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Cyngor sir ddinbych denbighshire County Council

To: Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 January 2024

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 25 JANUARY 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 5 - 6)

To review for information the record of delegated decisions taken by officers since the last meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

To confirm the forward work plan for future meetings.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 16)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 November 2023 (copy attached).

5 PROMOTE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION (Pages 17 - 74)

To consider a report by the Education Social Work Team Leader (copy attached) which provides members with the current position with regards to school attendance and engagement in education. The report also seeks the Committee's views on the approach taken by the local education authority to maximise pupil engagement in education.

10.10 am – 11.00 am

~~~~ BREAK (11.00 am – 11.15 am) ~~~~

6 LIBRARY SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE (Pages 75 - 94)

To consider a report by the Principal Librarian (copy attached) which highlights the Library Service's performance against National Standards and seeks the Committee's observations in relation to the report's contents.

11.15 am – 12.00 pm

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 95 - 118)

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

12.00 pm – 12.20 pm

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

12.20 pm – 12.30 pm

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Hugh Irving (Chair)
Councillor Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair)

Ellie Chard
Bobby Feeley
Martyn Hogg
Carol Holliday
Alan Hughes
Paul Keddie
Diane King
Terry Mendies
Andrea Tomlin
~~~~

Voting Co-opted Members for Education (Agenda Item No. 5 only)

David Lloyd
Colette Owen
Neil Roberts

COPIES TO:

All Councillors for information
Press and Libraries
Town and Community Councils

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, (*name*)

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

Denbighshire County Council

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

Date of Disclosure:

Committee (*please specify*):

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)**

Signed

Date

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

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PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 30 November 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Bobby Feeley, Martyn Hogg, Carol Holliday, Alan Hughes, Hugh Irving (Chair), Paul Keddie, Terry Mendies and Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair)

Lead Members – Councillor Julie Mathews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities and Councillor Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (Monitoring Officer) (GW), Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital & Assets (HV-E), Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader (IM), Planning and Performance Officer (EH), Scrutiny Coordinators (RhE & KE) and Senior Committee Administrator (KJ).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Diane King and Andrea Tomlin.

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator informed the Committee that the Leader of Independent Group had resigned his position on the Committee and appointed Councillor Bobby Feeley to serve in his place as one of the Group's representatives.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests of a personal, or a personal and prejudicial nature, were declared.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

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

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 September 2023 were submitted.

Matters arising:
Business item 5, 'Christ the Word Catholic School Inspection Report Update' – the Chair confirmed that a progress report would be presented to the Committee in July 2024 for further scrutiny. The Vice-Chair emphasised the importance of Performance Scrutiny Committee examining and monitoring education related

matters across the Council, particularly the local education authority's provision of services and support to schools.

Business item8, 'Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan' – members were advised that further scrutiny of the action plan's delivery would take place in November 2024.

It was:

Resolved: that the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 September 2023 be approved as a true, accurate and correct record of the proceedings.

5 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER REPORT

The Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities introduced the report (previously circulated) reminding members that the purpose of the Corporate Risk Register was to identify the potential future events that might have a detrimental impact on the Council's ability to achieve its objectives and delivery of the Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027.

The Head of Corporate Support: Performance, Digital & Assets advised members that the Corporate Risk Register update report had been compiled following a review in September where a number of changes had been made. Appendices to the report highlighted:

1. Appendix 1 – summary of significant changes
2. Appendix 2 - table and trend analysis of the Corporate Risks
3. Appendix 3 – detailed information on the 13 Corporate Risks
4. Appendix 4 – a reminder of the Risk Appetite Statement - agreed November 2022 to be reviewed in February 2024.

The Committee were asked to use appendices 2 and 3 as a tool to identify areas for further scrutiny to inform their forward work plan.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Team Leader explained that the review had been comprehensive to reflect the change in the structure and circumstances of the Council. It had also been an opportunity to merge and de-escalate some risks.

At the last review in February 2023 there were 20 Corporate Risks. Of those 9 had been amalgamated / de-escalated to a Service level (para 4.5 of the report referred). Two new risks – 51 and 52 - had been added to the Register to reflect the financial situation of the Authority, culminating in a total of 13 identified risks. Seven of those risks were inconsistent with the Risk Appetite Statement i.e. serious enough to be on the Register.

Responding to the Committee's questions Officers advised:

- The Strategic Planning Team (SPT) were actively engaged with officers, the Corporate Executive Team (CET) and service management teams to address risk and performance management issues.
- Risk around capacity had increased under the budget pressures, that risk was common across all services.
- The SPT were also supporting the budget process by collating information around the impact of budget cuts on wellbeing and future generations by focussing the WBIA on key cohorts in the communities and wellbeing goals.
- The budget process was comprehensive and underway, working via workshops for proposals to deal with major savings. In addition the proposals were circulated to members and Teams meeting arranged for their consideration. Whereas the Budget used to be an annual 'event' moving forward it would be an ongoing process.
- The Strategic Direction paper previously shared with members indicated that the direction of travel was a Council that transforms what / how it worked rather than chipping away at services on an incremental basis.
- Information on proposals had been circulated to members (workshops and Teams meetings for questions and answer (Q&A) sessions with the Head of Service). Members were able to raise concerns on any proposals at those briefings.
- All proposals subsequently had to go through the open and transparent decision making democratic process e.g. Cabinet. If members were unhappy with the decision made there was an opportunity to call the decision in for scrutiny.
- The law provided that decisions made by Local Authorities were divided into executive functions (under the Cabinet, Lead Member Delegated Decision or Lead Officer Delegated Decision) and non-executive functions (Council). Council could not overturn a Cabinet decision. Scrutiny could challenge a decision and ask for it to be reconsidered but Cabinet was the ultimate decision maker.
- The Risk Appetite indicated the level that the Council would like the risk to be rather than where it was at that time.
- Nationally there had been concern around children being placed in unregulated placements. An information report would be requested from the Head of Children's Service as to whether Denbighshire had any children placed in unregulated premises.
- With respect to the recruitment of Care Workers, the Authority recruited on the basis of knowledge, skills and experience – not their gender or age. All Equalities (Act 2010) provisions were applied within the recruitment process.
- In the care sector, particularly with the lower graded roles, it was difficult to compete with the higher wages of the retail and hospitality sectors.
- Nationally there were not enough qualified social workers to fill the vacancies.
- The Authority continued to streamline its recruitment process and consider the of suitability of career graded posts to address problems around recruitment.
- Fraud would always be on the Corporate Risk Register - given the number of employees, external individuals/companies and spending undertaken. It was

important to have clear controls to prevent, deter, investigate and deal with fraud.

- The Authority already paid more than the National Living Wage (NLW), therefore the increase to the NLW would have no further impact on budget considerations.
- With respect of Risk 45 (Climate Change) it was the risk of not moving quickly enough on circumstances within the Council's control that could lead to reputational risk. It was to be noted that the Corporate Risk Register was a register of risks to the business – not the community.
- Whilst the Council could not change the risk of an unexpected or unplanned serious event occurring it could change its preparedness by its business continuity plans.

During the discussions the Lead Member for Equalities addressed the suggestion made by Councillor Terry Mendies - in respect of targeting care work recruitment towards mature women, rather than younger women who may take maternity leave at the rate payers' expense – as being wholly inappropriate and discriminatory towards women.

The Committee requested further information on:

- The number of (and reason for) children under the Authority's care in placements in unregulated premises (risk 50);
- The figures attributed risk 31 - The risk of fraud and corruption resulting in financial and reputational loss and possibly impacting on service delivery.

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

***Resolved*: subject to the above observations and the provision of the additional information requested to receive and acknowledge the –**

(i) amendments made to the Corporate Risk Register through the September 2023 review (Appendix 3), including the status of each risk against the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (Appendix 4); and

(ii) to receive and endorse the summary document (Appendix 2) which incorporated the colour and trend status.

At this juncture the Committee adjourned for a 15 minute break.

6 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assetes and the Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital & Assets introduced the report (previously circulated) that provided an update on the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan up to the end of quarter 2, September 2023.

There were changes in the presentation of the Performance Update Report compared to that in quarter 1, the changes were highlighted under section 4.4 of the report to more easily identify corporate successes and areas of improvement.

Cabinet had considered the Performance Update Report the previous week and identified two performance areas for improvement which had been added to the Q2 report:

- Housing and Environmental Services – to provide an update on the performance against the indicator relating to the percentage of damage to roads and pavements made safe in target times.
- For the Organisation to provide an overview of the cultural offer provided across Council services as part of the plan to develop setting out the Cultural Strategy and how that would connect with personal and economic wellbeing.

It was anticipated that sustaining performance was likely to be challenging going forward given the financial pressures and subsequent unavoidable service reductions.

The Planning and Performance Officer gave an overview of the report explaining that the objective was to identify where the performance measures were at within each of the nine Corporate Plan Themes, projects and activities.

Overall the performance ratings were for:

- Measures – orange (acceptable) and
- Projects – yellow (experiencing obstacles) apart from the theme of A Fairer, Safer Denbighshire where the rating was red (priority for improvement) due to the ongoing problems relating to poverty and worklessness.

Summarising the position on the various Corporate Themes the Planning and Performance Officer advised:

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs -

- The new 'My Home Denbighshire' intervention had resulted in fewer individuals as presenting as homeless. There were fewer numbers on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list, but the numbers were still higher than the Authority wished to see on the list.
- Financial pressures and lack of capacity had proved challenging in the energy efficiency projects for council homes in preparation for the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS).

A prosperous Denbighshire -

- Still some challenges around the larger projects in Denbigh and Rhyl due to delays and funding shortages. It was anticipated that the recent announcement of Levelling Up 3 award would address those problems.
- Tourism and associated spending had increased.
- Incomes and employment remained a priority for improvement. An economic strategy had been developed, utilising external expertise and capacity from the Wellbeing and Future Generations Commissioner's Office.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire -

- Some challenges around embedding the whole school approach to mental health.

A learning and growing Denbighshire –

- Still waiting for attainment measures from Welsh Government to be able to understand the performance of schools within the given context.
- The Modernising Education Programme was still experiencing delays – specific updates were included within the content of the report.
- Early Years support, Llwybrau and Working Denbighshire were achieving some positive outcomes.

A better connected Denbighshire –

- Repair of damage to roads and pavements remain a cause for concern.
- The 20mph speed limit had now been implemented.

A greener Denbighshire –

- Still looking at methodology around measuring the carbon tonnage reduction from supply chains.
- Preparation was underway for reviewing the strategy.

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire –

- The free school meals programme was expanding.
- There had been an increase in figures received from North Wales Police (NWP) around domestic violence and repeat offending. It was understood that the rise was due to a change in reporting methods.
- Concern regarding employees' completion of equality modules had been flagged and was being addressed.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language –

- As a result of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns there had been a decrease in children continuing their education through the medium of Welsh, plans were ongoing to encourage more children into nurseries through the medium of Welsh.
- Work around the cultural strategy had been paused for a while but there were many projects ongoing to support the Welsh language and culture through heritage venues, tourism, libraries and national park and levelling up projects etc.

A well-run, high performing Council –

Being open and transparent was part of the Council's core values. The new Well-Run, High Performance Council Board had been established to embed the organisational culture more deeply. An all member workshop was planned for January 2024 to establish how they wish to be involved.

Responding to the Committee's questions officers advised:

- Performance was reported in arrears (3 months) therefore issues around employee capacity might be recorded in December – given the restriction on staff vacancies implemented in September. The impact of future changes would be reported similarly.

- Thresholds / measurements may need to be reconsidered depending impact of proposed changes.
- Discussions would need to be held with Cabinet for the potential reduction of Corporate Themes in light of the budget cuts.
- The Verto performance management system was limited to the functions that the Council paid for – generally used as a reporting tool rather than performance management.
- The Well-Run, High Performance Council Board would be looking at the culture of the Council and how Performance Information data was used would be under consideration.
- There was a statutory duty to report on the seven key governance areas, detailed in the report. They referred to matters such as the Corporate planning processes, performance management, financial management, procurement processes etc. the governance of the Council rather than functions and services delivered.
- An update to the Welsh Index for areas of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) were expected late 2025 or early 2026.
- Whilst developing the theme around a Fair and Equal Denbighshire information was drawn from a number of available national data around poverty, including Data Cymru.
- Sources for the content of the Performance Framework could come from various directions, such as:
    - National publications
    - Welsh Government
    - Service plans
    - Strategic Boards
- There may well be productivity gains to be made by the Council via the likes of Artificial Intelligence (AI) / ChatGBT. Its use would need to have regard to ethical principles and data protection (GDPR) legislation.

The Committee raised concern around the percentage of Year 11 school leavers not known to be in Education, Employment or Training. The Scrutiny Coordinator advised that there was a report due to be presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee in the new year on Ensuring Engagement in Education.

Following the discussion

The Committee:

***Resolved**: subject to the above observations, and consideration being given to issues raised during the discussion in relation to the Council's ability to deliver the full suite of corporate priorities during a prolonged period of financial constraints, to receive and acknowledge the progress made to date in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan during Quarter 2 2023/24.*

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

The next meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for the 25 January 2024, proposed for that meeting were two agenda items.

I. Library Service Standards 2022/23 and
II. Ensuring Engagement in Education.

The report on the Economic and Business Development Strategy due to come to January's meeting had been moved with the permission of the Chair to March's meeting.

The Scrutiny Coordinator reminded the Committee that if there was anything in the reports presented at the current meeting which in their view merited further scrutiny they should complete the form in appendix 2 for the next Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SC&VCG) who would next meet in January.

At the recent meeting of the SC&VCG they had considered a proposal to consider the processes/procedures for applying for grant funding e.g. Levelling Up Fund/Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) to ensure the Authority was able to respond and submit applications at short notice if necessary. More work was required in relation to scoping out the purpose of the report and the outcomes of examining the matter, but it was anticipated that it would be added to the forward work programme, probably in the spring 2024.

An information report regarding the Management of Council House Stock was listed on the forward work programme for the submission to the Committee in March 2024. The topic was closely related to an item on the Communities Scrutiny Committee's agenda on 1st February and would therefore be included in that report.

It was:

Resolved: subject to the above to confirm the Committee's forward work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The Chair, Councillor Hugh Irving, informed the Committee that he had been unable to attend a recent meeting of the Queen's Building Project Board as he was away on holiday. The Board would be holding its next meeting the following week and he would be attending that meeting.

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Gareth Sandilands, reported on a recent meeting of the Capital Scrutiny Group (CSG) which he had attended. At that meeting the Group had considered financial bids for the Ruthin Velodrome Project, school building extension works, financial bids for minor adaptations work, along with how capital funds would be spent in future.

The Committee:

Resolved: to receive the verbal reports provided.

Meeting concluded at 12.20pm

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Report to	**Performance Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting	**25th January 2024**
Lead Member / Officer	**Gill German (Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People)**
Head of Service	**Geraint Davies (Head of Education)**
Report author	**Wayne Wheatley Education Social Work**
Title	**Promote School Attendance and Engagement in Education**

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report provides the current position with regards to School attendance and engagement in education and the response taken to address matters when concern exists at individual pupil level in Denbighshire.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information and explain the measures in place to support vulnerable pupils to re-engage with their education and deepen an understanding of the regional and national context in addressing the current level of concern nationally.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 Scrutiny are invited to discuss the details of this report and to identify any matters raised that require further clarity or examination in the future.

4. Report details

Context

4.1 School attendance rates in 2018/19 pre- pandemic school year ended with primary schools achieving an overall figure of 94.8% and secondary schools 93.7%

4.2 The Welsh Government (WG) statistics for September 2022 to June 2023 demonstrate the drop in attendance over the last three years across Wales authorities is significant with an overall average across authorities achieving 88.9 % Primary/Secondary combined.

4.3 Jeremy Miles MS has also recently announced plans to bring Wales in line with England where persistent absence is defined as 10 per cent of half day sessions missed (30 sessions) rather than the current 20 per cent absence rate of persistent absence which equates to 60 half day sessions a year.

4.4 Denbighshire has received additional WG funding through the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) to address and support education and schools. We are developing cohesive community links in authorities to address this current trend and focus on community belonging and access to services which ensures children access their right to education but also receive services broader and wider that just education alone.

4.5 The recently published guidance from the WG replicates this focus within its title **Belonging, Engagement and Participation** .

4.6 The community and belonging terms are central to the government and LA position on tackling the low levels of re-engagement of pupils back to education.

4.7 The “terms” above are now the driving force for the recently published WG guidance to address the importance in promoting attendance and the difference this can make to children’s outcomes and opportunities beyond their statutory education.

4.8 This guidance will form part of the existing attendance procedures for schools in Denbighshire reflecting where necessary the key themes and expectations of actions by local authorities.

4.9 Denbighshire Education Department provide schools with a template Attendance Policy that ensures compliance, effective management and support. The policy can be found in **Appendix 1** with a summary of content in **Appendix 2**

Vision and Scope

There is no one solution, one group or one service that can address this issue.

4.10 The LA must look at how we utilise the recent reforms in the national curriculum, Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) (Wales) Act 2018, and the resources and connections both within the authority but also within its business and commerce sector to offer wider and connected links to broaden opportunities for our children in Denbighshire.

4.11 The scope of the above in turn addresses many issues children deal with daily apathy, despondency and more worrying mental health and well-being which has increased significantly since the pandemic. Most if not all referrals from schools to the Education Welfare Service have a repeating theme of the above issues and the question to be answered is how we collectively change this landscape and offer opportunity and a vision that is tangible.

Position Statement

4.12 Currently the overall performance of Denbighshire is 90.1%, the average across Wales from September to November 2023 is 91.3% . A more detailed analysis of our current position regarding Attendance and current support is available in **Appendix 3**

Good Practice

4.13 A whole school approach is common across Denbighshire schools where all staff regardless of role can make a difference to a child in a school setting that places the child central to all its work with a common interest of learning, care and well-being. Schools have in place pastoral teams and support staff working with pupils to improve learning outcomes but also understanding the care of our vulnerable learners who are subject to adverse childhood experiences, complex family's issues, poverty, disadvantage and increasing mental health anxiety and disengagement issues.

4.14 A series of guides have been created to support schools and families to understand the expectations around good attendance and also provide clarity through a series of frequently asked questions (FAQ's). Examples of these can be seen in **Appendices 4, 5 and 6.**

Fixed Penalty Notices

The fixed penalty notice code of conduct in Denbighshire enables the authority based on the school attendance evidence of a pupil to issue warning letters to a parent. This is an early notification to the parent after regular contact by school that poor attendance is an ongoing concern. Parents can receive a fine where these warnings are not acted upon within a reasonable amount of time.

These measures are taken as a last resort and in extreme cases only where all efforts to engage a parent have failed by school, this is in line with the current guidance from the WG and statement from Jeremy Miles Minister for Education and Welsh Language.

Action is also taken where non -payment of fine occurs and in these circumstances (43 days) a report written by the education welfare officer is referred through to legal services.

The matter reverts back to the original offence which is **"a parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly**- Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996.

Fixed Penalty Notices	School Year	Warning issued	Fines Issued
	2021/ 2022	42	7
	2022/2023	234	22
Current School Year	2023/2024	103	5

Please see **Appendix 7** for more information regarding FAQ on the Fixed Penalty Notice process.

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

5.1 This area of work contributes towards making Denbighshire a place where young people want to live and work and have the skills to do so. It also contributes to make Denbighshire a place where young people can flourish and have the best start in life regardless of any issues or challenges they may be facing.

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

6.1 Currently the local authority (LA) is supported by external grants to address the current level of concern nationally and locally regarding the impact of poor attendance and the progress to regain and surpass the levels achieved in 2018/19.

6.2 If the funding were to reduce in the settlement from the WG in 2024/25 a review would need to be taken to look at the strategic direction of the county relating to the future investment to support this high priority area. Denbighshire has a clear understanding that WG current drive by the Minister for Education is to engage learners.

6.3 Future inspections of our schools by Estyn will prioritise this area of performance based on investment of grants and how schools address this area of work. The performance of the authority to develop opportunity for young people in Denbighshire will be scrutinised across many services.

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

7.1 There is no decision or proposal for change required and therefore a Well-being Impact Assessment is not required.

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

8.1. Discussions with headteachers recently (November 2023) discussed the current position and highlighted the recent WG guidance “Belonging, Engagement, Participation”. There was recognition that schools must look at how they work with families focusing on a whole school approach that plans, supports and integrates the care of pupils to maintain and improve engagement with education.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Please see Section 6

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

10.1 The risks of not achieving the WG and LA strategic objective will potentially see a lower number of children accessing school regularly in Denbighshire thus impacting on their outcomes and futures.

11. Power to make the decision.

11.1 Education Act 1996 – Section 444

11.2 Scrutiny's powers in respect of this matter are detailed in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7 of the Council's Constitution.

Appendix 1

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND PRACTICE
FOR PROMOTING REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Name of School:	
Date of Policy:	
Version 001 dated	
Date Adopted by Governing Body:	
Annual Review Date:	

RECORD REPORT AND REVIEW

Safeguarding Personnel and Contact Numbers

Governor with responsibility for attendance:

Senior School Leader with responsibility for attendance:

SIM administrator:

Registration staff:

Education Social Worker Team Leader: Mr. Wayne Wheatley
Denbighshire County Council 01824 708064
07500 123965

N. B. All staff will have access to this policy, which can be found on COMPUTER and all staff will sign to the effect that they have read and understood the contents.

Policy Date from LA	
Policy developed by:	**DCC Education Services**
Version 001 dated	
Date Adopted by LA	
Annual Review Date by LA	

[V.3.2]

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1. INTRODUCTION

Denbighshire County Council has set out a clear statement of intent relating to school attendance with the introduction of an attendance procedure to be ratified and implemented across all schools in the County.

This model procedure is intended to set out an over-arching statement of appropriate protocols and practices relating to the management and promotion of school attendance in Denbighshire.

Schools set a range of attendance targets and absence targets, for statutory aged pupils (i.e. from the fifth birthday of a child in Reception to the last Friday in June, and where the child is sixteen by the end of that school year's summer holidays) and incorporates these in its key plans. The Local Authority supports schools to set their own targets using figures from the All Wales Core Data Set* on Attendance.

***http://schoolportalwales.org.uk/Default.aspx** (Please note: this is a restricted link only accessible by Head Teachers with a username and password.)

Active and meaningful partnerships with schools, pupils and other agencies will be essential to the successful achievement of these targets.

2. INTENT

In order to improve levels of school attendance and punctuality the Local Authority will employ five key strategies:

- Provision of support and challenge to all schools, focusing resources on those schools with the most identifiable needs.

- Development of a range of performance indicators and subsequent setting of realistic yet challenging targets using the Core Data Set.

- Provision at school level to support individual pupils who experience difficulties in attending school regularly, working with parents/carers to achieve improvement and commitment to the pupils' education.

- Provision of equitable support to parents, balancing assistance with insistence to ensure that all parents meet their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance.

- The continuing development of effective multi–agency working practices at school level in order to facilitate early intervention and sustained and improving levels of attainment of pupils.

- In developing the policy and practice for promoting school attendance, Denbighshire County Council will recognise the national context and central government priorities and balance this with the need to respond to the local context and particular priorities in Denbighshire.

- The Local Authority lead officer with responsibility for the development of school attendance policy and practice will be the Education Social Work Team Leader.

3. AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

It is vital to emphasise that there are two types of absence: authorised and unauthorised. Parents may need to be reminded that a letter or a phone call does not in itself authorise an absence, only the Headteacher's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter or phone call authorises the absence. Schools will follow the Denbighshire Attendance Procedures in order to monitor, support and address attendance issues. Schools should develop a close working relationship with the Education Social Work Service in order to promote regular school attendance.

Absences from school will be authorised if the parent/carer can prove any of the following statutory defences:

- by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; or
- absent on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong; or
- absent because the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority. *See link to Denbighshire County Council's School Transport Policy for further information.

  *** https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/strategies- plans-and-policies/education-and-schools/school-transport-policy.pdf**

If a child is absent with the approval of the school, for whatever reason, no offence is deemed to have been committed, thus, the decision taken by the school to give or withhold authorisation for an absence is a critical factor in determining the Local Authority decision to prosecute.

An explanation is required for every absence. If one is not forthcoming the absence will be treated as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher of the school. Regular unauthorised absence is an offence in law.

Parentally condoned absence is often more difficult to identify than any other form of pupil absence and is equally as damaging to the pupil's educational experience as any other form of absence. If school staff have reason to doubt that the explanation offered about a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be treated as unauthorised.

Since all absences are to be treated as unauthorised unless and until school agree on a satisfactory explanation, it is important that schools have procedures, consistently applied to pursue explanations and for amending registers. Such procedures would include a request for medical advice from relevant medical professionals.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOLS

Schools are primarily responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for responding to difficulties and issues which might lead to non-attendance following Denbighshire County Council's Attendance Procedures (see Appendix 1).

Schools should adopt a positive and proactive approach towards attendance matters. Schools which encourage parents to take an active role in the education of their children can play a major role in improving levels of attendance and punctuality and in reducing absenteeism.

It is a legal requirement that schools will:

- Maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010*.
  The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately. The register may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance, or for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
  * **http://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2010/1954/made**

- Accurately record each school session to show whether a pupil was present, or absent and whether authorised or unauthorised (according to criteria laid down by the Education Act 1996)*. Key to this work is the appropriate registration codes being applied by the registration staff.
  ***http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents**

- All Denbighshire schools must use the Welsh Government registration codes. See link below for further information:
  http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/565/1/100628attendancecodes4ien.pdf

- Remind parents it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised.

- Schools must ensure registers are updated daily to ensure that the data being analysed by the central data team and the Education Social Work Service is accurate.

- Set annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the statutory regulations. Targets should be submitted to: http://gwe-sms.blahwebserver.com/Account/Login (Please note: this is a restricted link only accessible by Head Teachers with a username and password.)

- Schools are required by law to have an attendance policy and are therefore strongly recommended to adopt the Denbighshire County Council Attendance Procedure. (See Appendix 1). The following should be personalised to every school:

    - Clear information is regularly communicated to parents through the school prospectus, newsletters, parents' evenings and through school web-sites. Parents should receive accurate and detailed information from school about attendance both at child level and overall school performance.

    - Opening and closing time of school with emphasis placed upon the need for a pupil to arrive on time.

    - Designated school staff must be aware of the importance attached to monitoring of attendance data looking at progress, trends and registration codes regularly. If a school is to be effective, designated staff need to analyse data at individual pupil level on a weekly basis.

    - Ensure school administration staff understand the SIMS attendance procedures and can support the school management team by producing reports on attendance.

    - Have in place first day contact with parents/carers, particularly in relation to pupils who are known to be poor attenders or who might otherwise be at risk.

    - Where absence is authorised, the school should remain vigilant to emerging patterns of non-attendance.

    - Schools must have a named governor with responsibility for attendance who receives a termly report on performance presented by the Headteacher at governor meetings.

- Schools must have in place a key senior member of staff with overall responsibility for attendance, monitoring the above activities.

'Good Practice: Guidance for Schools' is attached in the appendices of this document. (See Appendix 2).

4.1. PUPIL REINTEGRATION AFTER ABSENCE

After any period of absence, schools should consider whether the child requires support to reintegrate back into school. An Attendance Support Plan (see Appendix 3) should be used by schools to aid this process and each case needs to be managed on an individual basis.

- A named key worker with whom the pupil is comfortable should be appointed to support the pupil.

- Negotiate an Attendance Support Plan supported and agreed with the child, parent and school.

- Support identified within the Attendance Support Plan needs to be in place in readiness for the child's return.

- The pupil needs to feel welcome and supported on their first day.

- The identified key worker needs to debrief with the child at the end of each day throughout the reintegration period to eliminate any problems which may contribute to the child not returning.

4.2. SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION AUDIT TOOL

The Self-Evaluation Audit Tool (see Appendix 4) will be undertaken by all schools on an annual basis. Key features of these audits are to record key actions and areas for improvement:

- Analysing attendance data
- Examining existing procedures
- Inspecting attendance-related documentation
- Assessing communication with parents
- Considering strategies used to promote attendance
- Evaluating the response to Local Authority enquiries
- Identify training needs in the school

The audit will form part of the work with the Local Authority to address areas identified within the School Improvement Plan. The Education Social Work Service will support schools in this process.

(Copies of these documents are available electronically via the DCC Intranet - for education use only.)

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

For the purposes of the Education Act 1996, 'Parent' means all natural parents/carers whether they are married or not, it includes any person who although not a natural parent, has day-to-day care of a child or young person.

Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent in education law.

Parents can do a great deal to support the regular and punctual attendance of their child. Parents should:

- Ensure a good home routine is in place to prepare their child for the following school day (for example, school bag packed, uniform ready, an age-appropriate bedtime routine, a good early morning start including breakfast).
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Inform the school on the first day of their child's absence and keep the school regularly updated throughout the absence period.
- Ensure explanations for absences are a true reflection of the circumstances to enable schools to offer support to improve attendance.
- Expect contact from school regarding any unexplained absence of their child.
- Expect and be open to support from the school in order to improve their child's school attendance.
- Be aware that action can be taken in law to address unauthorised absence from school including a Fixed Penalty Warning notification at 5 days' unauthorised absence, followed by a Fixed Penalty Notice for 10 days or more unauthorised absence, an Education Supervision Order or parental prosecution.
- Schools will not approve holidays during term time. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Headteacher be in a position to consider the reasons for requesting holiday approval following the Exceptional Circumstance rule*. (Welsh Government Directive).

  *http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework

- The Headteacher will remove the child from their school roll if a parent requests to take their child on an extended absence (i.e. longer than four continuous weeks, including exceptional circumstances). On return to Denbighshire, the parent would need to reapply to the Local Authority for a school place.

Please note: School places are offered based upon school numbers at the time of application. Parents may be unsuccessful in securing a school place in the same school their child was previously registered prior to the extended absence.

5.1. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996* states that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to his /her age, aptitude and ability and to any special needs he/she may have either regular attendance at school or otherwise."

"a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are registered as a pupil."

Furthermore, Section 444 states that:

"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence."

* **http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444**

6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Under Section 437 of the Education Act 1996, Local Authorities have a duty to ensure a child for whom they are responsible is receiving a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires that Local Authorities must make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a "suitable education".

Implementation of the duty under Section 436A should be integrated with a wider range of duties placed on Local Authorities, including the Children's Act 2004 and the Welsh Government's 'Safeguarding Children Working Together' that aims to provide outcomes, and safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Local Authority has the responsibility of enabling pupils and parents who experience difficulty in maintaining regular or punctual attendance at school, and to enforce attendance, where appropriate, through legal proceedings. In Denbighshire, this work is undertaken by the Education Social Work Service, working with other services who regularly offer significant input in the process.

***** **http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/437**

* http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/4
* http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents

6.1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATION SERVICES (EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK SERVICES)

The Education Social Work Service acts on behalf of the Local Authority who has a duty to provide appropriate education to all statutory school age pupils in the County. The Education Social Work Service has the strategic responsibility for the writing and implementation of policies, operational procedures and codes of conduct in relation to school attendance.

In addition to improving overall school attendance research shows that children who are not in school are more vulnerable and can be easily drawn into crime, anti-social behaviour and community based issues. The Education Social Workers undertake individual case work as part of the Denbighshire Attendance Procedure. (See Appendix 1).

The Education Social Workers are centrally based, responding to the needs of schools and families as they arise. Schools and families can contact the Education Social Work Service through the helpline number – 01824 708064.

6.2. REFERRALS TO THE EDUCATION SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

Schools must evidence that they have followed the Denbighshire Attendance Procedures (see Appendix 1) prior to referral. Referrals to the Education Social Work Service are made using the Inclusion Referral form* via e-mail to *inclusion.referrals@denbighshire.gov.uk. An acknowledgement of receipt will be automatically sent to schools.

Once the referral is accepted, the allocated Education Social Worker will engage in individual case work in conjunction with the pupil, parents, schools and any other relevant agencies.

The Education Social Work Service will assist in removing barriers which may prevent a child from receiving full-time education by employing a range of practices and strategies in their case work and only where necessary resorting to legal intervention.

6.3. LOCAL AUTHORITY MONITORING AND SUPPORT

The Local Authority Officers and Education Social Work Service will monitor attendance through regular inspection of centrally held data on all schools. It is the role of the Education Social Work Service to analyse and disseminate data on attendance.

Continuous analysis of school data informs the Education Social Work Service's day-to-day operational planning and long-term strategic direction.

The Education Social Work Service will provide local and national data to enable schools to act upon it with the aim of improving educational outcomes and social inclusion.

Thorough analysis of attendance data can help highlight the early indicators of disengagement, which can ultimately lead to persistent absence.

6.4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN SERVICES

Children Services staff undertake assessments of 'Children In Need', in collaboration with other relevant professionals. The assessment will look at all aspects of the child's developmental needs, including his or her educational needs. Education Social Workers may bring to the attention of Children Services, children who have been referred to them due to attendance difficulties, who in their professional opinion may require additional support in accordance with the Local Authority's eligibility criteria for 'Children In Need'.

The Education Social Work Service and schools work closely with Team Around the Family (TAF) and other such agencies and will consider referrals if there are issues other than education that are preventing full attendance at school**.**

6.5. POLICY OF SUPPORTING LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC)

Denbighshire County Council is committed to securing the best possible educational outcomes for 'Looked After Children' (LAC). It believes that regular, punctual, uninterrupted attendance at school is vital to help ensure that Looked After Children are able to make the most of the educational opportunities which are available to them. (See Appendix 5 for Looked After Children Policy).

6.6. MULTI-AGENCY NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Local Authority recognises that the reasons for persistent non-school attendance are such that no single service or agency can expect to successfully address the issue. The Local Authority strives, therefore, through the development of area and locality working, to develop a multi-agency, cross-service, inter-disciplinary approach. This is characterised by the delivery of a child-centred, seamless, co-ordinated and effective response.

6.7. SCHOOL NURSING AND OTHER HEALTH AGENCIES

The School Nursing Service is accessed through a referral system. (See Appendix 6).

The School Nursing Service is offered to all parents/carers, but parents can decline service.

On school entry and on commencing secondary school, the School Nursing Service sends parents/carers a health questionnaire. It is really helpful if the school can encourage the return of this information in order for the school nurse to link in with families at the earliest opportunity. The School Nursing Service health questionnaire, together with a handover from the Health Visitor, is used to identify any health issues likely to impact on the child's school attendance.

Where issues are identified, a referral will be made to health colleagues or other agencies. School nurses, as with school staff, are required to work in a confidential manner, therefore parents are encouraged to share this information directly with the school.

With parental consent, school nurses may have a role to play in giving advice to the staff on supporting parents and children and young people with their:

- Health & Well Being
- Exercise
- Healthy Eating
- Sexual health
- Immunisations
- Behaviour (e.g. sleep, continence, bullying)
- Chronic long term conditions

School nurses are unable to access GP records without the consent of parents. Schools are therefore advised to request that parents sign a consent form that the school or parent can forward to the GP for release of health information held by the surgery in order to support the family and the pupil with attendance issues at school.

6.8. LINKS WITH OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Denbighshire has strong links with the Education Social Work/Welfare Services across North Wales. Regular meetings take place to share good practice and coordinate actions that affect each Authority, and also cross-working arrangements with legal intervention and codes of conduct.

7. FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued by the Local Authority at the request of the school in relation to unauthorised absences from school.

Please refer to the following documents:

- Denbighshire County Council's Local Code of Conduct regarding Education Fixed Penalty Notices. (See Appendix 7).
- Denbighshire County Council's Attendance Procedures. (See Appendix 1).

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be requested by the school where a child has 10 or more school days recorded unauthorised absences. (Please note that each school day is made up of 2 sessions, am/pm therefore 10 days = 20 sessions).
Schools may request a warning letter be issued to parent/carers by the Local Authority at mid-point (5 days) however this may not be required in all instances.
A Fixed Penalty Notice applies to a child or young person of statutory school age, i.e. from the fifth birthday of a child in Reception to the last Friday in June, and where the child is sixteen, by the end of that school year's summer holidays.
The Local Authority will only issue a Fixed Penalty Notice requested by a school relating to unauthorised leave of absence, when a school provides the necessary evidence to substantiate their request.

If the absence is unauthorised and recorded on the register with a combination of any of the following unauthorised codes, this will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued:

- "U" - Lateness 30 minutes after the start of the school day or after afternoon register = 1 session am/pm unauthorised absence.
- "O" – Where the Headteacher makes the decision that the reason provided is an unacceptable reason not to attend school.
- "G" – Holiday absence not agreed by the Headteacher.

https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/education/attendance.aspx

8. FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM-TIME

Welsh Government guidance states:

In term-time, parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils for holidays and authorisation remains at the discretion of the Headteacher.

All requests for holiday leave should be in writing, ideally four weeks before the holiday, the application can only be made by the parent/carer

with day-to-day care of the child, even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves.

There needs to be consistency amongst schools on this issue. Denbighshire County Council's position is that no term-time holidays should be approved unless there are exceptional circumstances. If a parent/carer applies for a holiday in term-time which results in the child being absent for 10 school days this would result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. For further information see section relating to family holidays and extended holidays via the link below*.

http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework

9. EXTENDED OVERSEAS HOLIDAY

When making judgements about extended absence for pupils from minority ethnic families, schools should ensure that full account has been taken, not only of the Regulations and Welsh Government guidance, but also of the situation of minority ethnic families in general and the particular circumstances relating to each individual case. It is important that schools show an understanding of the parents' perspective even though the school may not be able to comply with the request for absence.

Schools should ensure that all parents are aware of the school's policy on absence. In the case of minority ethnic parents, special care should be taken to ensure that the regulations are fully explained and understood.

Key to this is schools communicating effectively with all their parents and carers, including those whose preferred language of communication is other than English or Welsh. Schools should contact the EAL Service (07500 123964/ 01824 708064/ roz.mannix@denbighshire.gov.uk) for guidance on good practice in using interpreters and translations.

The current Denbighshire County Council provider for translation/ interpreting services is 'The Big Word'. The EAL Service can advise on using these services and other options.

For further information on extended overseas holidays please refer to link below:

http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/pupilsupport/framework

10. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

All agencies have a clear role to play in helping to trace children who go missing from schools in Denbighshire or who go missing from schools from other authorities, and who may have moved into Denbighshire.

Parents/carers can support the smooth transition of their children's education provision between Denbighshire and other Local Authorities, where a move is required for any reason, by notifying the child's registered school.

Schools are expected to follow corresponding procedures in relation to those pupils who are removed from school by their parents without a named-school destination being provided and confirmed. (See Appendix 8).

11. SAFEGUARDING

The Safeguarding Officer in Education Services provides advice, support and training to schools on all safeguarding issues. Safeguarding is a consideration with all attendance concerns. Part of the Education Social Work Service roles and responsibilities involves representation at the following multi-agency forums which identify and plan support for the most vulnerable families and young people in Denbighshire:

- Multi-Agency Panel (MAP) - Education led
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) - Police led
- Joint Risk Assessment Panel (JRAP) - Children's Services led
- Prevent and Deter Panel (PAD) - Youth Justice Service led

For further information please refer to Denbighshire County Council's Safeguarding Policy via the link below:

https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/health-and-social-care/safeguarding.aspx

12. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Parents or carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their child receives a suitable education and some choose to discharge this duty by electing to home educate.

Schools must ensure that they receive the request to home educate in writing from the parents or a person with parental responsibility. On receipt of this notification, a copy must be sent by the school to the local Authority within 10 working days. If a child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs they cannot be removed from the school roll without the consent of the Local Authority Statementing Officer.

For further information please refer to Denbighshire County Council's guidance on educating your child at home via the link below:

https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/resident/education/educating-your-child-at-home.aspx

KEY DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Inclusion and Pupil Support Welsh Government Circular No: 47/2006

All Wales Attendance Framework

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2006

Guidance on School Attendance Codes June 2010

Statutory Guidance to help prevent children and young people from Missing Education WG Circular No: 006/2010

Additional Supporting Documentation

Inclusion and Pupil Support, WG 47/2006
http://gov.wales/dcells/publications/publications/circularsindex/2006/inclusionandpupilsupport/inclusionpupilsupport-e.pdf?lang=en

Statutory Guidance to Help Prevent Children and Young People from Missing Education, WG 006/2010
http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/101419missingeducationen.pdf

Elective Home Education, Welsh Government
http://edyourself.org/articles/EnglandandWales.php

Non- Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities on Elective Home Education (May 2015) Welsh Government
http://gov.wales/consultations/education/elective-home-education/?lang=en

Safe Learners in Education Welsh Government
http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf

Appendix 1

DENBIGHSHIRE ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE - GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS

CODE	ACTION – Unauthorised Absences	CODE	ACTION – Authorised Absences
A1	First Day Absence Contact • Update codes as reasons are received. Official SIMS Codes to be used – Whilst parents provide reasons, it is school's decision whether to authorise an absence. Please be mindful ESW service is unable to pick up referrals where school have authorised the absences. Legal action cannot be considered where absences have been authorised under C, I & M codes or where N codes are still in existence.	**AA1**	First Day Absence Contact • Update codes as reasons are received. • Following 10 days+ authorised absence, at schools discretion, (seek guidance from helpdesk if required) for illness/medical invite parents to AA1 meeting (see example AA1 letter). Monitor and review. Official SIMS Codes to be used – Whilst parents provide reasons, it is school's decision whether to authorise those absences. Please be mindful legal action cannot be taken where absences have been authorised under C, I & M codes or where N codes are still in existence.
A2	Follow up call/text • Check absences have been accounted for, enter reason on SIMS	**AA2**	Deterioration - AA2 letter to be sent (see example AA2 letter)

	• Update codes as reasons are received. • If no response move to next stage		• AA2 meeting with parents and pupil, school nurse and any other medical professional as appropriate. ** • Minutes of the meeting to be taken and Attendance Support Plan (ASP) and/or Health Care Plan to be completed, copy for parent. • Where there are genuine health reasons and there is an impact on attendance/learning, consider supplying work that can be completed at home. For more serious/long term health conditions consider a referral to BSS Moderation for home tuition. Both situations can be coded as 'B' so long as work is being returned for marking. Review regularly. • **Where the above stages determine there are no genuine health reasons further absences should be recorded as 'O' unless medical evidence is supplied from the date of AA2 letter. If medical/illness reasons continue to be provided without evidence send letter (See AA2+ example letter**

			• **A3 letters will no longer be sent to these pupils, because absences will only be authorised following medical evidence. Monitor and review.** • **If no improvement escalate to A4 (Unauthorised route).**
A3	Send letter home by post (See example A3 letter) • Code response as appropriate • If no response following 3 letters consider moving to next stage if unexplained absences are continuing.		
A4	Personnel with responsibility for attendance: • Trigger of 5 unauthorised absences - arrange meeting with parents and pupil by letter. (See example A4 letter) • Minutes of the meeting to be taken, Attendance Support Plan (ASP) to be completed, copy for parent and a 2 week review date set. * • Monitor and review and move to next stage if no improvement		

A4+	Senior Leadership Personnel with responsibility for attendance: • Arrange meeting with parents and pupil. (See example A4+ letter) • Minutes of the meeting to be taken and Attendance Support Plan (ASP) to be completed/revisited, copy for parent and a 2 week review date set. * • Monitor and review. If no improvement consider issuing a fixed penalty notice or move to the next stage. • Send letter to inform parents of referral to ESW service (See example A5 letter)		
A5	Complete Inclusion Referral Form including the following evidence which must have been accumulated within the same academic year and demonstrate either no improvement or deterioration: • SIMS registration certificate report • Copies of letters from school to parents • School meeting minutes (all levels)		

	• Review meeting minutes (all levels) • Any additional parental contact records • Attendance support plan • Medical/illness absences (AA1, AA2) must have entered the unauthorised absence pathway prior to ESW involvement. Referrer will receive an acknowledgement of referral letter with an allocated ESW and date for initial assessment appointment.		
A5+	Assessment and Intervention by the ESW Service: • Liaison and feed back to referrer as and when necessary. • In some cases a meeting may be required to address any school issues identified in the social work assessment. School to arrange meeting (see example A5+ letter) • Meeting to agree plan. 2 week review date to be set at meeting.		

	• School to send invitation to review meeting together with copies of meeting minutes and ASP(see example A5+ review letter, copy to ESW)		
A6	Governors Attendance Panel Meeting Invitees: Headteacher, Governor with responsibility for attendance, Wayne Wheatley, ESW, Health representatives if appropriate, Parent(s)/carer(s) and pupil. • School to arrange meeting - letter to be sent to parent/carer by recorded delivery, copy to ESW. • Parent/carer and student meet with the Governors Attendance Panel (meeting to be chaired by either ESW Team Manager or Headteacher). • Legal action will be discussed. • Attendance Support Plan (ASP) to be clarified and agreed. • Review date to be set for parent, pupil, senior leader and ESW. (Maximum of 4 weeks from meeting). School to send out A6+ Reminder		

	letter to be sent to parent in advance of meeting copy to ESW – see A6+ letter.		
A6+	Review meeting with Senior staff member, ESW, parent/carer and child • Recap progress of Attendance Support Plan (ASP) • Address any outstanding issues • Agree review date if required or decision if legal warning is to be issued. • No improvement, consider prosecution.		

Appendix 2

Good Practice - Analysis of Attendance Data

All schools hold a great deal of information about attendance which should be used for strategic planning and effective liaison with the Education Social Work Service and can thereby enable schools to manage attendance issues more effectively.

The link to this work is the administrative staff in schools who use SIMS relating to attendance data. Schools need to know how to use SIMS effectively to provide data for the school management teams who monitor attendance.

Schools can receive training for staff through Education Services on this matter by contacting the Education Social Work Team Leader.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- The school's commitment to achieving high levels of attendance should be explicit and clear to pupils, staff and parents.
- Pupils should constantly be reminded of the importance and value of good attendance and punctuality.
- The school must ensure the pupils' classroom experience is positive and enriching, encouraging them to take responsibility for and show commitment to their learning.
- Ensure that all school staff are trained on the appropriate use of registration codes. Training is available from the Education Social Work Service on request.
- Look at alternative curriculum options/possibilities for pupils who are hard to engage.
- Ensure that opportunities to reward attendance are scheduled into the school calendar.
- Discuss individual attendance targets with pupils; key staff need to monitor this work.
- Make clear to parents, through newsletters, the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Use the school web-site to promote the school's performance in school attendance weekly.
- Ensure key information about pupils is shared at transition.

- Use the media to promote good attendance at your school.
- Work closely with the governing body of the school and provide updates in governor meetings relating to attendance.
- Use the Attendance Audit to evaluate your school systems yearly.
- Use reward systems to celebrate success for pupils and inform parents.

INSET AND TRAINING

INSET and training can be provided and facilitated by Education Services, Customer Services and the Education Social Work Service to all schools, covering such issues as (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- Good practice on the keeping of registers
- Strategies for promoting regular attendance
- Strategies for addressing persistent absenteeism
- Communication with parents
- Good practice in monitoring punctuality
- Reintegrating long-term absentees
- Rewards and incentives
- First-day of absence contact
- Primary-Secondary transfer

Appendix 3

Attendance Support Plan (ASP)

Date of meeting	Name	Date of Birth	
School	Year group/class	Attendance %	Punctuality
What are the specific issues impacting upon school attendance in each of the following areas?			
School	Home	Community	
Strengths			
Record actions/services to address specific issues identified above. Record by whom and by when. Build on strengths. Record also if support offered but declined with reasons and if no service available to meet identified need			
School	Home	Community	
Signature of school staff	Signature of parent/carer	Signature of pupil	
Date of review meeting			

Appendix 4

Attendance Self Evaluation – TERMLY 201?- AUDIT TOOL

Met with: _____ LA Officer: _____

Senior manager responsible for attendance: _____

	Measure	Grade	Score	Evidence
Performance	Was the school's attendance for 201-1 impacting on the national categorisation profile? Local categorisation position Quartile 1 – 6 points, Quartile 2 – 4 points, Quartiles 3 & 4 – 0 points	Q1 - 6 Q2 - 4 Q3 - 0 Q4 - 0		
Policy	The Attendance Procedure in school is being used as described by staff ?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
Coding	Is the register being completed without any 'missing marks'?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
	Are the appropriate registration codes being used?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
	Is the school authorising holidays?	Yes - 0 No - 1		
Referrals / procedures	Is the school working in a preventative capacity with the LA & referring cases when appropriate?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
	Is the school following other procedures as appropriate e.g. guidelines for 'Elective Home Education', 'Children Missing Education', exclusions, holiday absence?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
	Is the school responding in sufficient detail within the set time frame for advice and enquiries from the LA?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
	Is there a named Governor for attendance?	Yes - 1 No - 0		
	Do Governors get termly reports on attendance?	Yes - 1 No - 0		

	Measure			Grade	Score	Evidence
	Excellent Good Adequate Unsatisfactory	= = = =	15 12 - 14 7 - 11 0 - 6	Total		Comment:

Appendix 5

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) POLICY FOR SCHOOLS IN DENBIGHSHIRE.

School:
Head teacher:
LAC Designated Teacher:
LAC Governor:
Date Policy adopted:

1. **The Objective**
   To promote and support the educational achievement and welfare of Looked After pupils.

2. **The Role of the Designated teacher for Looked After Children**

- A senior teacher, with links to the Leadership Team of the school. The LAC Designated Teacher needs to have a voice which can influence and guide decision making within the school. The Designated Teacher may be required to attend meetings, sometimes at short notice, during the school day, and some flexibility may be required.
- To work in conjunction with the Education Liaison Officer (ELO), Head teacher and LAC Governor to ensure that all staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by Looked After Children and understand the complexity of individual cases (where appropriate), and the need for whole school, positive systems of support to help overcome them.
- To promote the involvement of LAC in extracurricular activities and opportunities, promote home reading and homework support.
- To develop systems for effective communication with carers, parents, social services, health, ELO and any other relevant agencies and support networks.
- To monitor the educational progress of all children who are Looked After in order to intervene quickly at an individual or school level, should additional support be required.
- To work in conjunction with the ELO to ensure all LAC pupils have Personal Education Plans (PEPs), which are a statutory requirement for all LAC. PEPs need to be completed within timescale (20 school days of starting a new school or becoming LAC). PEPs need to be meaningful, detailed and accurate.
- To attend, arrange for a representative, or provide educational updates and reports for reviews, PEPs and meetings. Ensure a speedy transfer of information and documents (securely) between agencies.
- To support pupils to share their views and make a contribution to their PEP. Ensure the pupil voice is heard and represented.

- To work closely and liaise with the Governor with responsibility for LAC.
- To be aware of the child's legal status, contact arrangements, those with Parental Responsibility (PR).
- To be aware, where possible of those pupils who are on a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or have been adopted and have previously been LAC.

2.1 Wider School Staff

- LAC Designated Teacher to allocate a key member of staff the young person can speak with or meet with regularly, with or without prior warning where possible. Ensure the young person is in agreement with the allocated worker.
- To ensure all school staff who are in contact with Looked After Children have the appropriate amount of information regarding the young person's circumstances and are at least aware they are looked after by the Local Authority.
- In the absence of the usual class teacher(s), some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the covering teacher. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head teacher or the Designated teacher.

2.2 Training

- To develop own knowledge and understanding of Social Care / Education procedures and keep up to date with relevant training and attend training opportunities provided eg LAC Forum.
- To ensure all school staff have the appropriate training opportunities in order to fully support LAC within the school.
- To cascade information and training to school staff as appropriate.
- To have a firm understanding of the LAC / PDG Funding arrangements at a regional, local, school and individual pupil level. Be aware of the procedures and the impact of the funding on individual LAC pupils. (This will be recorded on the PEP).

3. The Role of the LAC Governor

- To work closely with the LAC Designated teacher and ELO and have a good understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by Looked After Children and what the school does to support LAC.
- The LAC Governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis, including information such as;
  Number of LAC in the school.
  Attendance of LAC.
  Comparison of test scores / levels.
  Levels of fixed term / permanent exclusions of LAC.

- The LAC Governor, as a critical friend, should feel comfortable to question and support the school in promoting the educational achievement and welfare of LAC.
- The LAC Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure LAC pupils have equal access to;
  National Curriculum / additional educational support and extra-curricular activities.
- To share and cascade information regarding LAC to other Governors and report to the Chair of Governors.

Appendix 6

School Nursing Service Referral Form

Re: Child's name:	D:O:B:
Address:	Contact tel: Home…… Work……. Mobile……
School:	Class (if known)
Name of adult with parental responsibility (P.R.)	Name ……
Is child aware of referral (please circle) Yes No Not applicable	**Please be aware that referral <u>will not be accepted</u> without parental consent**
Reason for referral:	
Other agencies involved:	
Name of referrer (please print):	Signature of referrer:
Designation:	Contact number:
Date of referral:	Date received by School Nurse

Appendix 7

Parents' Guide to Attendance Monitoring in Denbighshire Schools

PARENTS GUIDE TO ATTENDANCE MONITORING IN DENBIGHSHIRE SCHOOLS

The flow chart below outlines the communication and action parents/ carers can expect in relation to attendance concerns of their children. The codes (A1 – A6+, AA1 & AA2) are used by schools and Local Authority to reference the level of involvement:

PARENT/CARER RESPONSIBILITY
Ensure that your child attends school regularly and on time
Contact school on first day of absence to provide an (honest) reason and make daily contact thereafter to update.
Respond to communication from school
Attend meetings in relation to school attendance if/when required

SCHOOL ACTION TO MONITOR AND MANAGE ATTENDANCE	
A1	Text or telephone call to parent/carer if child is absent without reason. If no response go to A2
A2	Follow up text/phone call No response go to A3
A3	Letter home to request reason for absence

If the absence remains unexplained for 3 + days or is not accepted by the school (unauthorised) the following steps		**If the absence is accepted by the school (authorised) the following steps will be taken:**	
A4	Meeting in school with parent/carer to offer support to prevent further unauthorised absences. Attendance Support Plan (ASP) to be drawn up. Regular reviews (fortnightly). Consider Fixed Penalty Warning to prevent ongoing attendance concerns. If no improvement go to A4+	**AA1**	Following 10+ days authorised absences (or earlier if required), meeting in school with parent/carer to maximise attendance. Attendance Support Plan (ASP)/Health Care Support Plan to be drawn up. Regular reviews (fortnightly). No improvement, and where it is found that there is no clear medical evidence to prevent school attendance, go to AA2
A4+	Meeting in school with parent/carer to review and revise ASP. Regular review meetings (fortnightly). Consider Fixed Penalty Notice to prevent ongoing attendance concerns.	**AA2**	Meeting in school with parent/carer to clarify the medical concerns. Where there are no genuine health reasons further absences will be recorded as unauthorised and will be managed down the unauthorised route, go to A4/A4+.

Local Authority management of ongoing unauthorised absences.

A5	Referral from school to Education Social Work Service.

	Assessment undertaken regarding school attendance concerns. Attendance Support Plan drawn up – aim to prevent legal action where possible. Referrals of support to other agencies considered.
A5+	If required meeting in school to address any concerns identified in the assessment preventing school attendance. Regular reviews (fortnightly). No improvement go to A6
A6	Governor's Attendance panel meeting in school. Review actions of school and ESW service. Regular reviews (fortnightly).
A6+	If no improvement consideration of legal action.

APPENDIX 2

Policy Summary

- What is the intention of the Policy?
- What is an Authorised / Unauthorised absence?
- What is the responsibility of the school?
- How do we reintegrate pupils following absence?
- A self-evaluation tool for schools regarding absence management.
- What are the Parental responsibilities?
- What does the law say?
- What are the responsibilities of the Local Authority?
- What do the Education Social work Service do?
- How are attendance issues referred to the LA?
- How do we monitor attendance as an authority?
- What part do Children's Services play in ensuring attendance?
- The policy in relation to Children Looked after.
- Multi Agency working.
- Working with partners in Health
- Links with other Local Authorities
- Fixed penalty Notices
- The position around family holidays and extended overseas holidays.
- Children Missing in Education
- Safeguarding and Attendance
- Elective Home Education

TEMPLATES PROVIDED

- Attendance procedure Flow Chart
- Attendance Support Plans
- Termly self-Evaluation of Attendance
- School Nursing Referral forms
- Parents' Guides

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APPENDIX 3

Position Statement

The Welsh Government in their recent media coverage source (BBC Wales) highlighted one in six secondary pupils are regularly absent from school. The average half days sessions missed in 2022 /23 was 16.3% for children 11-15 years this is three times higher than the pre- pandemic period in 2018 /19. The gender gap has decreased between boys 12% and girls 13% levels of engagement with their education. A task force has now been set up by the minister for education Jeremy Miles MS in response to these ongoing level of concern across Wales.

A1.0 Denbighshire has seen a drop in levels of overall attendance in schools between 3 % and 12 % , many of the schools however are regaining their position pre- pandemic and many schools in Denbighshire are at levels being achieved in 2018/19 and higher in some cases.

A1.1 Currently the overall performance of Denbighshire is 90.1% , the average across Wales from September to November 2023 is 91.3%

The pre- pandemic year 2018/19		**Academic Year 2022 / 23**		**Sept to November 2023**	
Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
94.8%	93.7%	92%	87.1%	92.2%	86.9%

A1.2 The data below outlines the current school year Sept –November 2023 absence rates from (Stats Wales) for absenteeism of secondary age pupils 2022/23 which outlines Denbighshire percentage of half day sessions missed due to unauthorised absence at 4.2% and for all absences at 12.8 % The current school year data below indicates a reduction in overall absence month on month which will impact on the final year figures with a possible reduction in all absences in secondary schools.

Current School Year 2023

	Primary absences					
	September		October		November	
	Sessions	% of possible attendance	Sessions	% of possible attendance	Sessions	% of possible attendance
Authorised absence	11,959	1.5%	13,265	1.7%	12,307	1.5%
Unauthorised absence	7,944	1.0%	6,062	0.8%	4,922	0.6%
Total absence	19,903	2.5%	19,327	2.4%	17,229	2.2%

	Secondary absences					
	September		October		November	
	Sessions	% of possible attendance	Sessions	% of possible attendance	Sessions	% of possible attendance
Authorised absence	16,942	2.3%	20,867	2.8%	19,745	2.6%
Unauthorised absence	9,760	1.3%	11,876	1.6%	10,970	1.5%
Total absence	26,702	3.6%	32,743	4.4%	30,715	4.1%

A1.3 Throughout the last two school years' schools and the education welfare service have actively worked together to reduce absence levels post pandemic, numbers of referral to the service have increased by over a third. **Current levels of allocation to the four staff in the service are above 25 cases each requiring intensive intervention working with schools**, families, and other Denbighshire services and third sector services.

A1.4 The additional staff appointed through the Welsh Government LAEG grant have increased the service staffing with two family engagement officers working across the county. The focus of the roles is to provide a greater level of daily contact with families and children assisting with routines, management of home to school plans, working with staff in school to address any issues that impact on the pupil attending school and looking at the detail of planning to improve engagement and reduce barriers to learning.

A1.5 An additional grant for 23/24 relating to school attendance from the Welsh Government has also been received to appoint two attendance support officers working with the education welfare service to increase capacity and manage the higher levels of referral from schools.

A1.6 Schools also have named education welfare officers attending their multi-agency meetings (MAP) where vulnerable pupils are discussed offering additional support and interventions some of these pupils receive help from the EWO assigned to the high school MAP but also work alongside colleagues in schools, education services, Llywbrau service, Educational Psychologists and Behaviour Support and importantly Children Services and health to address the complex needs of vulnerable children.

A1.7 The EWO service have in place a rota each week where schools can seek advice or request intervention and attendance at meetings in any school each week with cases that require immediate attention. These can be relating to, social and community needs, family breakdown, school admission, children missing education Children Missing in Education (CME) where families leave the authority with no destination provided to schools or services.

A1.8 Schools causing concern do receive contact and reports from the education welfare service to discuss and address their data on attendance on their school management system (SIMS). This highlights issues and links to attendance codes patterns, pupil level concerns, and other distinguishing patterns relating to school procedures and data collection.

A1.9 54 % of contact and calls to the EWO helpdesk relate to mental health concerns, social anxiety and self – harm suicidal ideation of young people previously this was significantly lower in terms of main reason for contact.

Since January 2022 87 % of referrals to the EWO service from schools identify mental health as a significant factor in the pupils needs.

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Educational Social Work Service

Term Time Holiday

TAKING A HOLIDAY DURING TERM TIME

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Am I entitled to take my child out of school for a family holiday?

- No. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school or the alternative provision on a regular basis
- The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent to "fail to secure their child's regular school attendance at the school"
- Our view is no term time holidays should be approved
- Headteachers must not grant any leave of absence (holiday) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Parents do not have entitlement to take their child out of school for a holiday in term time

If we decide to take a holiday during term time what must we do?

- The parent/carer with whom the child resides must apply in writing to the headteacher where the child is registered
- The letter / application must explain the exceptional circumstance surrounding the request for the leave of absence

What will school do then?

- The headteacher will determine whether the exceptional circumstance applies, if not the application will be declined
- Only the headteacher (or the Deputy) has the power to approve leave of absence applications. When making a decision the headteacher will take in to consideration Welsh Government guidance on this matter (All Wales Attendance Framework) (2011)
- Each academic year , schools inform parents/carers via a letter, newsletter, or school web-site that they may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice if their child has unauthorised absences (10days or more) in term time
- You will receive a written response from the headteacher (or the Deputy) letting you know if your application has been approved
- **If the holiday goes ahead after the application has been declined the absence will be recorded as unauthorised**

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Educational Social Work Service

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Why is school and punctuality important?

Because Every Second Counts:

- 5 minutes late each day means three whole school days are lost each year
- 95% attendance equates to two weeks of education missed in a school year
- Poor Attendance affects learning
- Poor Attendance affects future outcomes
- Attendance affects wellbeing and sense of belonging

The school are concerned about your child's attendance and are going to involve the Education Social Worker. What will the Education Social Worker do?

- Contact you to arrange a meeting
- Meet to talk through the reasons for your child's poor attendance and discuss your concerns.
- Give you help and advice to improve your child's attendance.
- Assess the situation and agree a support plan with you , your child and school
- In consultation with school, consider the use of a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Instigate legal proceedings in cases where school attendance does not improve.

You can contact the Education Social Work Service on

01824 – 708064

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Educational Social Work Service

Fixed Penalty Notice

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Applicable to

Statutory School Age from Child's 5th Birthday

What will happen if the absence is unauthorised?

- **The school will decide if a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued. If the school decide that a Fixed Penalty Notice is to be issued**
- **You will receive a letter from the school advising that it has referred the matter to the Local Authority and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued:**
- **The school will inform the Local Authority that a Fixed Penalty Notice needs to be issued**
- **A Fixed Penalty Notice will be sent to you, accompanied by an explanatory letter, the Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal courts**

Penalties for Unauthorised absence		
Timeline	**One Child**	**Two Children**
Paid within 28 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 28 days and before 42 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 42 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular school attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular school attendance

Payments will not be accepted after the 42nd day and payments cannot be paid in part or by instalments

Each school can provide you with the contact number of the Education Social Work Service if you wish to discuss this matter further:

Details about Fixed Penalty Notice can be found on our Website

www.denbighshire.gov.uk

Other leaflets are available through the school where your child is registered or through Education Services

- **Helping your " School Attendance "**
- **Taking Children on Holiday during Term Time**

The expression "parent" in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent of a child but who has parental responsibility for him/her, or who has care of the child.

A brief guide to

Cyngor sir ddinbych denbighshire County Council

FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

FOR NON-ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

MISS SCHOOL. MISS OUT |

Under the Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 Local Authorities have been given powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as an alternative to taking legal action against parents/carers when responding to unauthorised absence from school.

The process is effective in Denbighshire fromSeptember1st 2015. The information below is a brief outline of the circumstances for which FPNs will be used.

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice ?

It is a fine for unauthorised absence from school. It does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record. Payment of a Fixed Penalty Notice is an alternative to parents being prosecuted in Magistrates Court.

What is an unauthorised absence?

It is an absence from school that is not justified or considered acceptable by the headteacher. (Please note, it is Only the Headteacher of your child's school who can authorise a pupil's absence)

Who issues Fixed Penalty Notices?

The Local Authority issues them, at the request of the headteachers.

When are they used?

- when a pupil has a minimum of 10 days unauthorised absence in a school year (these do not need to be consecutive days)
- for unauthorised holiday absence . Parents are advised that taking a family holiday during term time may result in an FPN being issued
- If a parent(s) carer(s) do not attempt to engage with the school or Local Authority regarding their child's absence
- If a child regularly comes to the attention of the police during school hours and is absent from school without an acceptable reason, the police authority may request the Local Authority issue a FPN.

Before a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, you will receive a warning letter at 5 days unauthorised absence outlining the extent of your child's absence and the possibility of you receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice.

A warning letter does not apply when an unauthorised holiday of 10 days or more is taken during term time. A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued in these circumstances.

A brief guide to

I have received a warning letter and I want to avoid a Penalty Notice. What should I do?

- Ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time,
- If your child is ill make sure you make contact with the school on the first day and explain the circumstances
- Avoid arranging holidays during term time.

How much is the fine ?

£ 60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after this period but within 42 days of receipt.

It will be at the discretion of the Local Authority whether to issue an FPN on one or both parents/carers.

How do I pay?

The Penalty Notice will be sent by post to your home address and information on how to pay will be included.

What happens if I do not pay ?

If you do not pay the penalty in full within the maximum allowed timescales of42 days of issue, the Local Authority will be obliged to start legal proceedings against you for an offence under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996i.e. for failing to ensure regular school attendance. This may lead to an appearance in the Magistrates court and result in a fine up to £ 1,000 per parent per child.

Can I appeal ?

No, there is no statutory right of appeal. Once a Fixed Penalty Notice has been issues it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

Can I still be prosecuted if i pay the FPN ?

You can be prosecuted for the same period of absence identified in the Fixed Penalty Notice but you may be subsequently prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absences from school.

Each case is considered on an individual basis.

Why is attendance at school so important ?

- Good attendance increases attainment and achievement,
- Good attendance improves opportunities,
- Good attendance supports children and young people and keeps them safer
- Attending school reduces the risks attached to absenteeism.

A brief guide to

PLEASE REMEMBER

The Local Authority would rather work with parents/carers to resolve poor attendance than resort to enforcement actions such as Fixed Penalty Notices or Court.

For further help or advice please contact Education Services on :

Education Services

Telephone 01824 – 708064 email: schoolfpn@denbighire.gov.uk

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Report to	**Performance Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting	**25 January 2024**
Lead Member / Officer	**Councillor Emrys Wynne, Lead Member for the Welsh Language, Culture and Heritage/Liz Grieve, Head of Housing and Communities**
Head of Service	**Liz Grieve, Head of Housing and Communities**
Report author	**Deborah Owen, Principal Librarian**
Title	**Library Service Standards and Performance**

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report highlights the Library Service's performance against National Standards

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information regarding the Council's performance in relation to the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20 (extended for 21-23) and the progress made in developing libraries as places of individual and community well-being and resilience.

2.2. It should be noted that this report relates to Denbighshire's Library Service for the financial year 2022-23. The impact on performance of proposed changes to the Library/One Stop Shop service is not expected to be manifest until April 2024 at the earliest.

2.3. New National Standards are expected to be established with the publication of the 7th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards, which has a provisional implementation date of 1st April 2025.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee considers and comments on the performance against the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards and considers requesting a progress report in January 2025.

4. Report details

4.1. Welsh Public Library Standards

4.2. Library authorities in Wales have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to deliver a ‘comprehensive and efficient’ service to its residents. The Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards enables Welsh Government Culture Division (WGCD) to measure and assess how authorities are fulfilling their statutory duties.

4.3. Library Services submit an Annual Report, noting performance for the previous financial year, to which WGCD responds with an Annual Assessment Report. The most recent Annual Assessment Report covers 2022-23 and performance against the full 6th Framework 2017-20 (extended to 2023), and consists of 12 Core Entitlements and 10 Quality Indicators with specific targets. The report is attached as Appendix A.

4.4. Denbighshire continues to meet all 12 Core Entitlements. Of the 10 quality indicators (QI) which have targets, Denbighshire is achieving 8 in full and 2 in part. Please see page 2 of the Annual Assessment Report in Appendix A.

4.5. QI 3 Support for individual development. Met in full.

4.6. QI 4: Support for health and wellbeing. Met in full.

Talking Points returned fully to all libraries in 22-23, providing a face-to-face opportunity for people to have a conversation about maintaining an independent life and accessing local support and activities. It is a social prescribing approach and delivered via a partnership between Adult Social Care, the third sector and libraries. Libraries are embedded in the authority's Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly strategies and action plans. The recent survey of Bookstart parents

demonstrated the significant positive impact attending rhyme times in libraries has on parental mental health including recovery from post-natal depression.

4.7. QI 6: All static service points offer events / activities for users with special requirements. Met in full.

There were a total of 22,133 attendances at events and activities in libraries. This includes reading groups, children's activities, author events and a range of social engagement groups to reduce isolation and loneliness. 55% of the figure are attendances at our Bookstart Rhymetimes.

4.8. QI 7: Location of service points. Met in full.

4.9. QI 9: Up to date and appropriate reading material. Met in full.

23,973 items were acquired in 22-23. This includes the individual titles made available via subscriptions to two digital download sites Press Reader (newspapers) and Overdrive (magazines) - a total of 11,315 titles. The total physical books and audiobook items was 11,791. The Report noted that Denbighshire shows a strong commitment to children’s provision, with 25% of its materials being spent on children’s resources.

4.10. QI 10: Welsh Language Resources. Met in full.

71% of issues of Welsh language material were for children's books - with only 2 bookshops in the county, the local library is the main source of Welsh language books for children. This figure also reflects the high participation in the Summer Reading Challenge annually. Denbighshire is in the top quartile of library authorities for the proportion of the materials budget devoted to Welsh language resources and it is above the median for Welsh language issues per capita Welsh speakers.

4.10.1. QI 11: Online Access. Met in full.

Usage of the public access ICT is at a much lower level than pre-Covid, reflecting the general trend of people having their own devices. Following Covid networked solo digital laptops were introduced in every library for customers to use for private online meetings and consultations. The new cloud printing facility means

users can bypass the public PCs to release their printing via the self-service kiosk or via staff. This will also have contributed to the lower use figure.

4.10.2. QI 12: Supply of Requests. Partially met.

Our internal delivery system was reduced from 5 to 3 days in 2021 due to budget pressures, combined with not all the libraries being open every day this means that it takes slightly longer to supply requested items. 51% of items are supplied within 7 days, but 80% are supplied within 15 calendar days.

4.10.3. QI 13: Staffing levels and qualifications. Partially met.

There has been no change in overall staffing levels but Denbighshire does not meet the targets for overall staffing or qualified staff per capita. However, it is worth noting that the fact that most libraries in the service are one stop shops, and the majority of frontline, supervisory and managerial staff spend approx. 50% of their time on their Customer Services roles therefore only 50% of the staffing level is reported as library provision.

4.11. QI 16: Opening Hours Per Capita. Met in full.

Opening hours have returned to pre-Covid levels, with the exception of a reduction of half a day each at Ruthin and Denbigh libraries.

4.12. Authorities were also required to submit a narrative report including an impact to demonstrate the library has had on an individual, a commentary on the service's contribution to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals, and to reflect on the future direction and plans for the library service. The narrative report for Denbighshire is attached as Appendix B.

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

5.1. The Library Service is a statutory responsibility of the Authority and its services contribute to a number of corporate objectives and themes, including a healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire; a learning and growing Denbighshire; a better connected Denbighshire; a fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire; a Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and a well run high performing council.

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

6.1. There are no financial proposals associated with this report.

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

7.1. A Well-Being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken, as this is a performance report for information. But the 6th Framework of Library Standards demonstrates how libraries have a clear contribution to make to the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

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

8.1 Performance Scrutiny Committee in March 2023 considered the Welsh Government's Assessment of the Library Service's performance for 2021-22. There have been no further consultations regarding this particular report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. As this is a report on historical performance there are no financial implications to this report There are no direct financial implications of this report.

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

10.1. As this is a report on historical performance, there are no risks associated with this report.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

11.2. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution stipulates that scrutiny may 'review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy, objectives, performance targets and / or particular service areas'.

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Welsh Public Library Standards Sixth Framework: Denbighshire

Annual Assessment Report 2022/2023

This report has been prepared based on information provided in Denbighshire's annual return, impact statements and narrative report submitted to the Culture Division of the Welsh Government.

1. Executive summary

Denbighshire met all of the 12 core entitlements in full. Of the 10 quality indicators which have targets, Denbighshire is achieving 8 in full and 2 in part.

Denbighshire performs well in a number of areas, in particular in relation to access, with attendance at events, visits per capita and active borrowers all being above the median. The service also performs well for e-issues and demonstrates an awareness of the changing demands on IT provision in libraries. Denbighshire demonstrates a commitment to the provision of both children's and Welsh language resources, and also shows a commitment to meeting the needs of young people within its future development plans. Whilst Denbighshire is currently performing well and has well-considered plans for its short-term future direction, there are concerns about how the service will be able to respond in the medium term if the forecast cuts to library services in 2024-25 come to fruition. In this context, it is especially important that the service conducts user surveys in 2023-2024 or 2024-25 to ensure that library provision is meeting the needs of customers.

- User training is popular amongst library users; attendance at both formal user training and informal training are above the median (QI5).
- Libraries are well-used; visits per capital and virtual visits per capita are both above the median and the number of active borrowers per capita is in the top quartile of Welsh library services (QI8).
- Welsh language provision is well-supported, especially children's materials; Denbighshire is in the top quartile of library authorities for the proportion of the materials budget devoted to Welsh language resources (QI10).
- Denbighshire is performing better than the median for unplanned closure of static service points and no mobile stops or home delivery services were missed (QI16).

2. Performance against the standards

The standards framework comprises of core entitlements, quality indicators with targets, quality indicators with benchmarks and impact measures. Section 2 summarises achievements against these areas. A narrative assessment of the authority's performance is provided in Section 3.

2.1. Core entitlements

Denbighshire reported meeting all 12 of the Core Entitlements in full through self-assessment, providing helpful commentary where there have been changes from the previous year. The independent assessor agreed with the self-assessment.

2.2. Quality indicators with targets

There are 16 quality indicators (QIs), of which 10 have constituent targets. Of these, Denbighshire is achieving 8 in full and 2 in part.

Quality Indicator	Met?	
QI 3 Support for individual development:		Met in full
a) ICT support	√	
b) Information literacy and skills training	√	
c) E-government support	√	
d) Reader development	√	
QI 4 (a) Support for health and well-being		Met in full
i) Book Prescription Wales scheme	√	
ii) Better with Books/Reading Well scheme	√	
iii) Designated health & well-being collection	√	
iv) Information about healthy lifestyles and behaviours	√	
v) Signposting to health & well-being services	√	
QI 6 all static service points offer events/activities for users with special requirements	√	Met in full
QI 7 Location of service points	√	Met in full
QI 9 Up-to-date and appropriate reading material		Met in full
Acquisitions per capita	√	
or Materials spend per capita	-	
QI 10 Welsh Language Resources		Met in full
% of material budget spent on Welsh	√	
or Spend on Welsh per capita	-	
QI 11 Online access:		Met in full
a) i) Public access to Internet	√	
ii) Wi-Fi provision	√	
QI 12 Supply of requests		Partially met
a) % of requests satisfied within 7 days	x	
b) % of requests satisfied within 15 days	√	
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications:		Partially met
i) Staff per capita	x	
ii) Qualified staff per capita	x	
iii) Head of service qualification/training	√	
iv) CPD percentage	√	
QI 16 Opening hours per capita	√	Met in full

2.3. Impact measures

The framework includes three indicators aimed at assessing the impact of library use on people's lives. These indicators do not have targets, and authorities were only required to carry out user surveys for QI1 once over the original three-year period of the framework (2017-20). The summary figures (lowest, median and highest) are based on all authorities providing data in the 2022-23 return. Rankings reflect the numbers of respondents, where 1 is the highest scoring authority. However, it is important to bear in mind that some authorities have conducted surveys since 2020, whilst others report survey data from before the Covid pandemic. Some responses therefore reflect the situation several years ago, whilst others may have been affected by disruption during the pandemic period. As a result, there are limitations on the extent to which these data might be considered comparable.

Denbighshire completed its adult user survey in November 2018 and its children's user survey in February 2020. No full survey was undertaken in 22-23 as it is anticipated that a survey will be conducted as part of the work to develop a new Library Strategy.

Performance indicator		*Rank*	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
b) % of young people who think that the library helps them learn and find things out:	87%	12/16	58%	90%	98%
e) % of adults who think that the library has made a difference to their lives:	78%	=13/16	41%	86.5%	96%
QI 5 b) % of attendees of training sessions who said that the training had helped them achieve their goals:	Not provided	-	82%	96%	100%

Authorities are also asked to provide an impact statement describing the impact which the library service has had on an individual or on a group of individuals during the year.

Denbighshire provided an impact statement concerning a man who had retired early and is living with dementia. Having a thirst for knowledge and wanting to continue learning for pleasure and to keep mentally stimulated, he visited to library to see what it could offer, accompanied by his wife. The couple found the environment to be inclusive and welcoming and appreciated the staff members skills in communicating with someone with dementia. The wide range of online and physical resources were also valued; *"it's such an incredibly helpful and interesting resource – I feel privileged to have access to it"*. The library provides a place he feels comfortable visiting and which respects his independence. It is also filled with resources he finds stimulating and which are available for free and include a digital offer which he can access at home whenever he wants.

2.4. Quality indicators and benchmarks

The remaining indicators do not have targets but allow services to monitor and benchmark their performance over time, in comparison with other authorities. The following table summarises Denbighshire's position for 2022-23. Ranks are included out of 22, where 1 is the highest, and 22 the lowest scoring authority, unless stated otherwise. Indicators where fewer than 22 authorities supplied data are those where

relevant data was not available from some authorities. Indicators 'per capita' are calculated per 1,000 population unless otherwise noted.

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 1 Making a difference					
a) % of adults who think that using the library has helped them develop new skills	55%	13/16	24%	69.5%	90%
c) health and well-being	44%	=12/16	35%	66.5%	94%
d) enjoyable, safe and inclusive	93%	=14/16	93%	97%	100%
QI 2 Customer satisfaction					
a) 'very good' or 'good' choice of books	82%	15/16	80%	91%	99%
b) 'very good' or 'good' customer care	96%	16/17	92%	98%	100%
c) 'very good' or 'good' IT facilities	65%	16/16	65%	86%	99%
d) 'very good' or 'good' overall	94%	17/17	94%	98%	100%
e) users aged 16 & under rating out of ten	9.3	=8/16	8.0	9.3	9.7
QI 5 User training					
a) attendances per capita	18	7/22	1	10.5	222
c) informal training per capita	424	1/19	5	131	424
QI 6 attendances at events per capita	230	7/22	13	165	559
QI 8 Library use					
a) visits per capita	2,495	6/21	781	2,106	4,814
b) virtual visits per capita	633	10/22	124	537.5	7,979
c) active borrowers per capita	155	2/22	43	106.5	167
QI 10 Welsh issues per capita	203	6/22	13	53	864
QI 11 Online access					
a) Computers per 10,000	10.52	4/22	3.32	7.99	16.99
b) % of available time used by the public	13%	7/19	7%	11%	77%
QI 13 Staffing levels and qualifications[1]					
(v) a) total volunteers	9	-	0	8	256
b) volunteer hours	978	-	0	583.5	14,014
QI 14 Operational expenditure					
a) total expenditure per capita	£13,589	7/21	£6,726	£11,476	£27,330
b) % on staff,	63%	=13/21	46%	64%	78%
% on information resources	9%	=16/21	5%	12%	21%
% on equipment and buildings	9%	4/21	1%	3%	29%
% on other operational costs;	20%	=7/21	1%	15%	35%
c) capital expenditure per capita	£336	=6/21	-£479	£145	£2,865

[1] *Following discussion with the peer review group it was decided not to include rankings for volunteers as the implications of volunteer numbers are ambiguous.*

Performance indicator		Rank	Lowest	Median	Highest
QI 15 Net cost per visit[2]	£2.56	9/19	£0.41	£2.76	£6.22
QI 16 Opening hours[3]					
(iii) a) % hours unplanned closure of static service points	0.04%	10/22	0%	0.05%	0.95%
b) % mobile stops / home deliveries missed	0%	=1/20	0%	0%	3.74%

3. Analysis of performance

The core entitlements and quality indicators can be divided into four key areas. This section of the report outlines performance under these areas.

3.1. Meeting customer needs (QI 1-5)

Denbighshire meets the targets for Support for individual development (QI3) and health and well-being (QI4), with the service displaying a strong commitment to community well-being. Talking Points returned fully to all libraries in 22-23. Delivered via a partnership between Adult Social Care, the third sector and libraries, it provides a face-to-face opportunity for people to have a conversation about maintaining an independent life and accessing local support and activities. Libraries are embedded in the authority's Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly strategies and action plans. Attendances at both formal user training and informal training are above the median for library services (QI5). Most reported indicators for Making a difference (QI1) and Customer satisfaction (QI2) are below the median. However, these results relate to library provision pre-Covid and it is important that the service conducts further surveys in 2023-24 or 2024-25 to ensure that library provision is meeting the needs of customers.

3.2. Access and use (QI 6-8)

Attendance at events is above the median (QI6), as are visits per capita and virtual visits per capita (QI8). The number of active borrowers per capita is in the top quartile of Welsh library services (QI8). Borrowing was higher than in 21-22 and Denbighshire performs particularly well in terms of e-issues, which are in the top quartile of library services.

3.3. Facilities and services (QI 9-12)

Denbighshire shows a strong commitment to children's provision, with 25% of its materials being spent on children's resources (QI9). Denbighshire is in the top quartile of library authorities for the proportion of the materials budget devoted to Welsh language resources and it is above the median for Welsh language issues per capita Welsh speakers (QI10). The service reports that 71% of issues of Welsh language material were for children's books - with only two bookshops in the county, the local library is the main source of Welsh language books for children. Although indicators relating to online access are above the median (QI11), Denbighshire reports that usage of public access ICT is at a much lower level than pre-Covid, reflecting the general trend of people having their own devices. The service only

[2] *Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.*

[3] *Rankings here have been reversed, so that 1 is the lowest scoring (best performing) authority.*

partially met the target for supply of requests following a reduction of its internal delivery system due to budget pressures (QI12).

3.4. Expertise and capacity (QI 13-16)

Denbighshire does not meet the targets for overall staffing or qualified staff per capita (QI13). However, it is worth noting that the fact that most libraries in the service are one stop shops, and the majority of frontline, supervisory and managerial staff spend approx. 50% of their time on their Customer Services roles therefore only 50% of the staffing level is reported as library provision. Opening hours have now returned to pre-Covid levels, with the exception of a reduction of half a day each at Ruthin and Denbigh Libraries due to budget pressures. Denbighshire is performing better than the median for unplanned closure of static service points, and no home delivery services were missed (QI16).

4. Strategic context

As part of the return, authorities are asked to report on how the library service is contributing to wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals. The following are amongst the examples provided by Denbighshire.

- **Better Mental Health**: access to the full range of Reading Well schemes and work with partners to raise awareness of the schemes.
- **Skills and Employability**: Working Denbighshire, the council's employability service, uses library facilities to meet with their clients and support people with digital skills and job search.
- **Digital**: library staff offer help to get online and to develop basic digital skills; libraries are a key partner in Denbighshire's digital inclusion programme, working closely with Cwmpas.
- **Early Years & Literacy**: weekly Bookstart Rhymetimes develop young children's language, learning and social skills; Summer Reading Challenge helps children aged 4-12 develop their love of reading for pleasure and choosing independently.
- **Support for wellbeing**: Home Library Service provides a personalised service to individuals who cannot access their local library due to disability, illness or caring responsibilities; Talking Points are community-led information sessions where citizens meet with health and social care staff, third sector support services and peers, to have a person-centred conversation about their health and wellbeing needs.
- **Cymraeg**: library provision is central to Denbighshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Bookstart Rhymetimes introduce many families to Welsh. The Summer Reading Challenge is fully bilingual.

5. Future direction

Reporting on the authority's future direction and plans for the library service over the following year, the library service refers to Denbighshire's Corporate Plan, and in particular the 23-24 theme A Better Connected Denbighshire, where libraries are seen as the key point of delivery of activity to reduce digital exclusion. Activities and developments in the 2023-24 Service Business plan include:

- Upgrading and modernising IT facilities
- Providing facilities and opportunities for digital skills learning
- Developing the scheme to lend digital devices to the public and distribute National Databank free sim cards to people in data poverty
- Supporting library staff to update digital skills
- Providing free access to a range of digital resources for reading and learning
- Delivering a programme of activities and events for children and adults to support engagement and wellbeing and to combat social isolation and loneliness
- Updating the Library Strategy in the light of the new Corporate Plan and Welsh Government's Culture Strategy.

Other areas of development include:

- Collaboration with Denbighshire Youth Service to pilot open access youth provision at libraries
- Participating in the forthcoming all-Wales collaborative re-tendering process for a new digital platform and Library Management System
- Contributing to the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to support children and young people's Welsh language skills in the community
- Further developing library facilities as flexible, adaptable and safe spaces to facilitate support services and to enable people to engage socially with each other.

However, the Council is facing a budget shortfall in 2024-25 so the expectation is that the library service will be subject to severe cuts.

6. Conclusion

Denbighshire performs well in a number of areas, in particular in relation to access, with attendance at events, visits per capita and active borrowers all being above the median. The service also performs well for e-issues and demonstrates an awareness of the changing demands on IT provision in libraries. Denbighshire demonstrates a commitment to the provision of both children's and Welsh language resources, and also shows a commitment to meeting the needs of young people within its future development plans. Whilst Denbighshire is currently performing well and has well-considered plans for its short-term future direction, there are concerns about how the service will be able to respond in the medium term if the forecast cuts to library services in 2024-25 come to fruition. In this context, it is especially important that the service conducts user surveys in 2023-24 or 2024-25 to ensure that library provision is meeting the needs of customers.

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Denbighshire Narrative 2022-23

Impact study

The impact which the library has had on an individual, or on a group of individuals, during the year. Describe the use made of the service, and the difference that use made to the individual or group concerned. Indicative length 300 words. Please indicate if permission for the Welsh Government to re-use and/or publish the impact statement has been obtained or not: Yes - obtained

Paul's story

"It's such an incredibly helpful and interesting resource – I feel privileged to have access to it"

Before retiring early, Paul was a senior public service officer. He has a great thirst for knowledge and is currently researching cosmology and Roman history, and his own family history. He is also a musician who used to play in bands and still composes his own songs. With a new grandchild in the family soon, he is writing a story for them and creating drawings which he layers with photographs using his iMac. He's skilled with technology, using his iPad daily to read and research.

Paul is also living with dementia and feels lucky to have cognition of what he finds more difficult. After chatting about might be available to him in his local community, Paul and his wife Brenda decided that it was high time for them to visit the library to renew his membership and find out more.

Brenda approached a member of staff to explain that she was supporting Paul to visit the library as he has dementia and was thrilled when the librarian immediately turned to Paul and dealt directly with him to renew his library membership and explain all the services available.

"It was so inclusive – she enabled Paul to understand what she was explaining and how he could use the library," Brenda said. "I was delighted by how the librarian engaged with Paul without turning to me as so often happens, as if Paul wasn't there or couldn't understand. It was clear that she had been trained in serving people living with dementia, and she showed great empathy and warmth in welcoming Paul as a member. She gave us information to take home about all the digital offers too. How she treated him was perfect.

"We came home buzzing with enthusiasm, and in no time Paul had signed himself up for all the digital resources – the ebooks, the emagazines and the newspapers. We're also planning to go in to do some research on Ancestry – we've been paying for it at home in the past, but now we can use it free in the library. It will be so nice

for him to research in a community place rather than on his own at home. When he goes into respite care he'll take his iPad with him so that he has plenty to read and it will help him to pass the time when he's in a different routine."

Paul said "I found it all incredibly helpful and it's amazing to have access to all these wonderful resources for free. Just today I've downloaded the Cosmos magazine and a historical novel set in Ancient Rome. I could read the New York Times every day if I wanted to – just amazing! I want to keep my brain working as well as it can for as long as possible, so learning and research is so valuable to me. I was delighted to find out about the notifications on the ebooks to remind me to renew them, or the messages about new editions of the magazines I like – they ping up on my iPad and so I can remember to download them. It's so useful to have features like this which help me."

Brenda said "I'm so thrilled that Paul can use the library without difficulty – in a visit and online. He finds noisy crowded spaces difficult now, so the calm, welcoming library is ideal – and he knows that there will be someone there to help him if he needs. It's so nice for him to feel he's in charge – the fact that the staff understand is so empowering for him."

Paul's story highlights the impact of the library service on his life and his wife's – providing him with a place he feels comfortable visiting and which respects his independence, filled with resources he finds stimulating and interesting and available for free, and a digital offer which he can access at home on his iPad for free whenever he wants, with features which help him.

[Names have been changed for privacy]

Wider Welsh Government priorities and strategies

Please provide a narrative that demonstrates how the library service is contributing towards wider Welsh Government priorities and strategic goals (indicative length: 500 words).

Better Mental Health

For many in our communities, the library is their safe haven, a place to visit regularly to be part of a shared experience, with no obligation to make a purchase and no stigma associated with their visit. Reading groups, art and craft groups, and learning opportunities support people to maintain or recover their mental health. Reading in itself is beneficial to mental health and the local library within the community provides access to a vast range of reading experiences for all tastes, in physical and digital formats.

We continue to provide reading material in a range of physical and digital formats to enable people to choose the format that best suits their needs.

We provide access to the full range of Reading Well schemes (supporting dementia, adult mental health and teens and children's mental health and emotional wellbeing) and work with partners to raise awareness of the schemes and how they can benefit readers.

Library staff are trained in Dementia Awareness, Autism Awareness and Makaton signing awareness. Our dementia-friendly Memory Bags and jigsaws collection support people with dementia and their carers.

Skills and Employability
Working Denbighshire, the council's employability service, works in close partnership with libraries, using library facilities to meet with their clients, and support people to learn digital skills and job search.

Digital
Our libraries offer free physical access to computers, Wi-Fi, scanning and printing including cloud printing. Crucially, library staff offer help to get online and to develop basic digital skills, often to people with very limited skills. Formal IT classes are provided by Coleg Llandrillo at 4 libraries using libraries' IT facilities. Libraries are a key partner in Denbighshire's digital inclusion programme, working closely with Cwmpas. We conduct an annual staff digital skills audit to ensure they keep up with developments.

Our e-resources offer continues to grow and benefits from the collaboration across all of Wales' public library services, the National Library of Wales and Welsh Government. In 22-23 we added Find my Past to our offer to enable customers to access the 1921 Census data.

Early Years & Literacy
Weekly Bookstart Rhymetimes develop young children's language, learning and social skills and have a significant impact on parental mental health, and on parents' skills and confidence as their child's first educators. They introduce many families to the Welsh language, and the informal and non-stigmatised group sessions create a social network for new parents who may be at risk of isolation, mothers dealing with post-natal depression, and foreign national families.

The Summer Reading Challenge remains our key activity to help children aged 4-12 develop their love of reading for pleasure and choosing independently, maintain their reading skills over the summer holiday, and discover new books and authors to enjoy. We support children's learning throughout the year, and the local library is often the only source of free books in Welsh and English.

Support for wellbeing
The Home Library Service provides a personalised service to individuals who cannot access their local library due to disability, illness or caring responsibilities. The monthly home visits are eagerly awaited, providing not only a range of books to read but social interaction and a gateway to other council services for people who are socially isolated.

Talking Points are community-led information sessions in each of our libraries where citizens meet with health and social care staff, third sector support services and peers, to have a person-centred conversation about their health and wellbeing needs. The Community Navigators who run them work closely with library staff to refer citizens and to promote the sessions.

Libraries provide a digital assistance service for online Blue Badge applications and help people apply online for their discretionary travel passes (bus passes) and other services.

We deliver a programme of social engagement activities which encourage people to get together to combat the risk of social isolation – such as craft groups, Welsh conversation groups, and social mornings – and our reading groups remain popular with readers.

Cymraeg
The local library is often the only place in a community where people can access Welsh language resources such as books and magazines, and where they can engage with staff in Welsh and attend Welsh activities. Our self-service kiosks, online catalogue and the PORI app enable library members to choose a Welsh language option to manage their library account.

We provide the full range of Welsh language books, magazines and e-resources for borrowing and downloading and work with publishers, Books Council for Wales and the National Library of Wales to ensure the widest possible choice of resources for readers.

Library provision is central to Denbighshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Bookstart Rhymetimes introduce many families to Welsh and they are encouraged to consider bringing up their children bilingually. The Summer Reading Challenge is fully bilingual and we work closely with schools to encourage children to borrow and read Welsh books.

We work with Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych and a range of community and cultural groups to put on and promote events and activities, such as children's activities, performance poetry, book launches, author events, and reading groups. We host Welsh cultural events in partnership with local community festivals and we have regular columns in papurau bro to promote the library offer.

Community Resilience
Denbighshire's vision for libraries is that they are the beating hearts of their communities, where local people can access services in their local community; a shared, trusted and welcoming facility with friendly knowledgeable staff. We continue to work collaboratively with local town councils to ensure service sustainability, and with partners to provide services and opportunities locally – from digital learning to social and interest groups; from benefits and rights advice to health support groups; from baby rhymetimes to adult reading groups; from access to elected members to engagement with public consultations.

Future Direction

Please provide a short statement about the future direction and plans for the library service (indicative length 200 words).

Libraries are key to the delivery of Denbighshire's Corporate Plan, and in particular in 23-24 for the theme A Better Connected Denbighshire, where libraries are seen as the key point of delivery of activity to reduce digital exclusion. Activities and developments in the 2023-24 Service Business plan include:

- Providing good quality, up to date library public IT facilities by upgrading and modernising according to demand and technological developments
- Providing facilities and opportunities for digital skills learning opportunities including via the Sir Ddinbych Arlein partnership led by Cwmpas
- Developing the scheme to lend digital devices to the public and distribute National Databank free sim cards to people in data poverty
- Supporting library staff to keep their digital skills up to date in order to support customers
- Providing free access to a range of digital resources for reading and learning
- Delivering a programme of activities and events to encourage children and adults to re-engage with their local library, to support engagement and wellbeing and to combat social isolation and loneliness
- Updating the Library Strategy in the light of the new Corporate Plan and Welsh Government's Culture Strategy

We will also continue to further develop our service in others areas, including

- Collaboration with Denbighshire Youth Service to pilot open access youth provision at libraries
- Participating in the forthcoming all-Wales collaborative re-tendering process for a new digital platform and Library Management System
- Contributing to the council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to support children and young people's Welsh language skills in the community

- Further developing library facilities as flexible, adaptable and safe spaces to facilitate the delivery of 1:1 and small group support services and to enable people to engage socially with each other

However, the Council is facing up to £20m budget shortfall in 2024-25 so the expectation is that the library service will be subject to severe cuts. Work and engagement on this will begin soon.

Report to	**Performance Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting	**25 January 2024**
Head of Service	**Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People**
Report author	**Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator**
Title	**Scrutiny Work Programme**

1. What is the report about?

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

2. What is the reason for making this report?

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

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee

3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and

3.2 determines whether any key messages or themes from the current meeting should be publicised via the press and/or social media.

4. Report details

4.1 Section 7 of Denbighshire County Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, as well as the rules of procedure and debate.

4.2 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must set, and regularly review, a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.

4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work programme report. The aim of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.

4.4 In recent years the Welsh Government (WG) and Audit Wales (AW) have highlighted the need to strengthen scrutiny's role across local government and public services in Wales, including utilising scrutiny as a means of engaging with residents and service-users. From now on scrutiny will be expected to engage better and more frequently with the public with a view to securing better decisions which ultimately lead to better outcomes for citizens. AW will measure scrutiny's effectiveness in fulfilling these expectations.

4.5 Having regard to the national vision for scrutiny whilst at the same time focussing on local priorities, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) recommended that the Council's scrutiny committees should, when deciding on their work programmes, focus on the following key areas:

- budget savings;
- achievement of the Corporate Plan themes (with particular emphasis on their deliverability during a period of financial austerity);
- any other items agreed by the Scrutiny Committee (or the SCVCG) as high priority (based on the PAPER test criteria – see reverse side of the 'Member Proposal Form' at Appendix 2);

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

4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms

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

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

Corporate Plan Performance Monitoring

4.8 Following a recent review of the Council's Corporate Plan performance reporting procedures it has been agreed to change the Council's approach to report on performance on delivering the Corporate Plan to a six-monthly cycle, rather than the current quarterly cycle. This will alleviate pressures on officers, across the authority, in providing data and time in compiling large, detailed reports and provide them with more flexibility to deal with the effects of budget pressures within services. A consequence of this approach is that the Corporate Plan performance reports that were produced and circulated to Performance Scrutiny Committee members at the end of quarters 1 and 3 as information reports will no longer be produced, the quarters 2 and 4 reports which are tabled for discussion will continue to be presented. In the absence of Quarters 1 and 3 Corporate Plan Performance Information reports, members can still access performance information through Verto - the corporate performance management system.

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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

Progress on Committee Resolutions

4.10 A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group met on 28 November 2023. At that meeting it allocated one item for this Committee's consideration. It relates to 'Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding'. The report is provisionally scheduled for presentation to the Committee at its November 2024 meeting (see Appendix 1 attached).

5.2 The Group's next scheduled to meet on 29 January 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

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

Note: Any items entered in italics have <u>not</u> been approved for inclusion at the meeting shown by the Committee. Such reports are listed here for information, pending formal approval.

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
7 March	**Cllr. Gill German**	1.	2018 Estyn Inspection Recommendations **[Education]**	To detail in full the work undertaken to fully address the recommendations made in the 2018 Estyn Inspection report of the education services provided by Denbighshire County Council, including how the measures taken to address the recommendations were received and monitored.	Ensuring that all of the regulators recommendations have been complied with and regularly monitored with a view to delivering a learning and growing Denbighshire that is fairer, safe and more equal to all pupils	Geraint Davies	By SCVCG *April 2023*
	Cllr. Gill German	*2.*	Elective Home Education **[Education]**	To examine the Authority's policies and procedures in relation to supporting and monitoring the delivery of Elective Home Education	Ensuring that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities with regards to pupils who elect to be educated at home, whilst also ensuring they are appropriately supported and safeguarded.	*Geraint Davies/Joe Earl*	*By SCVCG April 2023*
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	*3.*	*'Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?'*	*To consider the progress achieved to date in addressing the two recommendations made by Audit Wales in its May 2023 report along with the Council's future plans for sufficiently resourcing its wider corporate support services' functions*	*To ensure that the Council complies with AW's recommendations, the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and is adequately resourced to deliver its Corporate Plan 2022-27*	*Gary Williams/Catrin Roberts/Helen Vaughan-Evans*	*By SCVCG October 2023*
	Leader	4.	Economic & Business Development	To: (i) consult with the Committee on the draft new Denbighshire Economic & Community Ambition Strategy for 2024 onwards;	Formulation of recommendations in relation to the new Strategy that will help secure the delivery, in partnership with all stakeholders, of a more	Emlyn Jones/ Gareth Roberts	By SCVCG November 2022 (rescheduled

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				(ii) detail how the current and proposed new Strategy dovetail with the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Welsh & UK Governments and other economic development partners to support the delivery of a thriving economy in Denbighshire; and (iii) outline the work being undertaken to mitigate against the potential outcomes identified in Risk 36 of the Council's Corporate Risk Register	prosperous Denbighshire that provides employment and business opportunities for residents to improve the quality of lives and support thriving, cohesive communities		November 2023)
18 April	**Cllr. Julie Matthews**	1.	Corporate Risk Register: February 2024 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	*Helen Vaughan Evans/Iolo McGregor/ Nicola Kneale/Heidi Barton-Price*	*February 2023*
(Possibly invite a representative from Openreach ?)	**Cllr. Emrys Wynne**	2.	Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire	To consider the progress made to date, and future plans, for increasing and improving/upgrading internet connectivity for all areas of the county (including the latest position in relation to Fibre Community Partnerships and the UK Government's Project Gigabit roll out along with any other potential support/voucher packages that may be available	Support accessibility for all businesses and residents in the county to fibre broadband speeds that meet their individual needs, that will in turn support the delivery of the Council's corporate themes of a 'better connected Denbighshire', 'a prosperous' county that is 'fairer, safe and more equal'	Liz Grieve/Barry Eaton/Cath Taylor/Fran Williams/Philip Burrows	June 2023 (rescheduled October 2023)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				for businesses and residents to access)	as well as a learning and growing county.		
	Cllr. Barry Mellor	3.	Denbighshire's Revised Draft Climate & Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22 – 2029/30	To present the Committee with: (i) the findings and conclusions of the consultation exercise undertaken to revise the Strategy; and (ii) the revised draft Strategy for detailed scrutiny	(i) Pre-decision scrutiny of the revised draft Strategy with a view to seeking Scrutiny's support for its adoption and implementation; and (ii) For Scrutiny to determine whether it wishes to monitor its delivery going forward with a view to supporting the Council to deliver its net carbon zero ambition by 2030	Helen Vaughan-Evans/ Nicola Kneale	June 2023 (rescheduled November 2023)
6 June	**Cllr. Elen Heaton**	1.	Cefndy Performance Report 2023/24	To consider Cefndy's annual performance report for the 2023/24 financial year, including the delivery of its financial, business and social well-being objectives	To ensure the future financial and business sustainability of Cefndy in order that it effectively supports the delivery of the Council's corporate themes of learning and growing; healthier and happier, caring; and prosperous Denbighshire	Ann Lloyd/Nick Bowles	January 2023
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2.	Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (Q4 & Annual)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	Helen Vaughan-Evans/Emma Horan/Nicola Kneale	June 2023
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	3.	Recruitment, Retention & Workforce Planning	To provide details of: (i) the work underway to recruit, develop, support and retain staff (ii) interventions put in place to support and strengthen	Identification of potential future workforce pressure areas and the formulation of recommendations with a view to alleviating those pressures and secure the	Gary Williams/Louise Dougal	*July 2023*

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				recruitment, retention & workforce planning across the Council; and (iii) identification of any hard to recruit services/positions across the authority and interim measures taken to alleviate the pressures caused within those services **(Heads of Service for those services to be invited to attend to discuss the impact of staffing pressures on operational service delivery)**	Council's ability to sustainably deliver its services in future		
18 July	**Cllrs. *Gill German & Elen Heaton***	1.	Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24	To scrutinise the content of the draft annual report to ensure it provides a fair and clear evaluation of performance and clearly articulates future plans	Identification of any specific performance issues which require further scrutiny by the committee in future	Nicola Stubbins/Ann Lloyd/Rhiain Morelle/David Soley	June 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	2.	Christ The Word **[Education]**	To consider the progress made in delivering the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and the joint local authority & GwE school support plan following the 2022 Estyn inspection of the school, along with the consequential impact of the plans' delivery on the school as a whole	Regular monitoring of the arrangements in place to address the recommendations contained in the Regulator's report will: (i) secure continual improvement in all aspects of the school's work to ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential; and ensure that the lessons learnt by all stakeholders are applied across all schools in	Nicola Stubbins/ Geraint Davies/James Brown/GwE/Christ the Word staff & Governing Body	September 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
					Denbighshire as they introduce the new curriculum; and (ii) support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities of a learning and growing Denbighshire as well as a fairer, safe and more equal county.		
26 September	**Cllr. Gill German**	1.	Curriculum for Wales **[Education]** **(School staff to be invited to attend)**	To detail the progress made in relation to implementing and embedding the new Curriculum for Wales: (i) in primary schools and in year 7 and 8 in secondary schools – what worked well, areas for improvement and lessons learnt by all stakeholders during the initial implementation phase; and (ii) provide an evaluation of the implementation process across all key stages, the Curriculum's impact on staff recruitment and retention, along with feedback from headteachers, teachers and school-based staff on their experiences of the implementation process and the advantages and/or disadvantages of the new Curriculum for learners.	Assurances that all educational establishments and staff are fully equipped and trained to deliver the new curriculum, identification of any gaps or risks associated with the provision and solutions to address them, with a view to ensuring that children and young people in Denbighshire realise their full potential in line with the Council's Corporate Plan	Geraint Davies/James Brown/Gw E	July 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	2.	Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation	To analyse:	To reduce the risk of the Authority not complying with any of the requirements of	Geraint Davies/Ruth	July 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			(School staff to be invited to attend) **[Education]**	(i) the effectiveness of the funding provided to schools to meet the Act's requirements; (ii) progress made in recruiting and supporting Educational Psychologists; (iii) school-based educational practitioners' feedback on the resources and support provided to schools with a view to meeting the Act's additional requirements; and (iv) staff recruitment and retention matters relating to the implementation of the Act's requirements."	the Act and to ensure that every pupil and student in the County is given the required support and opportunities to realise their full potential whilst ensuring that school-based staff are adequately supported and equipped to deliver the required support.	Thackray/Joseph Earl	
	Cllr. Gill German & Cllr. Emrys Wynne **[Education]**	3.	Delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in the County's Schools	To report on the progress made to date in delivering the WESP in all of the county's schools in line with the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh language provision	To ensure that all schools are appropriately resourced and supported to achieve their statutory targets in relation to the delivery of Welsh-medium provision whilst also supporting all pupils to realise their full potential	Geraint Davies/Marc Lloyd Jones/James Curran/Carwyn Edwards	September 2023
28 November	**Cllr. Rhys Thomas**	1.	Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan (1st business item on agenda)	To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020	The identification of actions that will support and ensure the delivery of the Council's Corporate Theme of quality housing that meets people's needs and ultimately the Corporate Plan.	Emlyn Jones/ Angela Loftus/Jane Abbott	September 2023
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2.	Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (July – Sept)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	*Helen Vaughan-Evans/*Emma Horan	November 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				Plan and Strategic Equality objectives			
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	3.	Corporate Risk Register: September 2024 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	*Helen Vaughan-Evans/Iolo McGregor/ /Heidi Barton-Price*	*November 2023*
	Leader & Cllr. Julie Matthews	4.	Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding (in the post-Brexit era) *TBC*	To examine current Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding and maximising the benefits of all funding opportunities on offer (incl. any lessons learnt from recent Levelling Up & Shared Prosperity Fund applications with a view to improving our processes for any future funding that becomes available)	Establishment of a simple, effective and easily adaptable funding application process which can be initiated immediately funding streams are announced to enable well-evidenced applications to be submitted within tight timescales, with a view to realising maximum benefit and impact for residents from each application submitted, and wherever possible mitigate the effects of budget pressures	Tony Ward/Gary Williams/Emlyn Jones/Helen Vaughan-Evans (with input from Liz Grieve on learning from SPF funding)	By SCVCG November 2023

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
Learner Travel Measure (Wales) ***[Education]*** ***TBC –*** once outcome of WG Review available (review autumn 2023 & report considered by CET)	*To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils*	*Identification of potential changes to the Council's learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications*	*Geraint Davies/Ian Land*	*January 2021 (rescheduled Sept 2022 & Jan & May 2023)*
Denbigh Health and Social Care and the Rebalancing of Social Care Agenda *(now widened was Dolwen Residential Care Home (now to be considered as part of the future vision for health and social care services in the Denbigh area)* *Sometime during 2024/25 (tbc)*	To review the future provision of services at Dolwen to meet the growing demand and complexity of need, whilst supporting people to live in a home that meets their needs and allows them to live an independent and resilient life.	*Pre-decision scrutiny of the task and finish group's findings and the formulation of recommendations for presentation to Cabinet with respect of the future provision of services at Dolwen with a view to ensuring that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs and are able to live independent and resilient lives*	*Task and Finish Group/Ann Lloyd/Katie Newe*	*July 2018 (delayed due to COVID-19)*
Post 16 provision at Rhyl College (suggested for scrutiny during service challenge) Date tbc following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions	*To examine the post 16 provision at Rhyl College*	*The development of an effective working relationship between the College and the Council to secure the delivery of courses required to support the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and improve the future prospects of the area's students*	Rhyl College (and invite Geraint Davies & John Evans – post 16 officer from DCC)	*By SCVCG July 2020*

Information/Consultation Reports

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
Feb/May/Sept/November each year [Information]	Quarterly 'Your Voice' complaints performance to include social services complaints	To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints and identify areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address weaknesses. The report to include: (i) a comprehensive explanation on why targets have not been met when dealing with specific complaints, reasons for non-compliance, and measures taken to rectify the failures and to ensure that future complaints will be dealt with within the specified timeframe; (ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services; and (iii) details of complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and the lessons learnt from them. Report to include example(s) of complaints and compliment(s) received. ***Consideration of the information provided will assist the Committee to determine whether any issues merit detailed scrutiny***	Kevin Roberts/Ann Lloyd	September 2023

Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
7 March	**22 February**	18 April	**4 April**	6 June	**22 May** (due to B/H)

Performance Scrutiny Work Programme.doc

Updated 09/01/2024 RhE

Appendix 2

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

Proposal Form/Request received

(careful consideration given to reasons for request)

Does it stand up to the PAPER test?

- **P**ublic interest – is the matter of concern to residents?
- **A**bility to have an impact – can Scrutiny influence and change things?
- **P**erformance – is it an underperforming area or service?
- **E**xtent – does it affect a large number of residents or a large geographic area?
- **R**eplication – is anyone else looking at it?

NO

No further action required by scrutiny committee. Refer elsewhere or request information report?

YES

- Determine the desired outcome(s)
- Decide on the scope and extent of the scrutiny work required and the most appropriate method to undertake it (i.e. committee report, task and finish group inquiry, or link member etc.)
- If task and finish route chosen, determine the timescale for any inquiry, who will be involved, research requirements, expert advice and witnesses required, reporting arrangements etc.

Appendix 3

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
20 February	1	Void Property Refurbishment Framework	To seek Cabinet approval for the tendering of a new voids framework. Value £16M	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author Mark Cassidy
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators
19 March	1	Care Home Fee Setting 2024/25	To seek Cabinet approval for the Fee Structure 2024/25	Yes	Cllr Elen Heaton Lead Officer/ Report Author Nicola Stubbins/Ann Lloyd
	2	Denbighshire's draft Local Housing Market Assessment	To seek Cabinet approval of the assessment for submission to Welsh Government	Yes	Cllr Win Mullen-James Lead Officer/Report Author – Angela Loftus
	3	Sustainable Communities for Learning – Rolling Programme	To approve the draft proposals for the next stage of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme for submission to Welsh Government	Yes	Cllr Gill German Lead Officer – Geraint Davies Report Author – James Curran

Appendix 3

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
	4	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas
	5	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators
23 April	1	North East Wales Archive Project	To update Cabinet in respect of the NLHF application outcome, and to seek a decision re the next steps	Yes	Cllr Emrys Wynne Lead Officer – Liz Grieve Report Author – Craig Berry/Sian Lloyd Price
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators
21 May	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas

Appendix 3

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

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

FUTURE ITEMS

Appendix 3

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

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

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

Meeting	***Deadline***	*Meeting*	***Deadline***	*Meeting*	***Deadline***
20 February	***6 February***	*19 March*	***5 March***	*23 April*	***9 April***

Updated 12/01/2024 – KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

Appendix 4

Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
30 November 2023	**5. Corporate Risk Register Report**	***Resolved:*** *subject to the above observations and the provision of the additional information requested to receive and acknowledge the –* *(i) amendments made to the Corporate Risk Register through the September 2023 review (Appendix 3), including the status of each risk against the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (Appendix 4); and* *(ii) to receive and endorse the summary document (Appendix 2) which incorporated the colour and trend status.*	Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations.
	6. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update	***Resolved:*** *subject to the above observations, and consideration being given to issues raised during the discussion in relation to the Council's ability to deliver the full suite of corporate priorities during a prolonged period of financial constraints, to receive and acknowledge the progress made to date in delivering the Council's Corporate Plan during Quarter 2 2023/24.*	Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's recommendation.

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