80% of priority 1 and priority 2 cases within 12 weeks. Priority 3 cases and priority 4 cases and/or ~~Cases~~ cases which are complex or lacking in evidence or relatively low-priority may take significantly more than 12 weeks to investigate. The Council may also close investigations when evidence of a harmful breach is not forthcoming.

The Council aims to provide an efficient service. The forbearance of complainants is therefore greatly appreciated, as answering regular requests for updates takes officers away from the task of investigating alleged breaches. Repeated requests for updates may be regarded by the Council as an unreasonable demand, as set out in the Council’s policy for dealing with unacceptable customer behaviour. The Council will instead endeavour to

provide complainants with updates at key points during investigations, as and when they become available.

Updates will be provided by letter, email or telephone, depending on the preference of the complainant. If a case is generating significant local interest, updates may alternatively be provided on the Council's website. The Council aims to respond to **any correspondence received enquiries** within 10 working days **of their receipt**. **Correspondence which provides information but does not include a clear request for service may not receive a response from the Council. The Council may not respond to correspondence concerning cases which have been investigated and closed**

2.4.2 Site visits

The Council does not carry out site visits in response to every complaint, but some cases will demand an on-site inspection. It is for the Council to decide whether a visit is needed as part of an investigation.

In order to make the most efficient use of resources, visits are carried out in geographical groupings. For this reason, it may be some weeks after a report has been received before a site visit is undertaken. In order to expedite matters, complainants may wish to provide evidence which would negate the need for a site visit.

2.5 What happens once a breach has been investigated?

Once an alleged breach has been investigated, the Council will then pursue remedial action or close the case down. Cases will be closed down at this stage if: a) we do not have sufficient evidence of a breach; or b) a breach has been identified, but is not so harmful that the Council would find it expedient to devote further resources to remedying the matter.

2.5.1 Expediency

The planning compliance function is a discretionary service offered by the Council. As such, it is for the Council to decide whether **and when** to pursue remedial action in

response to alleged breaches of planning control. The aim of the planning compliance function is to remedy the adverse effects of breaches, not to punish the people carrying them out.

The pivotal issue for the Council is whether the unauthorised development is unacceptably affecting public amenity. It is not an appropriate use of Council resources to take action against a trivial or technical breach which causes negligible harm to public amenity.

2.5.2 Remedial action

Depending on the severity of the unauthorised development, any ensuing remedial action will in most cases take one of two forms. The Council may:

- 1) Pursue the cessation of the breach, through formal enforcement action if necessary. This option is appropriate when there is adequate evidence of a harmful breach which irreconcilably conflicts with planning policy; or
- 2) Request a planning application to be submitted in retrospect. This is an appropriate method of dealing with breaches which may be harmful, but whose harm could potentially be controlled by attaching a condition to a retrospective planning permission. For example, a planning condition may mitigate noise by requiring the installation of soundproofing. It is also appropriate to request an application if the nature of the breach is such that the submission of evidence and/or the input of specialist consultees is needed in order that an informed decision about a development's acceptability can be made.

The Council will not typically proceed with enforcement action in relation to developments which are subject to an ongoing planning application **or appeal**.

In cases where a requested application turns out not to be successful—or not submitted at all—the Council may resort to pursuing the cessation of the breach, through formal enforcement action if appropriate.

2.5.3 Formal enforcement action

The Council has the power to serve enforcement notices which formally require recipients to undertake remedial action or otherwise face a penalty. There are different types of notice the Council can serve, depending on the nature of the breach. Certain notices may only come into effect 28 or more days after their date of issue, in order to allow the recipient the opportunity to appeal. Appeal proceedings are overseen by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales, which will either uphold, modify or quash the notice.

Notices must offer recipients a reasonable period within which to carry out the required remedial works. This period of compliance starts when the notice comes into effect or, in cases where appeal proceedings are brought, when Planning and Environment Decisions Wales issues its decision.

For relatively minor breaches, the service of the enforcement notice may be deemed sufficiently punitive in itself, given its effect on land valuation. In ~~most~~ some cases, however, the response of the notice's recipient will be monitored once the period of compliance has elapsed. If the monitoring reveals that the recipient of a notice has failed to comply with its requirements, the Council may, if expedient, seek to secure further punitive action. Penalties for non-compliance vary depending on the type of breach and the notice served (see section 3.2). Prosecution may be pursued if it is in the wider public interest to do so, and if legal advice suggests that there is a reasonable prospect of success. **It is for the Council to decide whether and when to pursue legal action.**

The timescales needed for the complete resolution of cases can unfortunately be extensive, and often dependent on factors outside of the Council's control. The Council will nonetheless strive to resolve all priority cases in a timely manner, and, if expedient, will pursue all appropriate and reasonable avenues to do so.

3. Advice for alleged contraveners

3.1 How to respond to an allegation by the Council

Those who are alleged by the Council to have carried out unauthorised works should read the correspondence they have received thoroughly. Any such correspondence will carefully set out the Council's position and provide advice about what to do next. It will state what courses of remedial action are available and, if applicable, the penalties for non-compliance. Given the costs involved, the Council may refuse to provide further advice beyond this, especially if a fee would ordinarily be levied for providing such advice to the public (as is the case with pre-application advice, for example).

In light of the above, alleged contraveners are advised to seek the assistance of a planning consultant if they are in any doubt about their obligations. A list of such agents who operate in the locality is available at www.denbighshire.gov.uk/planning. Alternatively, Planning Aid Wales, which is a charitable organisation which helps eligible individuals to participate more effectively in the planning system, provides advisory services including a helpline. Further information about the charity can be found at www.planningaidwales.org.uk.

3.2 Formal notices

There are a number of formal notices which the Council has the power to issue in response to an alleged breach of planning control. There is no obligation on the Council to make informal attempts at resolving an alleged breach prior to issuing a formal notice.

Each type of notice has a different function. They also have different penalties for non-compliance. These vary depending on the notice served, and will be expressed on, or in an annex attached to, the notice. They most often take the form of one or more of the following:

- Prosecution, which can result in a fine;

- The Council carrying out the works required by the notice followed by action in the County Court to recover all incurred costs; and/or
- The Council carrying out the works and then registering a charge on the property with the Land Registry, recoverable should the property be sold.

Certain notices are appealable. If the recipient of a notice has this right of appeal, the details of how to exercise it will be given in an annex to the notice. Further details about the grounds under which an appeal can be raised will also be provided.

3.2.1 Enforcement Notices

Section 172 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives the Council the power to issue an Enforcement Notice to require an alleged breach of planning control as defined in the Act (see section 1.2 of this document) to be remedied. The required remedial action will be identified on the notice. Once served, there is a period of no fewer than 28 days before the notice comes into effect, to allow its recipient to raise an appeal. Once the notice comes into effect, there is a further period of time to allow for compliance. This period for compliance will vary depending on the nature of the alleged breach. Failure to comply with an enforcement notice within the required timeframe is a criminal offence and can lead to a substantial fine.

3.2.2 Listed Building Enforcement Notices

It is a criminal offence under Section 9 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to alter, extend or demolish a structure subject to a Listing without Listed Building consent. A Listed Building Enforcement Notice (“LBEN”) seeks to have unauthorised works remedied by:

- a) Requiring the building to be brought back to its former state; or
- b) If that is not reasonably practicable or desirable, requiring other works to alleviate the effects of the unauthorised works; or
- c) Requiring the building to be brought into the state it would have been in if the terms of any Listed Building consent had been observed.

The Notice must specify a time period for securing compliance with its requirements. There is a right of appeal against a LBEN; the procedures are similar to those used for an appeal against an Enforcement Notice.

If works subject to a LBEN are later authorised by a retrospective application for Listed Building consent, the notice will cease to have any effect. The liability to prosecution for an offence committed before the date of any retrospective consent will remain, however. The penalty for offenders is a substantial fine, imprisonment, or both.

3.2.3 Breach of Condition Notices

A Breach of Condition Notice (“BCN”) may be served when a condition attached to a planning permission has not been adhered to. Because the imposition of any given condition can be appealed at the time when the planning permission was granted, there is no right of appeal against a BCN. Failure to comply with a BCN can, upon prosecution, lead to a fine.

3.2.4 Stop Notices and Temporary Stop Notices

The Council may issue a Stop Notice or a Temporary Stop Notice in order to stop a particularly harmful activity with immediate effect. These notices are typically reserved to dealing with especially severe alleged breaches—‘Priority 1’ cases (see section 2.3) which are ongoing and whose harm is irrevocable.

A Temporary Stop Notice allows the Council to stop a harmful activity in order for us to investigate the matter further and, if appropriate, issue a formal notice to have the identified harm remedied. Stop Notices may only be issued at the same time as an Enforcement Notice or after an Enforcement Notice has been served, and thus are best used to ensure that a harmful activity does not continue during appeal proceedings. Failure to comply with a Stop Notice or a Temporary Stop Notice can lead to a substantial fine.

3.2.5 Enforcement Warning Notices

An Enforcement Warning Notice (“EWN”) formally requires its recipient to seek to remedy an alleged breach by undertaking one of the following courses of action:

- Apply for planning permission for the unauthorised development in retrospect; or
- Cease the alleged breach.

Serving an EWN prevents an unauthorised development from potentially gaining immunity from further enforcement through the passage of time (see section 2.1.1).

The Council will often issue an EWN in relation to alleged breaches which, after an initial assessment, appear to accord with planning policy in principle. They are reserved for circumstances in which, subject to the imposition of conditions, there is a ‘reasonable prospect’ that retrospective planning permission would be granted if an application for such were to be made. They do not act as a guarantee that planning permission will be forthcoming. Failure to comply with an EWN may lead to further formal action, normally the service of a full Enforcement Notice.

3.2.6 Other notices

The Council has the power to issue further types of formal notice, such as those which deal with unconsented advertisements, untidy properties and unauthorised works within Conservation Areas. As is the case with the abovementioned notices, the penalties for non-compliance and the available options for raising an appeal will be expressed either on or in an annex to the notice issued.

3.3 Injunctions

If the Council considers a breach of planning control to be sufficiently serious, it may apply to the Courts for a restraint injunction. Those in breach of an injunction can be imprisoned.

3.4 Submitting a planning application

Alleged contraveners may be instructed to attempt to regularise unauthorised development by submitting a planning application. In order to ensure that the submitted application passes validation checks—that is, contains all the documentation we need in order to consult on and determine the application—applicants are advised to employ the services of a planning consultant. This can often save applicants time and money in the long run. A list of agents who operate within Denbighshire, as well as general advice on submitting planning applications, can be found at www.denbighshire.gov.uk/planning. Our support team can also provide limited assistance by email, at planning@denbighshire.gov.uk, or by phone on (01824) 706727.

3.4.1 Non-determination of retrospective planning applications

The Council has the power to decline to determine retrospective planning applications for development that is subject to an enforcement notice.

3.5 Officers' right of entry onto land

The planning compliance officer has a right of entry onto land to:

- Ascertain whether there has been a breach of planning control;
- Determine whether and how the Council's powers should be exercised; and
- Determine whether there has been compliance.

Any person who wilfully obstructs an authorised officer acting in the exercise of a right of entry shall be guilty of an offence and will be liable to prosecution.

Contact us

Website: www.denbighshire.gov.uk/planning

Email: planning@denbighshire.gov.uk

Phone: (01824) 706727

Appendix 2: The performance of the planning compliance function, Q3 2016-17 to Q2 2024-25

Continues overleaf.

Period	2022-23				2023-24				2024-25			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Caseload												
Cases registered	53	54	38	43	51	49	38	104	45	43		
Investigation												
Percentage of cases investigated (estimate)					47	57	45	34	34	100		
...Of which, percentage investigated within 12 weeks	69	77	69	74	70	60	85	59	66	64		
Average time taken to investigate cases (weeks)												
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action (weeks)	18.4	25.9	33.4	29.4	30.2	24.8	22.9	22.6				
Formal enforcement action												
Enforcement notices issued												
Enforcement notices issued, incl. Enforcement Warning Notices	12	18	16	4	6	15	3	4	14	6		
Appeals made	1	1	3	1	0	0	1	1	0	0		
Cases taken to court for non-compliance	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0		
Cases resolved by the Council carrying out works in default	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		

Period	2019-20				2020-21				2021-22			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Caseload												
Cases registered	75	45	42	28	35	34	51	27	39	56	49	55
Investigation												
Percentage of cases investigated (estimate)												
...Of which, percentage investigated within 12 weeks	62	67	33	53	86	82	67	67	50	48	53	80
Average time taken to investigate cases (weeks)	16	14.7	21.9	21.6	11.3	8.6	11.5					
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action (weeks)	28.4	19.8	25.4	25.9	7.1	14.6	13.9	26.1	23.1	16.1	29.1	35.4
Formal enforcement action												
Enforcement notices issued	3	7	4	9	2	1	1	1	2	0	4	
Enforcement notices issued, incl. Enforcement Warning Notices												23
Appeals made	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Cases taken to court for non-compliance									0	0	0	0
Cases resolved by the Council carrying out works in default									0	1	0	0

Period	2016-17		2017-18				2018-19			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Caseload										
Cases registered	46	55	49	52	33	35	40	49	77	43
Investigation										
Percentage of cases investigated (estimate)										
...Of which, percentage investigated within 12 weeks	96	91	96	92	87	82	81	77	78	61
Average time taken to investigate cases (weeks)	2.9	8.1	8.1	10.9	11	6	11.3	8.3	10.4	14.7
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action (weeks)								19.4	17.1	27.9
Formal enforcement action										
Enforcement notices issued	2	4	5	10	5	4	7	12	9	5
Enforcement notices issued, incl. Enforcement Warning Notices										
Appeals made	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Cases taken to court for non-compliance	0	1	0	0	1	0				
Cases resolved by the Council carrying out works in default	0	0	1	0	0	0				

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Appendix 3: Planning compliance caseloads in North Wales authorities

Authority	No. of officers (FTE)	No. of cases per year (avg.)	Active cases (apx.)	Active cases per officer
Anglesey	3	300	350	117
Conwy	2.6	300	140	54
Denbighshire	0*	200	590	590
Eryri	1.6	Unknown	200	125
Flintshire	3	350	250	83
Gwynedd	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Wrexham	3	350	100	33

* Since November 2024, Denbighshire County Council has had zero planning compliance officers. This is the first time that the Council has had no officers dedicated to planning compliance since 2016. In the intervening period, the Council has typically had fewer officers than neighbouring authorities. From 2016 to 2021, the Council has one officer. From 2021 to 2024, the Council had two officers. Approval has now been granted by the Chief Executive Team to recruit one officer, and this process is underway. One officer is however unlikely to remedy the backlog caused by years of insufficient resource.

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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	12 th December 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Rhys Thomas
Head of Service	Liz Grieve Head of Housing & Communities
Report author	Geoff Davies, Lead Officer – Community Housing
Title	Housing Rent Setting and HRA Budgets 2025 / 26

1. What is the report about?

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

2. What is the reason for making this report?

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

3. What are the Recommendations?

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

4. Report details

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

4.2. The maximum increase to weekly rents is set by Welsh Government Rent Policy which is based on the September CPI figure each year. If CPI is less than 3% the maximum is CPI + 1%.

- 4.3. This year CPI was 1.7% and therefore the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary has set a 2.7% maximum increase.
- 4.4. Further information on this process is set out in appendix 1 a, which is the report for Cabinet recommending a 2.7% increase.
- 4.5. Whilst we understand the any rent increase has to be carefully considered we are also required to ensure that we can maintain and improve our Council housing stock of 3,334 homes to the standard required by the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and our own Corporate Plan.
- 4.6. With a new focus on Net Zero and Affordable Warmth we have been set challenging targets to achieve for our stock which will however ultimately benefit council tenants through higher standards and more energy efficient homes than they have now.
- 4.7. Due to significantly rising standards and significantly rising costs, the Housing service firmly believes that we have no option but to seek approval for the maximum increase.
- 4.8. Even with this additional income we are still faced with a challenge to meet the required standards whilst also continuing to deliver much needed new homes.
- 4.9. All other Local Authorities with Housing stock in Wales have indicated that they will be seeking a recommendation to increase rents by the maximum.
- 4.10. A key point in our decision to make this recommendation is to consider the Affordability model used by the service to formally measure whether our rent levels are affordable for households in Denbighshire. Using the respected Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) "Living Rent" Model we have been able to measure rents and can confirm that with the maximum increase allowed our weekly rents remain within the strict affordability limits for earned income of the lowest income households within Denbighshire.
- 4.11. Information on the affordability model and the detailed, wider considerations of investment required to achieve the standards required are contained within appendix 3.

4.12. In order for the committee to fully consider these proposal prior to Cabinet, the full suite of reports for Cabinet are attached as appendices. These include the full Cabinet report, HRA Budget out turn projection for 2024 / 2025, HRA Capital Investment budget forecast and also the additional report outlining the wider considerations taken in reaching the final recommendation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. A full review of the Housing Stock Business Plan (HSBP) has confirmed that the Plan remains robust and viable. There are sufficient resources to support the

management and supervision of the housing service and the investment needs of the stock.

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

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

11. Power to make the decision

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

Housing Revenue Account ~ 2025/26 Budget Setting				
2023/24		2024/25		2025/26
Final		Original	Forecast	Proposed
Outturn	Period 8 - November 2023/24	Budget	Out-turn	Budget
			M7	
£	EXPENDITURE	£	£	£
2,806,064	Supervision & Management - General	3,262,364	3,233,998	3,305,974
605,660	Supervision & Management - Service Charges	674,637	674,637	689,651
6,580,268	Repairs and Maintenance	6,841,000	6,842,753	7,062,000
9,991,992	Total Housing Management	10,778,000	10,751,388	11,057,625
7,050,486	Item 8 Capital Charges	7,745,000	7,408,000	8,852,000
1,367,884	Capital Funded from Revenue	1,015,000	1,533,102	0
134,898	Capital Funded from Revenue - AHG	135,000	134,898	0
-172,553	Provision for Bad Debts	158,000	158,000	160,000
18,372,706	Total Expenditure	19,831,000	19,985,388	20,069,625
	INCOME			
17,188,812	Rents (net of voids)	19,030,000	18,824,038	19,012,000
367,381	Service Charges	389,000	389,000	397,000
192,756	Garages	203,000	207,087	211,000
134,898	Affordable Housing Grant	135,000	134,898	135,000
100,321	Interest on Balances & Other Income	13,000	10,000	4,000
17,984,168	Total Income	19,770,000	19,565,023	19,759,000
	Surplus / Deficit (-) for the Year:			
388,538	General Balances	-61,000	-420,365	-310,625
1,568,420	Balance as at start of year ~ General	1,179,882	1,179,882	759,517
	Earmarked Balances	0	0	0
0	FRS Adjustment		0	
1,179,882	Balance as at end of year ~ General	1,118,882	759,517	448,892

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Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	17th December 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Rhys Thomas - Lead Member Housing & Communities
Head of Service	Liz Grieve - Head of Housing & Communities
Report author	Geoff Davies - Lead Officer Community Housing
Title	Housing Rent Setting & Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2025/26

1. What is the report about?

1.1. To seek approval from Cabinet for the Denbighshire Housing annual rent increase, the Housing Revenue Account Capital and Revenue Budgets for 2025/26 and Housing Stock Business Plan.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. It is a statutory requirement to set budgets and rent levels before the start of the new financial year. The budget must be consistent with the assumptions within the Housing Stock Business Plan (HSBP) which has been designed to maintain Welsh Housing Quality Standard throughout the 30-year business plan.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2025/26 (Appendix 1) and the Housing Stock Business Plan (Appendix 2) be adopted.
- 3.2. That rents for Council dwellings be increased in accordance with the Welsh Government (WG) Policy for Social Housing Rents by 2.7% to an average of £112.29 with effect from Monday 7th April 2025.

3.3. Cabinet are asked to note the additional report (appendix 3) on the considerations taken into account when deciding on this recommendation.

3.4. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 4) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

4.1. The latest forecast outturn for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2024/25 is detailed in Appendix 1, in line with the monthly monitoring report. Balances at year end are forecast to be £759,517.

4.2. The proposed budget for 2025/26 is also detailed in Appendix 1. The budget has been calculated to ensure we can deliver our revenue services; the capital investment programme, to strive to achieve quality standards for our homes; and continue to develop our new build programme.

Welsh Government Rent Policy

Welsh Government has a policy for social housing rents that will be applied consistently by all social landlords.

Welsh Government rent policy sets a maximum annual rent uplift of **CPI +1%** using CPI from the previous September but with Ministerial discretion if CPI exceeds 3%.

4.3. In September 2024 UK inflation (CPI) was 1.7% and the increase is therefore within the policy to a maximum rent increase of **2.7%**. We are committed to the requirement that there will be no evictions due to financial hardship where there is engagement.

The policy is a maximum and due to the pressures on the HRA to invest in our homes to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), and also strive to deliver the corporate plan target for new homes, we are proposing to increase our weekly rents by **2.7%**.

Therefore, in summary –

- The overall total increase across all stock is 2.7%.
- The average weekly rent will be £112.29

In making this recommendation we are able to clearly evidence that our rents remain affordable and any increase will help us invest back into our homes and communities to benefit all our tenants and their households.

Any less of an increase will lead to further pressures and more extended programmes to achieve higher standards for social housing in Wales. A detailed review of this recommendation as set out in Appendix 3.

75% of households are in receipt of welfare benefit and housing costs support, therefore the increase in rent is covered by this support.

There is a need for balance to ensure we can continue to invest in our existing homes and consider carefully managed growth through our new build programme. Maximising our own income generation is an important factor when seeking to draw down extra grants from the Welsh Government.

Housing Stock Business Plan (HSBP)

As part of the budget process it is necessary to review the Housing Stock Business Plan and this is achieved through a due diligence exercise on an on-going basis to review the assumptions used and to validate the robustness of the financial model. In addition, the review undertakes a sensitivity analysis.

The current Housing Stock Business Plan assumes a minimum balance of £750k is maintained over the mid-term to mitigate against any future risks.

The HSBP maintains borrowing to fund capital works such as the new build and improvement programmes. The level of borrowing is closely monitored as this is related to annual capital financing costs.

All council's in Wales have reached agreement with Welsh Government to remove the borrowing cap from HRA's as per the Deed of Termination of HRA Subsidy Voluntary Agreement 20th March 2019. This repealed the previously agreed cap introduced by the Housing Act 2014 settlement payment.

Local Authorities in Wales are still required by Regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out their duties under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003. Therefore, any borrowing undertaken by LHAs following the abolition of the borrowing cap will continue to be “unsupported” and any increase is for Local Authorities to manage within their existing resources. Any significant increases in borrowing will impact on available revenue expenditure.

Service Charges

Service chargeable income collects actual costs for specific services only applicable to certain homes. These include communal areas services such as lighting, cleaning and grounds maintenance. These are based on actual costs.

Overall costs show an increase over last year to £507k. Individual properties may be subject to a varied charge. The average charge per property has increased to £2.86 per week (from £2.61 last year).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

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

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

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

11. Power to make the decision

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

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APPENDIX TWO					
SUMMARY	0	1	2	3	4
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	M7 Outturn				
WHQS Improvements & Maintenance	14,428	10,301	11,167	10,262	10,298
New build	6,389	5,739	3,663	3,067	0
Acquisition of existing properties	0	0	0	0	0
Other Improvements	0	0	0	0	0
	20,817	16,040	14,830	13,329	10,298
CAPITAL FUNDING					
Major Repairs Allowance	2,666	2,370	2,370	2,370	2,370
Capital Receipts	346	830	0	0	0
Borrowing	12,288	12,300	5,000	4,000	3,800
Other Funding Sources	3,848	540	735	375	0
Capital Expenditure funded by HRA	1,669	0	0	0	0
	20,817	16,040	8,105	6,745	6,170
REVENUE EXPENDITURE					
Management	3,909	3,996	4,099	4,195	4,279
Repairs & Maintenance	6,843	7,062	7,311	7,553	7,780
Interest	3,545	3,865	4,005	3,959	3,871
Capital Financing Charge	3,862	4,986	5,407	5,843	6,329
	18,159	19,909	20,822	21,550	22,259
REVENUE INCOME					
Gross Rental Income	19,295	19,486	20,124	20,736	21,297
Garages	207	211	215	220	224
Service Charges	389	397	405	413	421
Voids	-471	-474	-491	-506	-522
Bad Debts	-158	-160	-159	-160	-159
WG Affordable Housing Grant (AHG)	135	135	135	135	135
Interest on Balances	10	3	1	-2	-6
	19,407	19,598	20,230	20,836	21,390
BALANCES					
Surplus / Deficit (-) For Year	1,248	-311	-592	-714	-869
Capital Expenditure funded by HRA	1,668	0	0	0	0
Balance Brought Forward (HRA Reserve)	1,180	760	449	-143	-857
Surplus / - Deficit after CERA	-420	-311	-592	-714	-869
Balance carried forward	760	449	-143	-857	-1,726

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Housing Rent Setting 2025/2026

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



1) Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

2) Summary

- With the maximum increase allowed, our weekly rents remain within our affordability measures for those households with the lowest levels of earned income.
- Even with the maximum increase we are face significant budget pressures to be able to achieve the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard
- We can demonstrate the positive impact that investment in our stock has on our households through reduced bills.
- Any rent increase less than the maximum is less investment in our homes.
- Our tenants "value for money" satisfaction is amongst the highest in Wales
- Our tenants "satisfaction with the overall service" is amongst the highest in Wales

3) Background

Each year, we are required to consider our annual rent increase in line with the maximum allowed by the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary Housing & Local Government.

Whilst our need is to increase our rents in line with the maximum allowed, to ensure we can continue to meet cost increases, before making this recommendation we have measured our rent levels using a nationally recognised affordability model. With the maximum increase allowed we can confirm that our rents remain affordable for the lowest income earners in Denbighshire.

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

Why we are where we are?

We have reported in previous years that we have experienced significantly rising costs traceable back to the period after the pandemic and then followed by a period of high inflation. This has led to significant cost increases in the building & construction sector which has impacted on our investment programmes in our housing stock.

In addition, the increased standards specified in Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 2) will require us to achieve significantly higher energy ratings for all our homes. This will require significantly increased levels of investment to what we have previously committed. This investment, while a significant cost to us as the Landlord, will benefit our tenants who will be living in an excellent standard of accommodation with a renewed focus on affordable warmth.

Any rent increase that is less than the maximum allowed would impact on our ability to invest in our homes and extend the time we need to meet new standards. 1% is approximately £190k per annum less for every year of the business plan.

4) Impact on Household Affordability

As part of our consideration of the increase we monitor other income changes for our households. Notable highlights are:

- State Pension will increase by 4.1%
- Minimum wage will increase by 6.7%
- Actual wages expected to increase by 4.7%
- Universal Credit and welfare benefits will increase by 1.7%. (any increase in housing costs will be met for these households)

We currently have 75% of households in receipt of some support to meet their weekly rent, either through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Costs. Any increase in weekly rent charge will be met by the housing costs support for these households (assuming their circumstances did not change).

In addition, we have adopted the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Living Rent Model to enable us to assess our rent levels for affordability in relation to household income in the county. This uses the Office for National Statistics (ONS) data from October 2024 on average household incomes in Denbighshire.

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

Even with a 2.7% increase, a household with the lowest 30% of average earned income, would still have a weekly rent comfortably less than 28% of this income.

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

More detail on the affordability model can be found here -

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

Our Affordability modelling is shown in the graph below -

Affordability

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

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



Advice & Support to Promote Affordability

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

Highlights of April 2024 to October 2024 of the Key to Advice project are:

- 117 tenants supported
- £236,767 annual income gains

Working Denbighshire

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

Financial Inclusion

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

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



Impact on longer term HRA budgeting

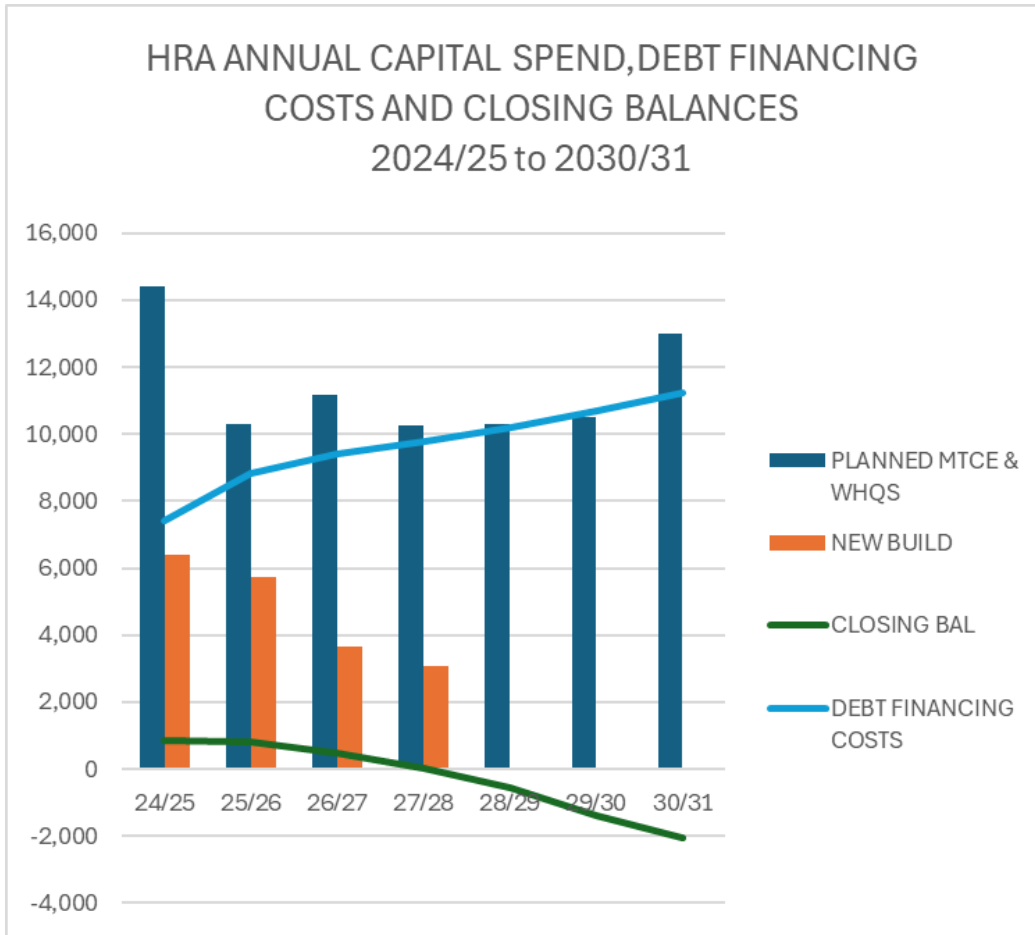
Over the last few years, the Council's annual (capital) spend on maintaining its existing housing stock and building new houses has increased dramatically. This is due to a number of factors, including the introduction of new WHQS, high levels of inflation and the target of adding 170 new houses to our stock by 2027 subject to the availability of Welsh Government funding.

Unfortunately, the level of external funding has not matched this increase in spend, meaning the Council has to borrow to fund a significant portion of its capital spend.

This additional borrowing places a burden on the Housing Revenue Account in the form of interest payments and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP – an amount set aside each year to repay outstanding debt). The forecast for the next 5 years shows that our current level of capital spend, and the borrowing required to fund it, is financially unsustainable.

We therefore intend to carry out an 'deep dive' review of our Housing Stock Business Plan early in 2025 in order to ensure that the HRA remains financially viable while continuing to provide homes for our tenants which are safe, warm and comfortable and which meet current quality standards.

The following graph shows the impact on our debt financing costs and closing HRA balances of the forecast capital spend over the next 7 years.



Capital investment in our stock

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

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

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).

Affordable Warmth Pressures



Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP)

We have **450** off gas properties that will need upgrading with an ASHP at **£8,000** per property = **£3.6M**.



Solar Panels (PV)

We have **3,200** homes that will need PV at **£4,500** per property = **£14.4M**.



External Wall Insulation (EWI)

We have **615** properties in need of insulation at **£8,000** = **£4.92M**.

Other WHQS Pressures



Due to covid we have **600** kitchens and bathrooms that are out of compliance. Each new kitchen costs us **£9,000**. Each new bathroom costs us **£6,000**.



Robust and secure storage **£1,500** plus **£690** for a base.



Flooring at change of tenancy. Estimate **£300k** based on **250** voids at **£1,200**.

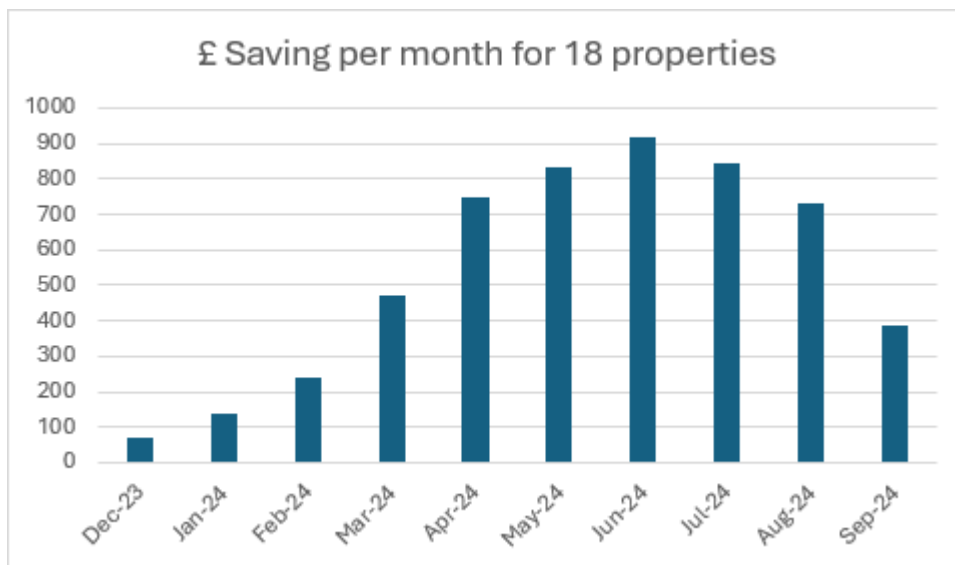


Water Butt **£120** installed.

Impact of our Investment

On a positive note, the graph below shows the benefit to households of investment in our homes. These are 18 random homes selected following “retrofit” improvement works which have significantly improved the energy efficiency and therefore weekly bills for these households.

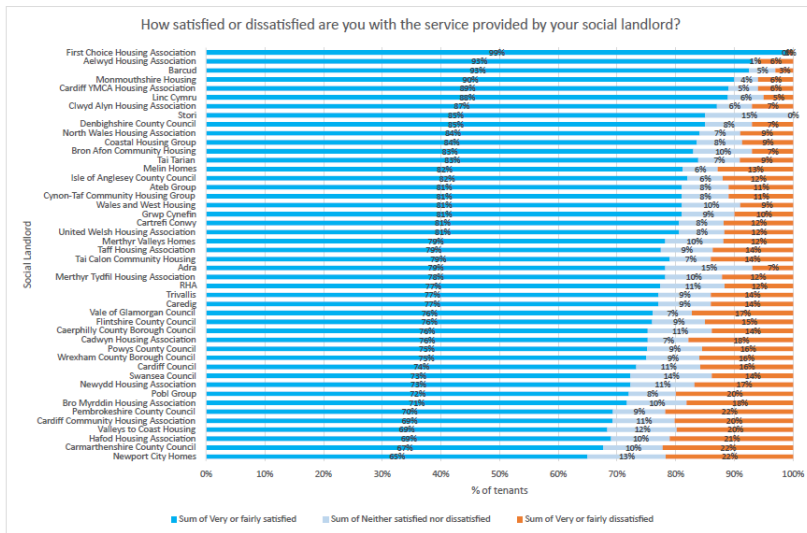
Each individual property is saving approximately £29 per month due to Retrofit energy efficiency works.



Feedback from Council tenants

Overall satisfaction.

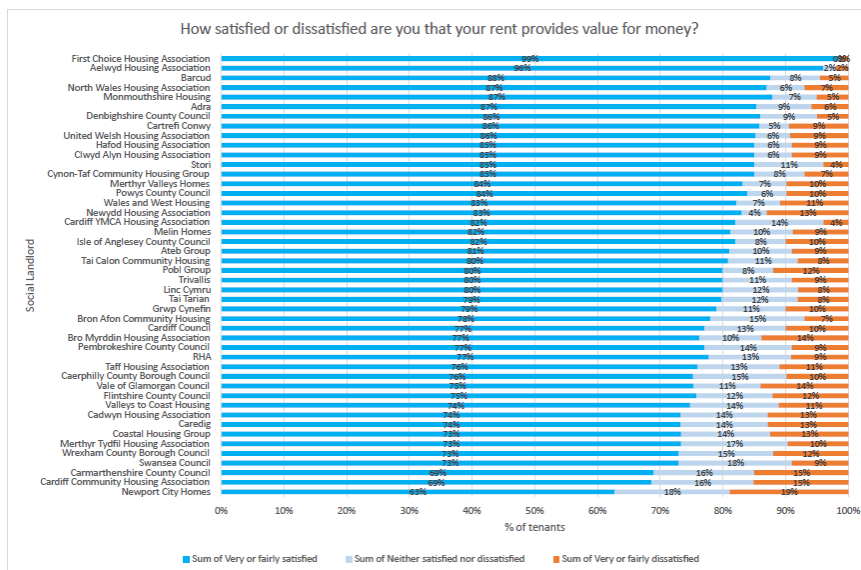
In our STAR survey of our tenants in January 2024, 85% of Denbighshire tenants said they were satisfied with the service provided. This places us 9th out of 46 social landlords in Wales and the top council.



Source: Welsh Government June 2024

Value For Money

Denbighshire has 86% value for money satisfaction which places us 7th out of 46 Landlords in Wales.



Source: Welsh Government June 2024

Service Charges

Service chargeable income collects actual costs for specific services only applicable to certain homes. These include communal areas services such as lighting, cleaning and grounds maintenance. These are based on actual costs.

Overall costs show an increase over last year to £507k. Individual properties may be subject to a varied charge. The average charge per property has increased to £2.86 per week (from £2.61 last year).

We aim to keep service charges as low as we possibly can and ensure value for money through competitive costs and the delivery of good quality services. We have compare our service charges to other landlords and we remain amongst the lowest on average.

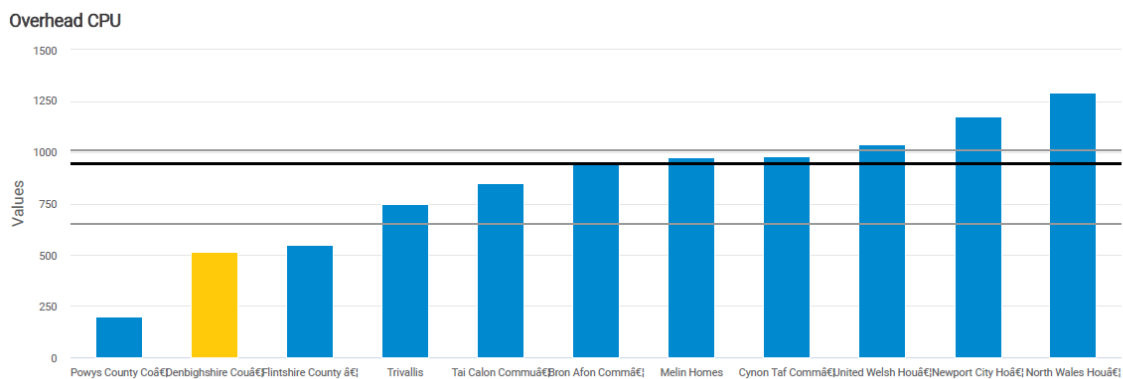
Cost Efficiency

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

This graph shows Overheads as a Cost Per Property (CPU).

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

The full report is available on request.



Communication with Tenants

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

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Housing Rent Setting 2025 2026: 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: 1413

Brief description: The impact of the annual rent increase for council tenants and the balance between maintaining affordability and being able to invest in our homes for the benefit of all our tenants.

Date Completed: [TEXT HERE] Version: 0

Completed by: [TEXT HERE]

Responsible Service: Housing and Communities Service

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? Council 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 : 35 / 36.

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

There is a balance between maintaining affordability and being able to invest in our homes for the benefit of all our tenants now and well into the future. Our investment will be targeted at meeting the Welsh Housing Quality Standard to significantly increase affordable warmth and the energy efficiency of council homes to support achievement of Net Zero

Prevention

The business plan relies on keeping pace with inflation to ensure we can continue to develop tenants to support those that need, build resilience in others and tackle the energy performance issues of our homes. This impacts on the climate and also tackles fuel poverty for households

Integration

The Business Plan will enable us to deliver high quality homes and services for tenants and their communities. we can also build new council homes to meet the significant need. this supports a safe and secure home which impacts on many other services such as health, social care and education

Collaboration

The HRA 30 year Business plan supports the Asset Management Plan and our approach to improving the lives of our communities through investing in homes which promotes economic

opportunity for local business as well as the social and environmental impacts.

Involvement

We consult the Tenants Federation on the rent increase each year. Whilst they accept it is not popular they acknowledge the investment needs and the longer term view. We survey our tenants every 2 years and ask about their views on our services and specifically about the value for money for their rent

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Positive
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Positive
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Positive

Main conclusions

The annual rent increase may present challenges for some households particularly following the recent cost of living and high inflation crisis. However in order for the Housing service to be able to continue to invest in our

Housing Rent Setting 2025 2026

housing stock and our services particularly to increase the energy performance of our homes and provide support services for disadvantaged households, we need to increase our income as close to meeting rising costs as possible.

A detailed affordability assessment carried out by using the JRF Living rent Model ensures that our rents, with the increase in 2025 2026 , remain affordable for households with the lowest earned incomes in Denbighshire

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

This will have a positive impact because a sustainable HRA will support the provision of quality social housing for people in Denbighshire into the long term. Whilst any increase in weekly outgoings could have an impact on households failure to invest could jeopardise our future growth

Further actions required

We have a Financial Inclusion Action Plan which will help mitigate the impact on households through a series of actions. The increased income will enable us to increase our investment in our stock, neighbourhoods and support services

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Increasing our income will allow us to invest in improving the efficiency of existing stock, reduce carbon emissions and build new build homes which are low carbon

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

This will enable us to continue to invest in areas we own including open spaces and neighbourhoods

Economic development

A sustainable HRA business plan will support local businesses into the future. A detailed affordability assessment carried out by using the JRF Living rent Model ensures that our rents, with the increase in 2025 2026, remain affordable for households with the lowest earned income

s in Denbighshire.

Quality skills for the long term

Increasing our income will help us to meet staffing costs and develop future opportunities and increase investment in new technology and skills

Quality jobs for the long term

This will enable us to continue to invest in skills through improvement works and community benefits. Also to provide services to support households into work

Childcare

A detailed affordability assessment carried out by using the JRF Living rent Model ensures that our rents, with the increase in 2025 2026, remain affordable for households with the lowest earned income s in Denbighshire

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

[TEXT HERE]

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

[TEXT HERE]

Economic development

An increase in weekly rent could have an adverse effect on families weekly income and ability to manage their childcare and work balance

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

We are able to invest in promoting healthier communities for our tenants and work towards homes being warmer and more affordable to keep warm

Further actions required

We are able to invest in additional services such as community development staff to significantly increase our work to promote health and well being. The negative is increased could increase arrears / debt issues but our resources allow us to invest in projects to mitigate this and far reaching actions to tackle financial exclusion and debt.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Investment in housing stock including new build will enable us to consider community benefits including these factors

Biodiversity in the built environment

Investment in lower quality stock will enable us to demolish and replace homes and consider biodiversity in this process

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Investment in housing stock including new build will enable us to consider community benefits including these factors

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Investment in our housing stock is required to ensure we can maximise energy efficiency and reduce fuel use and carbon through poor performing homes.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Investment in housing stock including new build will enable us to consider community benefits including these factors

Flood risk management

Ensuring we have resources to adequately respond and mitigate flooding issues and that new build schemes will achieve flood mitigation works by design

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

We are able to invest in promoting healthier communities for our tenants and provide safe and secure homes for families

Further actions required

We are able to invest in additional services such as community development staff to significantly increase our work to promote health and well being. The negative is increased could increase arrears / debt issues but our resources allow us to invest in projects to mitigate this and far reaching actions to tackle financial exclusion and debt.

Positive impacts identified:

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

This will allow us to continue to invest in health and well being including physical assets such as play areas and also working with our communities

Access to good quality, healthy food

We have staff resources to help our communities develop resilience and promote healthy lifestyles

People’s emotional and mental well-being

We have staff resources to help our communities develop resilience and promote health and well being. We have a Financial Inclusion action plan to tackle debt and financial exclusion issues which will support emotional well being.

Access to healthcare

Through having staff resources available we are supporting a Public Health Wales project on Tackling health inequality and can continue with similar work

Participation in leisure opportunities

This will allow us to continue to invest in health and well being including physical assets such as play areas and also working with our communities to enhance access to leisure through projects such as Nature for Health activities

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

Positive

Justification for impact

Continued investment in line with inflation will support our business plan to able to continue to offer social housing and related services to those who are not served by the private housing market

Further actions required

We will mitigate the negatives of the rent increase, which could disproportionately effect households with the protected characteristics through investment in financial inclusion initiatives and support services which will also benefit wider tenant population

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

Continued investment in line with inflation will support our business plan to able to continue to offer social housing and related services to those who are not served by the

private housing market.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

Continued investment in line with inflation will support our business plan to be able to continue to offer social housing and related services to those who are not served by the private housing market

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

A sustainable HRA will enable us to continue to provide quality housing and also invest in support initiatives that tackle poverty and provide opportunity in our communities

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

An increase in rent could have an adverse effect on households but the rise is below CPI inflation and will be offset by significant investment in support services in this area

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

[TEXT HERE]

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

[TEXT HERE]

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

A sustainable HRA business plan will enable us to maintain adequate resources to support communities

Further actions required

The Business Plan has enabled us to deliver increased work with communities to focus on additional areas of work which will support community participation and resilience in the long term

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

A sustainable HRA business plan will enable us to maintain adequate resources to promote safer communities and tackle issues and individuals. These resources can support partnership working to work together to take a strategic approach to promoting safe neighbourhood's and also joint working to tackle issues

Community participation and resilience

The Business Plan has enabled us to deliver a community development team to focus on additional areas of work which will support community participation and resilience. We are developing this through a Community Investment strategy and related work plans

The attractiveness of the area

We are able to invest significantly in improving the appearance of our neighbourhoods through the HRA

Connected communities

The Housing team and community development work enables us to ensure that people are connected to services and network as well as through digital inclusion work

Rural resilience

The Housing team and community development work enables us to ensure that people are connected and ensure that our homes in rural areas are able to contribute to the rural economy by providing quality homes and investment projects and opportunities

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

Positive

Justification for impact

The service adheres to the Welsh language standards but a sustainable HRA will enable us to consider opportunities to further promote the Welsh Language

Further actions required

This work can include providing community development activities through the Welsh language will be integral with in our Community Engagement Strategy

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

A sustainable HRA enables us to continue to promote the Welsh Language and support staff to work in the medium of Welsh so people can use their first language to access the service. We also adopt a local lettings policy which gives priority in rural areas to people from the community to help with protecting the future use of the Welsh language in our communities

Promoting the Welsh language

The service adheres to the Welsh language standards but a sustainable HRA will enable us to consider opportunities to further promote the Welsh Language. This work can include providing community development activities through the Welsh language.

Culture and heritage

A sustainable HRA enables us to continue to promote the Welsh culture and heritage and support organisations and projects in our communities

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

Good quality social housing is key to ensuring that the local economy can thrive in Denbighshire and North Wales. The continued growth of the business plan will support future provision to meet growing need. The service will be able to develop partnerships and support other organisations who are providing services to our tenants. Investment in our homes can contribute significantly to the net zero target.

Further actions required

The service supports the Council's corporate objectives in addition to the more specific plans such as the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Prevention Strategy. Wider health & well being is

promoted in addition to the investment in the local economy

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

The HRA commits significant invest through stock and neighbourhood improvement programmes. In addition new build homes will add significantly to this and we have awarded a significant contract for new homes components that will be manufactured in North Wales. This supports the local economy.

Community Benefits

are integral to all contracts to ensure employment and training opportunities are mandatory and the impact is captured as evidence

Human rights

The HRA investment enables us to provide jobs and opportunities which promote excellent employment practices and working conditions. High quality housing supports the Right to Adequate Housing

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

Good quality social housing is key to ensuring that the local economy in Denbighshire and North

Wales is sustainable and supports the economic activity of the area by providing affordable housing

options in the area. In addition the provision of social housing with increasing stock numbers will

support a number services which seek to support households with settled and secure accommodation in safe neighbourhoods

Reducing climate change

The HRA Business Plan will invest in existing homes and new homes to deliver the highest standards of energy performance and use of renewable energy sources in our homes

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]

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	12 December 2024
Head of Service	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Services: People
Report author	Karen Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

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

2. What is the reason for making this report?

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

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee

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

4. Report details

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

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

4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms

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

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

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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

5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group's next meeting is scheduled for 20 January 2025.

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/Updated
2025						
6 Feb 2025	Cllr. Barry Mellor	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>Communities Scrutiny Committee February 2024 (KE)</i>
	Cllr. Rhys Thomas	2 Ex Council Housing Disposal Process	Examine the process for disposal of ex council homes and scrutinise any obstacles that may cause delays in the disposal process	To understand the various services involved in the disposal of ex council housing stock and the process / barriers that may cause delay in their disposal.	Liz Grieve / Geoff Davies (Property Services / Legal Services)	Communities Scrutiny Committee May 2024 (KE)
	Cllr. Rhys Thomas	3 Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020	The identification of actions that will support and ensure the delivery of the Council's Corporate Theme of quality housing that meets people's needs and ultimately the Corporate Plan.	Emlyn Jones/ Sue Lewis/Jane Abbott	Transferred from PSC July 2024
	Cllr. Barry Mellor.	4 Review of trollibocs recycling service and associated	To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised service following the additional	Assurances that the additional resources provide for the service has achieved the required aims.	Tony Ward / Paul Jackson	CSC 24/10/24 KE.

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/Updated
			waste collection functions	resources provided.			
27 March 2025	Leader	1.	Rhyl Regeneration Programme and Governance	To receive an update report on the delivery of the regeneration programme to date	Identification of any barriers or slippages and the formulation of recommendations to try and address them and sustain the delivery of the programme to secure the regeneration of Rhyl to benefit the economy and the lives of the town's	Tony Ward	Communities Scrutiny Committee March 2024 (KE) rescheduled by SCVCG Sept 2024 (RhE)
	Leader/Cllr. Barry Mellor	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) rescheduled by SCVCG Sept 2024 (RhE)
	Cllr. Barry Mellor	3	<i>Draft Local Toilet Strategy & Savings Proposal</i>	<i>To examine the progress made to date on the Local Toilet Strategy and consider it in-line with draft recommendations for savings proposals.</i>	<i>To provide observations / recommendations prior to the report going to Cabinet for a decision.</i>	<i>Paul Jackson/Hayley Jones</i>	<i>Requested by Corporate Director 04/12/24 (KE)</i>

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/Updated
	Cllr. Rhys Thomas	4	Emergency Heating Provision	To consider what emergency measures are put in place to protect vulnerable residents in case of heating failure.	Ensure there is a procedure to provide alternative source of heating for vulnerable tenants in case of heating system failure.	Liz Grieve/ Ann Lloyd?	SC&VCG 25/11/24 (KE)
15 May 2025	Cllr. Alan James	1	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
26 June 2025	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	1.	Review of the Second Home/Long-term Empty Council Tax Premium	To examine the proposed premium charges for 2026/27 having regard to the data analysis of the impact of the 2024/25 premium increase as well as the outcome of the public consultation on the proposed policy and	Pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals will support effective decision-making ensuring that the Cabinet's decision on the premiums supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan's objectives.	Liz Thomas/Paul Barnes/Elaine Edge/Leah Gray	By SCVCG Sept 2024 (RhE)

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/Updated
				premiums for 2026/27 onwards			
4 September 2025							
16 October 2025							
11 December 2025							

Future Issues

Communities Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<p>Second Homes and Short-term Holiday lets and their impact have been fully assessed)</p> <p>(timing tbc – once the full details of the WG proposals are known (incl. Licensing Scheme proposals)</p>	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”	<p>(i) An assessment of the proposals’ anticipated impact on Denbighshire County Council, residents, businesses, and local economy</p> <p>(ii) 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</p>	Emlyn Jones/Sue Lewis/Lara Griffiths/Paul Barnes/Gareth Roberts	June 2022 (rescheduled November 2022/ March 2023/ October 2023/May 2024 (by SCVCG))RhE

Information/Consultation Reports

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

Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

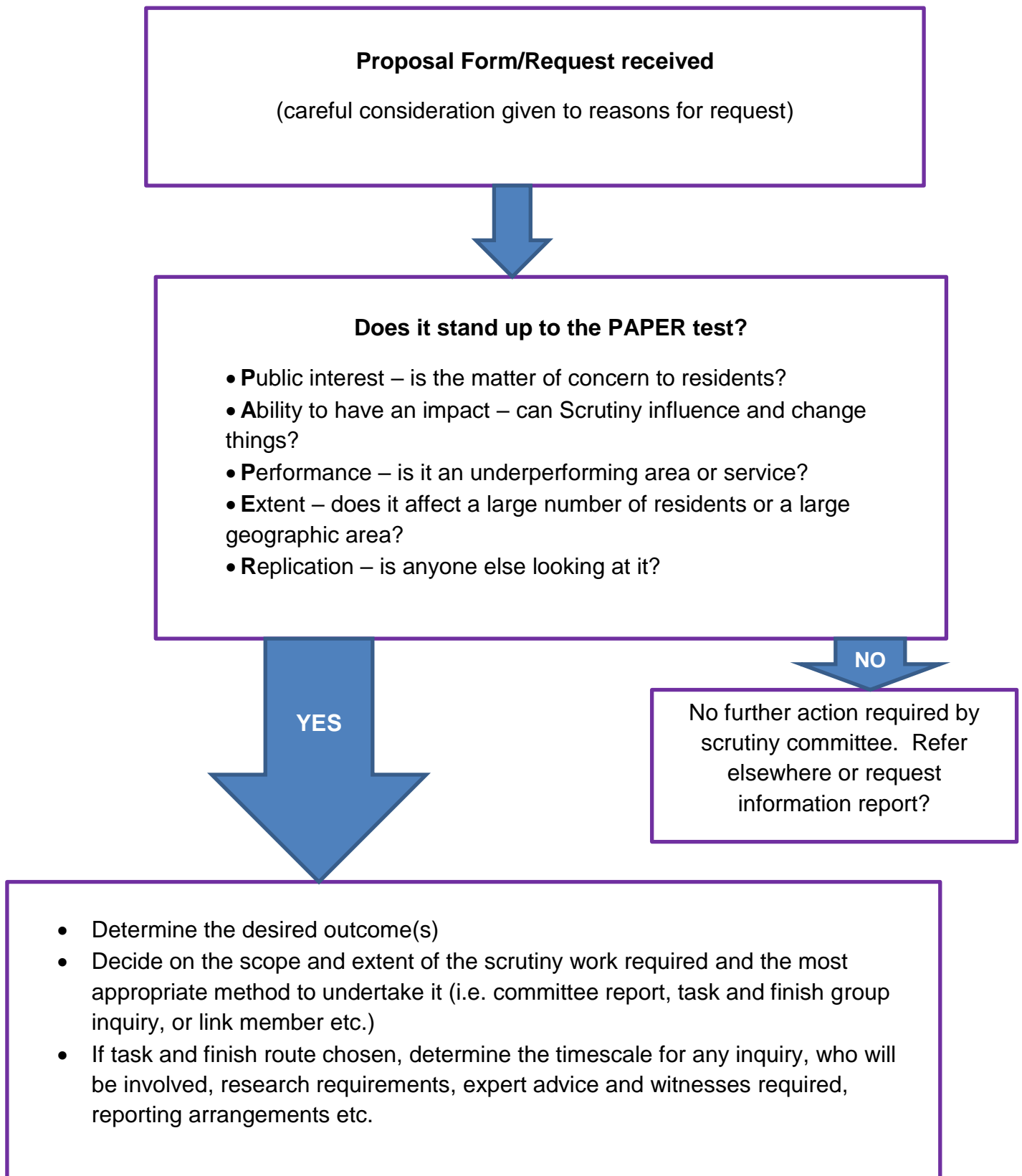
Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
6 th February	23rd January	27 th March	13th March	15 th May	30th April

04/12/24 KE

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Member Proposal Form for Scrutiny Forward Work Programme	
NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION	
TOPIC	
What needs to be scrutinised (and why)?	
Is the matter one of concern to residents/local businesses?	YES/NO
Can Scrutiny influence and change things? (if 'yes' please state how you think scrutiny can influence or change things)	YES/NO
Does the matter relate to an underperforming service or area?	YES/NO
Does the matter affect a large number of residents or a large geographical area of the County (if 'yes' please give an indication of the size of the affected group or area)	YES/NO
Is the matter linked to the Council's Corporate 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	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
17 Dec	1	Housing Rent Setting & Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2025/26	To seek approval for the proposed annual rent increase for council housing and to approve the Housing Revenue Account Capital & Revenue Budgets for 2025/26 and Housing Stock Business Plan	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Geoff Davies	28.06.24 KEJ
	2	Denbighshire County Council Draft Local Toilet Strategy	To approve the draft Strategy for Public Consultation	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Paul Jackson/Hayley Jones	14.10.24 KEJ
	3	Housing Support Grant – Domestic Abuse Safety Unit	To seek Cabinet approval to award the contract for the new service	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Ann Lloyd / Nigel Jones / Alison Hay	03.09.24 KEJ, rescheduled 22.10.24
	4	Voids Framework Contractor Appointment	To inform Cabinet of the outcome of the recent Voids Framework, advise of winning bidders and then seek approval from Cabinet to award the contracts	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Mark Cassidy	25.10.24 KEJ
	5	Queen’s Market Rhyl – operator/management	To seek approval from Cabinet to appoint a management company for the Queen’s Market in Rhyl	Yes	Cllrs Jason McLellan and Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Tony Ward /	25.10.24 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
					Emlyn Jones / Gareth Roberts / Russell Vaughan	
	6	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	7	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
21 Jan	1	North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement	Contract Award Agreement of the formal tender	Yes	Cllrs Elen Heaton & Diane King Lead Officer/Report Author – Nicola Stubbins / Ann Lloyd / Llinos Howatson	17.09.24 KEJ
	2	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter	To provide an overview of Denbighshire's summary of performance from the PSOW and actions required	Yes	Cllr Julie Matthews Lead Officer/Report Author – Ann Lloyd / Kevin Roberts	10.09.24, rescheduled 02.10.24, rescheduled 22.10.24 KEJ
	3	Corporate Joint Committee Governance Arrangements	To agree the governance arrangements for the transfer of the NWEAB into the CJC	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Gary Williams	26.04.24, rescheduled 11.06.24, 10.09.24, 25.10.24 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
	4	Updated Contract Procedure Rules	To seek approval of the updated Contract Procedure Rules	Yes	Cllr Julie Matthews Lead Officer/Report Author – Karen Bellis	12.11.24 KEJ
	5	Former North Wales Hospital – Approval to Issue Third Party Agreement	To seek Cabinet approval to issue the third party contract	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Emlyn Jones / Gareth Roberts / Amy Selby	21.11.24 KEJ updated 05.12.24 moved from Feb to Jan
	6	Revenue Budget Setting 2025/26	To review and approve the budget proposals for forthcoming financial year 2025/26	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	15.05.24 KEJ
	7	Capital Plan 2025/26 – 2027/28	To review and approve proposals for inclusion in the Capital Plan	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	15.05.24 KEJ
	8	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	9	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
18 Feb	1	Economic Strategy	Outline of Denbighshire's new Economic Strategy & Action Plan and request for Cabinet to approve the final documents.	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Emlyn Jones / James Evans	27.09.24 KEJ
	2	Panel Performance Assessment	To approve the Council's	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis	12.04.24

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
		Response	management response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report		Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Heidi Barton Price	KEJ, rescheduled 25.10.24 KEJ
	3	Interim Position on the Proposal for a new National Park in North East Wales	To consider a draft interim position on the National Park proposal that attempts to capture the initial view of members and officers. To then confirm the ‘next steps’ process for DCC to adopt the interim position before it is sent to NRW.	Yes	Cllr Alan James Lead Officer/Report Author – Emlyn Jones / Huw Rees	28.11.24 KEJ
	4	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting 2025/26	To review and approve the budget and Council Tax setting proposals for the forthcoming financial year 2025/26	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	15.05.24 KEJ
	5	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	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
25 March	1	Residential Care Fees 2025/2026	To seek Cabinet approval for the setting of care home fees for the financial year 2025/26.	Yes	Cllr Elen Heaton Lead Officer/Report Author – Nicola Stubbins / Ann Lloyd	25.09.24 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
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	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
29 April	1	Draft Local Toilet Strategy and Savings Proposal	To approve the Local Toilet Strategy	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Paul Jackson / Hayley Jones / Kimberley Mason	14.10.24 KEJ
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	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
27 May	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	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

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
24 June	1	Council Performance Self-Assessment 2024 to 2025 (year-end)	To consider a report on the Performance Self-Assessment	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Emma Horan	03.10.24 KEJ
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	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
29 July	1	Second Home / Long-term Empty Council Tax Premium	To provide information and an update on the proposed Council Tax premiums for second homes and long-term empty properties	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Liz Thomas / Paul Barnes / Elaine Edge / Leah Gray	04.12.24 KEJ
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	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

FUTURE ITEMS 2025

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

18 Nov	Council Performance Self-Assessment Update - April to September (QPR1&2) 2025	To consider an update report on the Performance Self-Assessment April to September	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Emma Horan	03.10.24 KEJ
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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>17 December</i>	<i>3 December</i>	<i>21 January</i>	<i>7 January</i>	<i>18 February</i>	<i>4 February</i>

Updated 05/12/2024 – KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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