

To: Members of the Performance  
Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday 11 April 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, 18 APRIL 2024** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE**.

Yours sincerely

G. Williams  
Monitoring Officer

## **AGENDA**

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

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

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

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

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

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

#### **4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 5 - 14)**

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 7 March 2024 (copy attached).

#### **5 INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IN DENBIGHSHIRE (Pages 15 - 24)**

To consider a report by the Digital Officer on the Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire, the progress made to date, and future plans, for increasing and improving/upgrading internet connectivity for all areas of the county (copy attached).

**6 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER: FEBRUARY 2024 REVIEW**

(Pages 25 - 114)

To consider a report on the Corporate Risk Register: February 2024 Review from the Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets (copy attached).

**7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 115 - 142)**

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

**8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

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

**MEMBERSHIP**

**Councillors**

Councillor 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

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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 the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held in Council Chamber County Hall and by video conference on 7 March 2024 at 10am.

### PRESENT

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

### ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (GW) Head of Education (GD), Chief Internal Auditor (BC), Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital Assets (HV-E), Head of Corporate Support Service: People (CR), Principal Education Manager (RT), Electively Home Educated Advisory Teacher (JW), Scrutiny Coordinators (RE and KE) and Committee Administrators (SJ and NH)

### Education Co-opted Members –

Colette Owen and Neil Roberts in attendance for Agenda Item 5.

### Lead Members in attendance at the Committee's invitation:

Councillor Gill German: Lead Member for Education, Children and Families and  
Councillor Gwyneth Ellis: Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets.

**Observers:** Councillors Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain- Jones and Jon Harland and Lay Member David Stewart.

## 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities who had been invited to attend for business item 6. However, Councillor Gwyneth Ellis: Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets was in attendance to present that report.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The following members declared person interests in business item 5, 'Supporting and Monitoring the Delivery of Elective Home Education', in their role as school governors:

Councillor Ellie Chard	Local Education Authority (LEA) Governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa
Councillor Bobby Feeley	LEA Governor at Rhos Street School
Councillor Martyn Hogg	Parent Governor at St. Asaph VP School

Councillor Carol Holliday	Town Council/Community governor on the governing bodies of Ysgol Penmorfa & Ysgol Clawdd Offa
Councillor Alan Hughes	Governor at Ysgol Caer Drewyn
Councillor Paul Keddie	Governor Ysgol Bryn Collen
Councillor Diane King	Governor at Christchurch School
Neil Roberts	Governor at Ysgol y Parc
Councillor Gareth Sandilands	LEA Governor at Ysgol Clawdd Offa

Councillor Andrea Tomlin declared a personal interest in the same business item as a close acquaintance of an individual currently undergoing the elective home education process.

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

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

### 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 25 January 2024 were submitted. It was:

***RESOLVED:*** *that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25 January 2024 be received and approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.*

### 5. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People, Councillor Gill German, introduced the Elective Home Education report (previously circulated).

The report was being presented to the Committee to reassure members that Denbighshire County Council (DCC) was meeting the statutory requirements for Elective Home Education (EHE) within the County. The report included an oversight of the procedures in place and the Council's safeguarding responsibilities.

The Head of Education guided Members through the report (previously circulated).

Home education was a term used when parents chose to educate their children at home instead of sending them to school. Home education reflected the diversity of approaches and allowed for an individualised approach for children tailored to the specific needs and interests of each child. Many home educating parents felt that they were able to meet their children's needs and learning styles more effectively than in the classroom.

Children who were home educated were not expected to follow the Curriculum for Wales or any other specified curriculum or meet criteria for the number of learning hours. The home education approach could range from a continuum from a formal, structured, schedule-based education through to autonomous or child-led education.

The responsibility of the parent was to provide a suitable, efficient, full-time education, in line with the child's age, ability and aptitude.

The role of the Local Authority (LA) was to identify children and young people who were not receiving a suitable, efficient full-time education. It was not the authority's role to provide the education however, support from the LA was available and provided when requested. The ways in which the authority fulfilled this role could take on many different forms. The most important was engaging in a positive, supportive manner with the families and building up a relationship to ensure that it could identify that learning was taking place, that it was suitable and sustainable.

Before learners were taken off the school register, the Welsh Government Statutory Guidance should be shared with families in order that they knew what was expected of them to educate at home. Once the families moved over to EHE the Denbighshire protocol, updated in February 2024, (previously circulated in Appendix 1) would be sent out to families to support them in getting started.

All EHE families were offered a home visit to discuss the provision taking place. This was an effective way to link with all families and was a good opportunity to meet the learners and hear their point of view. It also gave the learners the opportunity to explain what they had been learning in their own words. Families did not have to accept a home visit and some families preferred to send an educational report or a third-party endorsement report to the local education authority (LEA).

Currently Denbighshire had 158 learners registered as EHE. There had been a noticeable increase since August 2016 where the LA had 94 learners registered as EHE. The numbers of EHE learners could fluctuate during the school year.

Every year the LA was awarded a Welsh Government grant to support the learners of EHE families. In October 2023, out of 141 families registered at that time, 76 showed interest and were supported financially.

Unfortunately, as in line with other LAs, Denbighshire had a small number of families who either refused or were reluctant to engage. As a LA, Denbighshire actively try to engage with these families through a structured

process of specific letters, that were distributed at specific times. In between these letters, phone calls, emails and unannounced visits would take place to try and engage and support the families. The EHE officer worked closely with the Education Social Work Team in these cases to ensure that any safeguarding concerns were dealt with promptly.

The Denbighshire EHE Team had received the Gold award in recognition of the work that they undertook with home educated children.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and questions were welcomed from Members.

Members questioned how the education provided at home was being actively monitored. The Head of Education explained that monitoring the quality of the education being provided by the family was not the authority's role. The authority's role was to support EHE families and identify learners who were not receiving any education within the home. Information explaining the EHE role was in the report (previously circulated), and this was shared with parents when families were considering EHE, explaining their responsibilities.

Officers stressed that pupils who had health issues and who were educated at home by tutors arranged by the school of the education authority were not classed as EHE.

Members questioned the process in place when all levels of correspondence had been rejected by the family. The Head of Education stated that there was a national procedure in place which was followed. Engagement with some EHE families was difficult, if all areas of correspondence and attempts to communicate and engage with the families had been exhausted then it would become a legal matter with an Education Order put in place.

Members recognised the significant increase in EHE learners since 2016 and questioned if the funding had increased with the numbers. The Head of Education expressed that funding was a challenge. EHE was grant funded and there had recently been a change in the way that grants were received. All grants went through the Local Authority, there was 1 grant with 4 elements relating to how the money could be spent. The funding/grants had not increased with the numbers of EHE learners. It was emphasised that the increase in the number of EHE pupils was not unique to Denbighshire, it was reflected across the majority of LA areas. The highest number of EHE pupils were in the secondary sector, with anxiety and struggling with everyday school life being a reason for some families opting to provide EHE. In some cases, pupils did return to mainstream education following a period of being educated at home, between September 2023 and February 2024 22 pupils in Denbighshire had returned to be educated within a school setting.



Members expressed concerns regarding the monitoring/checks on EHE families and questioned if there were discussions with the Local Education Authority (LEA). The Head of Education explained when families were considering home educating their children, there was a conversation to ensure parents understood what was involved and what was expected of them.

Members asked if EHE learners undertook exams for example GCSE, the Electively Home Educated Advisory Teacher explained EHE families were not required to follow the curriculum and therefore were not required to sit any exams if they did not wish to. However, in her role she would encourage pupils to sit exams in order to further their career prospects. Part of her role was to signpost the pupils and parents to resources available to them, e.g. summer reading challenges in the libraries etc. and to support them to sit exams if they chose to do so. Year 10 and 11 age pupils would be provided with Careers Wales information to help them plan ahead for the future.

Members discussed the impact on the social experiences of a child who was home educated and sought clarity on any support that was in place to address it. The Head of Education stated that the social aspects of a child being educated within the home was something for the parents to consider and was part of the discussions from the beginning. The EHE Team worked with Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL) to encourage EHE families to socialise together by using the facilities. There was a limited amount of funding given from Welsh Government for EHE families to come together to allow for social experiences. Information was shared with EHE pupils' families on groups etc. that were available for them to attend with a view to enhancing the social interaction aspect of their learning.

It was confirmed that Estyn did not have any involvement with pupils who were EHE. The Regulator's responsibilities only extended to examining the local education authority's arrangements for providing support to EHE pupils and families as part of its inspection of the LA Education Service. GWE did not have any involvement with EHE pupils either.

The Head of Education stressed that if the authority had any safeguarding concerns regarding a child/pupil the Safeguarding Procedures would be instigated as a matter of urgency.

Members registered their concerns with regards to the perceived lack of national regulations governing the responsibilities of individuals and families who choose to educate their children at home and therefore requested that the Lead Member and Head of Education correspond with the Welsh Government on the matter. The Head of Education stated that he would raise the matter with Denbighshire's link Estyn Inspector during their next meeting in early summer 2024.

The Chair thanked the Lead Member and officers for the detailed report and for answering questions from Committee Members.

Following a comprehensive discussion, the Committee:

**Resolved: subject to the above comments and observations to –**

- (i) endorse the policies, procedures and approach taken by the Council's Education Service to support and monitor the delivery of Elective Home Education (EHE);***
- (ii) acknowledge the efforts of Education Service staff in 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;***
- (iii) request that an Information Report be circulated to Committee members in 12 months' time detailing data and trends in relation to the number of pupils in the county who are educated at home; and***
- (iv) recommend that the Lead Member for Education, Children and Families, in conjunction with Education Service officers, write to the Welsh Government's Minister for Education and Welsh Language seeking the Government to introduce regulations governing the responsibilities of those who choose to educate their children at home.***

## **6. ARE THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE SUPPORT FUNCTIONS EFFECTIVE?**

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets introduced the report (previously circulated).

The original Audit Wales report had examined the Council's arrangements for its Corporate Services under four departments, Human Resources (HR), Corporate Customer Services, Digital Services and Internal Audit. The results of the review were positive with only two recommendations, the Council's responses to the recommendations were attached to the report. The report looked at the vision and strategic direction of the corporate support functions to consider if they effectively and adequately supported the Council's objectives. The review also considered if the Council's corporate support functions were taking account of the sustainable development principle.

The Head of Corporate Support Services: People provided members with further detail regarding the report and its recommendations.

The report presented to the Committee related to the Audit Wales Report on 'Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?' dated May 2023

and provided an update on the progress made against the recommendations contained within the report. The report was for the Committee to consider the progress made 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.

The review found that the Council's corporate support functions had a good understanding of the sustainable development principle, but the Internal Audit Service did not consistently consider the principle in all its audit work, some HR Policies were out of date and although the Council had appropriate monitoring arrangements in place, it was yet to consider the future strategic objectives and resourcing needs of the functions that were examined.

The Audit report made two recommendations and a copy of the Council's original Management response (previously circulated) was considered by the Governance and Audit Committee on the 26 July 2023 and by Scrutiny Chairs and Vice- Chairs Group (SCVCG). Since the report had been published considerable progress had been made on the actions identified to address the recommendations. Members were directed to a table of the recommendations from the report and the progress of the actions to date. Of the four actions, two actions had been completed, one partially completed, and one action was ongoing.

Relating to recommendation one (R1) - review of out-of-date policies, the Head of Corporate Support Services: People informed Members that 50% of the Council's policies had now been reviewed and were up to date. Policies were updated when there were new developments within legislation. All policies were reviewed every three years in line with the Council's Policy, going forward it was important that informal reviews within the three years were recorded on a regular basis.

Relating to recommendation two (R2) - consistency of Internal Audit considering the sustainable development principle, Internal Audit now included questions to ascertain how services were complying with the sustainable development principle and Carbon Emissions when developing the scope for each audit undertaken.

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

Members referred to paragraph 4.5 of the report relating to Human Resources (HR) having 51 different policies and questioned if there was a need for so many and if any could be consolidated. The Head of Corporate Support Services: People stated that the 51 policies in place covered the whole employee lifecycle, from recruitment to leaving or retirement, there was a

policy for each aspect of an employee's employment with the organisation. The policies in place provided protection for the Council and employees.

Members discussed ways for reviews to have as little effect on resources as possible and questioned if there could be better referencing to the Sustainable Development Principle within all Policies and audits undertaken. The Chief Internal Auditor welcomed the suggestion and advised that he would consider the Committee's above proposal in the following year's Audit Plan.

Members asked if the Council outsourced any Support Services. The Corporate Director explained that this was dependent on the support function. For example, the Council outsourced translation services, others were run jointly with other local authorities e.g. the Joint Procurement Service with Flintshire County Council, whilst some very specialist services were procured from external providers however, other support functions within the Council would not be financially viable to be outsourced.

The Corporate Director: Governance and Business advised members that the Governance and Business Directorate had been established in April 2023 with a view to consolidating support services in one place and strengthening them in order to provide better support to deliver frontline services. An organisation the size of Denbighshire required good governance arrangements to enable it to build resilience and support the transformation of services going forward.

The Chair thanked officers for the detailed report and for attending the meeting.

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

***Resolved: subject to the above observations to acknowledge the progress made to date by the Council –***

- (i) in addressing the two recommendations laid out in the May 2023 Audit Wales review 'Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?'; and***
- (ii) in sufficiently resourcing its wider corporate services' functions.***

## **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 18 April 2024. In response to requests from officers the Chair had permitted the deferral of two business items from the current meeting's business agenda to future meetings. They were:

- 2018 Estyn Inspection Recommendations, deferred until the June 2024 meeting; and
- the Economic and Business Development Strategy, deferred until the Committee's meeting in July 2024.

Both deferrals were permitted in order to give officers more time to undertake detailed work in relation to the topics prior to submitting them for Scrutiny.

Appendix 2 contained a copy of the Member's Scrutiny Proposal forms and Members were encouraged to complete the form if they had any items which they thought would merit scrutiny.

Since the publication of the Committee papers a request had been received to defer the presentation of the Revised Draft Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22 – 2029/30 from April's meeting to the June meeting, due to changes in personnel. If the Committee was willing to permit this rescheduling it would need to move a business item from its June 2024 meeting to a later date. It was agreed that the Cefndy Performance Report 2023/2024 be re-arranged to the Committee's July 2024 meeting to accommodate this request.

Appendix 3 showed the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for information.

Appendix 4 outlined the progress made with respect of the Committee's recommendations from its previous meetings.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee:

***Resolved: subject to the inclusion of the information report on Elective Home Education for March 2025, and the rescheduling of the Revised Draft Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22–2029/30 from April to June's meeting and the Cefndy Performance Report 2023/24 from June to July's meeting, to confirm its forward work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.***

## **8. FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chair informed the Committee that he had been unable to attend the most recent meeting of the Queen's Market Project Board but had been advised that the Queen's Market building had now been handed over to the Council. The Corporate Director: Governance and Business confirmed that this was the case. Members:

***Resolved: to note the information provided.***

Meeting concluded at 12.25pm

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<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Cllr. Emrys Wynne, Lead Member for Broadband and Digital Strategy</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Liz Grieve, Head of Housing and Communities Service</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Philip Burrows, Digital Officer</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Poor Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire</b>

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

1.1. The internet connectivity status of properties in Denbighshire.

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

2.1. To provide information regarding the internet and telephony status in Denbighshire.

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

That the Committee:

3.1. reviews and understands the information provided regarding the current situation of internet and telephony connectivity in Denbighshire; and

3.2. determines whether further scrutiny of specific connectivity issues is required.

## **4. Report details**

4.1. Out of the total 50,501 premises in Denbighshire, 2,690 premises receive internet speeds of 30Mbps or less and 1,145 premises receive internet speeds of 10Mbps or less. (See Appendix A for more detail.)

- 4.2. 'Helping residents to understand options and solutions for improved internet connectivity' is an aim within our Corporate Plan and DCC have invested in a Digital Officer post (from February 2020 to May 2025) to advise individuals, businesses, and communities on this.
- 4.3. The Digital Officer works closely with Members and City, Town and Community Councils when advising communities.
- 4.4. This is important because the connectivity landscape and options for improvement are complex to navigate, owing to the following factors:
- i) There is no legal obligation on Openreach to connect every property with fibre.
  - ii) Openreach are the only fibre provider who are actively upgrading the rural areas.
  - iii) Denbighshire County Council, the Welsh Government and UK Government, have no power to influence how a private company (Openreach) runs its business. We can only encourage them to install more fibre into our county by supporting residents to access UK Government 'Gigabit Voucher' scheme.
  - iv) The 'Gigabit Voucher' scheme can only be accessed if numerous eligibility criteria are met, and often requires residents to work as a collective to pool their vouchers together for the value to cover the cost of install through the formation of a 'Fibre Community Partnership'. However, this is a time-consuming process and sometimes still is not enough to meet the cost.
  - v) The UK Government 'Gigabit Voucher' Scheme ends in March 2025. It has been inaccessible for the past 12 months due to the UK Government's 'Project Gigabit'. Until this project decides which premises in Denbighshire will be upgraded, the Voucher scheme remain closed to us.
  - vi) Small areas have been released from 'Project Gigabit' and are eligible for vouchers.
  - vii) Openreach will not start any new Community lead Fibre Community Partnerships due to the 'Gigabit Voucher' ending in March 2025.
  - viii) Alternative technologies such as wireless connections, satellite and 4G are available but are not always the best solution for residents.
- 4.5 The Council is also represented on the Ambition North Wales Digital Board and Digital Programmes. This work is at a strategic and regional level and concentrates on improving digital infrastructure across the region. The changing commercial and



policy intervention environment makes this work challenging due to commercial changes and announcements from OpenReach and interventions from the UK government which can result in North Wales Ambition Board projects becoming no longer viable or required as the commercial rollouts and UK Government's interventions progress. This work is medium to long term and as such projects are subject to change to reflect the changing environment.

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

5.1. This work relates to the 'A Better Connected Denbighshire' priority, specifically the aim about 'Helping residents to understand options and solutions for improved internet connectivity, including through Fibre Community Partnerships.'

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

6.1. There are no costs associated with the production of this report.

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

7.1. Not required for this report.

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

8.1. A similar report was submitted to Scrutiny in 2023.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. Not required.

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

10.1. If the UK Government 'Gigabit Voucher' Scheme is not renewed in March 2025, we will not be able for pay for fibre to be brought in to the rural areas via Openreach's Fibre Community Partnership.

- 10.2. UK Government has stated that some very hard to reach premises will be too expensive to connect via fibre.
- 10.3. The Welsh Government are planning a new connectivity programme called 'Extending High Speed Broadband Reach in Wales'. This will provide a connection of 30mbps to some very hard to reach premises.
- 10.4. There is an identified risk that the planned interventions of the North Wales Ambition Board's digital programmes could impact on OpenReach's decisions to change its commercial plans in the region, including in Denbighshire, where the digital footprint is improving.
- 10.5. The Openreach Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) also known as the copper-based exchanges, will be turned off by December 2025. Premises using the fibre-based VoIP system should know they will lose emergency landline phone use in the event of a power cut. If their modem and phone do not have electricity, they cannot make a phone call. On the old copper-line based system, the small amount of electricity carried over copper-lines powered the phone. This is more problematic in areas with no 4g signal. The Digital Officer will work to inform communities of this risk and seek to find other solutions where possible.

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

- 11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.
- 11.2. Section 7.2.3 stipulates that Scrutiny can consider any matter which affects the Council's area or its inhabitants.

## Appendices:

### Appendix A: Current internet connectivity position in Denbighshire

Based on Ofcom figures (which are appropriate to use for planning purposes on this topic), Denbighshire has the following numbers of premises (where a premise equates to an address, i.e. could be a business address, or where one building might contain multiple flats, each of which is a premise).

Total number of premises	50,501
Number of Premises with less than 30mbs	2,690 (previous 3,362)
Number of Premises with less than 10mbs	1145 (1,485)
Number of premises with less than 5mbs	665 (841)
Number of premises with less than 2mbs	255 (328)

### Fibre To The Premise (FTTP) Coverage Comparison:

(Openreach figures February 2024)

**UK 63.43%**

**Wales 61.85%**

**Denbighshire 73.19%**

## **Appendix B: Further Detail Regarding the Options and Complexities around Improving Connectivity in Denbighshire**

### **1. DCC's Limited Ability to Influence Openreach Work**

1.1. The UK Government classes telephony as an Open Market. This means it is not Openreach's sole responsibility to connect every premise. There are dozens of telephony/internet providers in the UK, whom, have the same opportunity to connect Denbighshire's premises. They choose not to do so, because of the expense.

### **2. Gigabit Voucher Grant**

2.1. The UK Government provides a grant called 'Gigabit Vouchers', which offers funding for fibre-based internet installations. This grant gives eligible premises up to £4,500 towards the cost of having fibre installed.

2.2. By forming groups of eligible properties and pooling said money, it is sometimes possible to cover the quote provided by Openreach to install fibre via their Fibre Communities Programme.

2.3. This process takes approximately two years; Six months to form the group, gather data and apply, Openreach then quotes an 18-month lead time for completion after signing the contract.

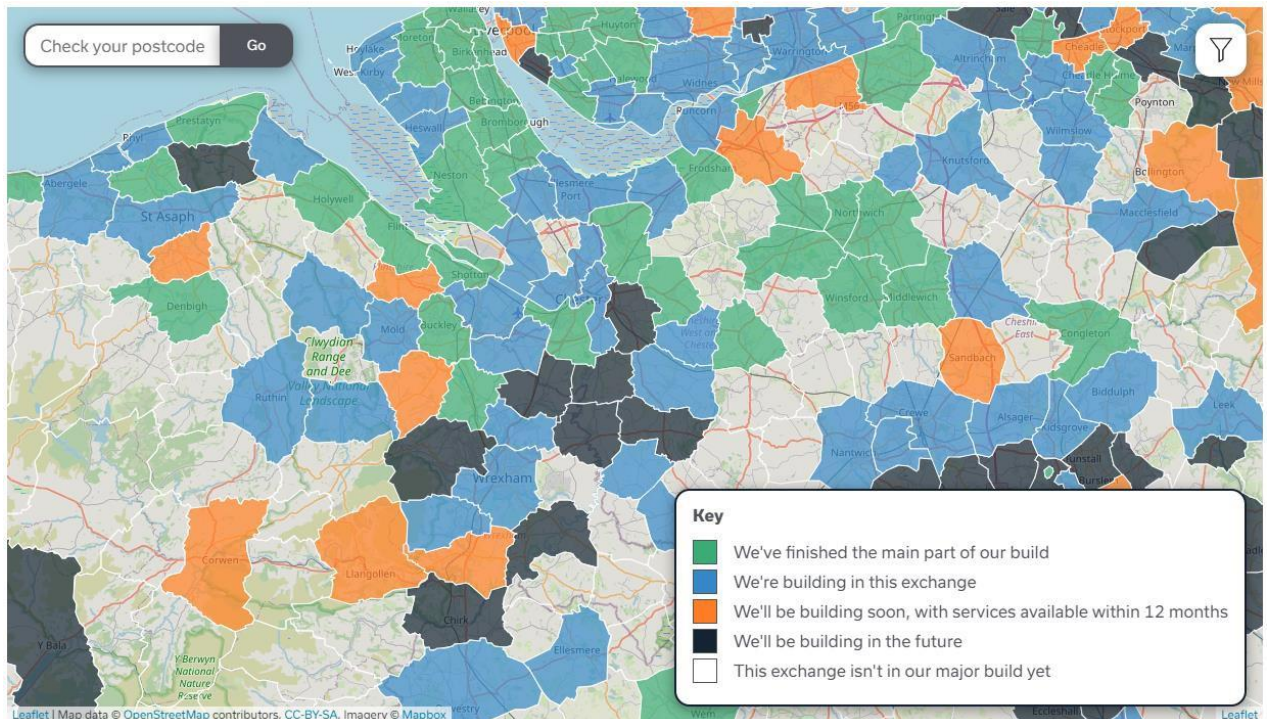
2.4. Properties eligible for the Gigabit Vouchers are ones that receive less than 100mbps and are not in a current upgrade scheme or have not been classed as 'under-review' for an upgraded by Openreach.

2.5. UK Government has paused the 'Gigabit Voucher' scheme in Wales, until it finalises the 'Gigabit Project' roll-out plan.

2.6. The Welsh Government no longer contributes towards the Gigabit Vouchers.

### 3. Planned Upgrades in Denbighshire

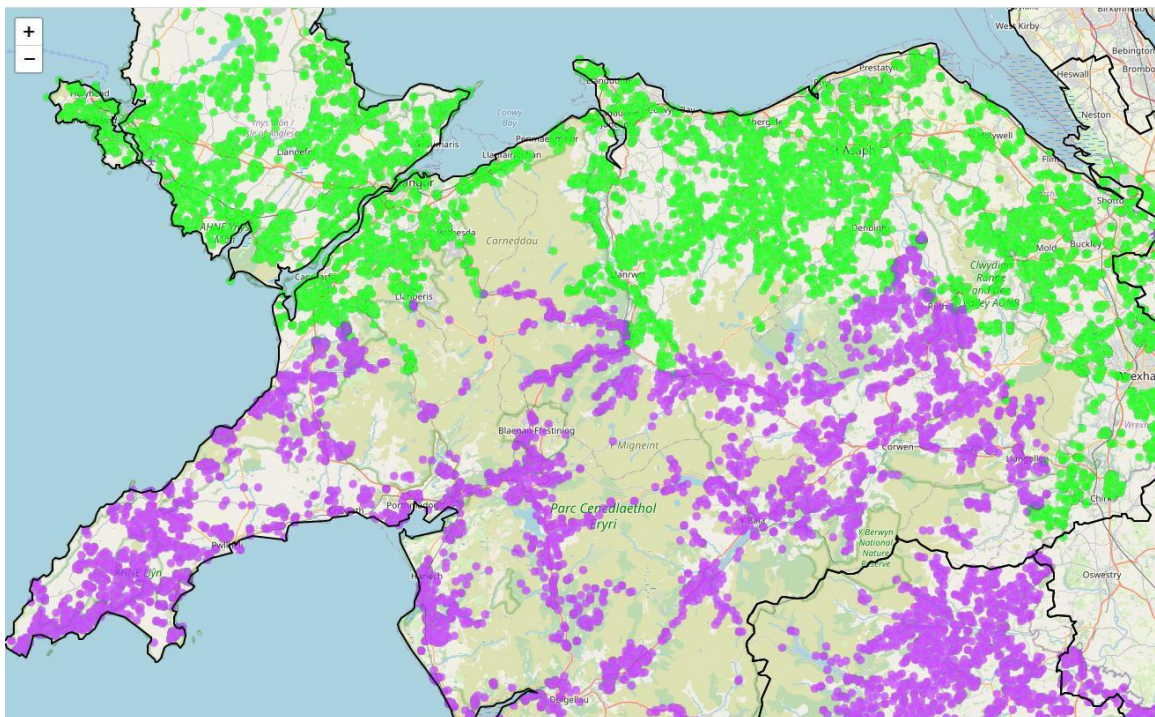
3.1. Openreach have released a map showing which exchanges are they are working on between now and December 2026. Openreach promise to upgrade a minimum of 75% of the premises in each exchange upgrade area. Openreach will not allow us to form Fibre Community Partnerships in these areas.



<https://www.openreach.com/fibre-broadband/where-when-building-ultrafast-full-fibre-broadband>

3.2 The UK Government submitted 5000 Denbighshire properties for tender to have fibre installed under their scheme 'Project Gigabit'. However, over 500 were caravans and therefore ineligible and 800 premises have been dropped from the tender for unknown reasons. None of the remaining premises are guaranteed to be installed.

**3.3** Project Gigabit has divided Wales into four lots. Lot 3 (purple) and Lot 4 (green) encompass Denbighshire. We know two or more providers have submitted quotes for parts of Lot 4. It is unknown for how many or which premises.



**3.4** The North Wales Economic Ambition Board has cancelled its 'The Last few %' project. This £4 million scheme would have aimed at the Very Hard to Reach premises in Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey and Wrexham

#### **4 Alternative Technologies**

**4.1** As an interim solution for poorly connected areas, there is grant funding for the purchase and installation of 4g routers with external antennas.

**4.2** Fixed Wireless Broadband and Starlink: These technologies offer reasonable connectivity for most of Denbighshire but should not be considered as a long-term solution. The Welsh Government grant 'Access Broadband Cymru' offers funding to purchase the equipment and cover the cost of installation. Starlink is prohibitively expensive costing £75 per month.

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<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Councillor Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities / Helen Vaughan-Evans – Head of Corporate Support: Performance, Digital &amp; Assets</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Helen Vaughan-Evans – Head of Corporate Support: Performance, Digital &amp; Assets</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Heidi Barton-Price, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Corporate Risk Register Review, February 2024</b>

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

- 1.1 An update on the February 2024 review of the Corporate Risk Register and the Council's Risk Appetite Statement, including changes to our risk reporting frequency.

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

- 2.1 To provide information regarding the latest review of the Corporate Risk Register and the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.
- 2.2 We are also informing Performance Scrutiny Committee of our amended approach to risk reporting, which responds to a request from the Governance and Audit Committee.

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

- 3.1 That Performance Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the amendments to the Corporate Risk Register.

3.2 That the Committee considers and comments on the amendments to the Council's Risk Appetite Statement, as detailed in 4.7 to 4.8 below, and Appendix 3.

## **4 Report details**

- 4.1 The Corporate Risk Register is developed and owned by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) alongside Cabinet. It is reviewed twice yearly by Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing. Following each review, the revised register is then shared with Performance Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee. The previous review was undertaken in September 2023. Papers last submitted to Performance Scrutiny Committee ([30<sup>th</sup> November 2023](#)) are available online.
- 4.2 The Council's Risk Appetite Statement has been applied to the discussions that we have had with risk owners, and our risk exposure (based on the score) is analysed within the Corporate Risk Register (Appendix 2).
- 4.3 The Council currently has 13 Corporate Risks on the Register. Summaries of the review are provided at the start of each risk in Appendix 2. No risks have been de-escalated during this review, and neither have any new risks been added.
- 4.4 Whilst all risks have been reviewed, no significant changes have been made during the February 2024 review, and residual risk scores remain unchanged for all 13 Corporate Risks.
- 4.5 Performance Scrutiny Committee should be assured that the Corporate Executive Team (CET) are taking a proactive monitoring approach to Corporate Risk, and quarterly 'deep-dives' into risks 01, 31, 34 and 48 have been scheduled into CET's Forward Work Plan. Crucially, the Committee should also be assured that financial risks have an ongoing and detailed process in place to ensure that those risks are constantly monitored as part of general budget discussions.

### **Risk Appetite Statement**

- 4.6 Seven risks 01, 21, 34, 45, 50, 51 and 52 (54%) are currently inconsistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (Appendix 3). However, this is to be expected as the register contains the Council's most serious risks.
- 4.7 It has been timely with this review for us to revisit the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (Appendix 3), which was last revised in [November 2022](#). The statement

should reflect our appetite now, where escalating costs and uncertain economic forecasts pose challenges for us in the delivery of services and projects, and threaten shared outcomes around personal and community independence and resilience.

4.8 Following discussions at CET, SLT and Cabinet Briefing, the following feedback was provided as to the appropriateness of the present Risk Appetite Statement:

a) Reflecting the present financial environment, it would be appropriate to now amend the Council's 'open' risk appetite in relation to project financing to '**cautious**'.

b) Following a discussion on our 'cautious' risk appetite for compliance and regulation (non-safeguarding), it was agreed that this was still appropriate for the Council's business and should remain as cautious. However, it was agreed that the descriptor would be amended to 'risks about adherence to law, regulations and **statutory** guidelines.'

c) The Risk Appetite Statement be subject to an annual review.

### **Risk Reporting**

4.9 We have recently received challenge from the Governance and Audit Committee as to the frequency with which Corporate Risks are reviewed, particularly during the present fast-changing financial environment. We have considered their request for 'more iterative' risk reporting throughout the year, weighed against capacity pressure within the Strategic Planning and Performance Team (SPPT), and a compromise that helps answer both (see Appendix 4) has been agreed with risk owners.

4.10 The proposal agreed is for quarterly, lighter-touch reviews with risk owners (alternating between email and tabled), that can then feed (for information only) into Governance and Audit meetings throughout the year (except November when it is tabled for discussion as usual). The register being kept more current throughout the year will hopefully allow SPPT capacity to be spread out, rather than bottle-necked in February and September with the larger reviews we presently have.

4.11 Please note that this approach is something that we will pilot and revisit at the end of 2024 to 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- 8.1 Prior to Performance Scrutiny Committee individual discussions have been held with CET Risk Owners (Chief Executive Officer and Corporate Directors), also including input from relevant Heads of Service and officers leading on further actions for instance.
- 8.2 A report was presented to CET to agree and / or make further amendments on March 11; with SLT on March 21; and Cabinet Briefing on April 8, 2024. Following Performance Scrutiny Committee's meeting, the register will be shared for information with the Governance and Audit Committee.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

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

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

10.1 There are no risks associated with this review.

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

11.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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

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

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## **Appendix 1**

# **Summary of Corporate Risk Register February Review 2024**

## Corporate Risk Register

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

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

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

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

### Summary of current corporate risks and score (February 2024)

We have 13 corporate risks on our register. 54% (7) are outside of our risk appetite.



**CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – SUMMARY FEBRUARY 2024 REVIEW**

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	February 2024 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
01. Safeguarding incident	A1 Critical (Red) Risk Almost Certain and Very High Impact	A1 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and Very High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated	Same	No
11. Unexpected or unplanned serious event	A2 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and High Impact	C3 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Possible and Medium Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	February 2024 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
12. Negative reports from external regulators	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	C3 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Possible and Medium Impact	Risk reviewed and updated	Same	Yes
14. Health and Safety	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	E2 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Rare and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes
21. Integration of health and social care does not develop further	A1 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and Very High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	February 2024 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
31. Fraud and corruption	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	E2 Moderate (Yellow) Risk: Rare and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated	Same	Yes
34. Insufficient regulated care	A2 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and High Impact	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No
37. Partnerships	B1 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and Very High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	February 2024 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
45. Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically positive	A1 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and Very High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No
48. Recruitment and retention	B3 Major (Orange) Risk: Likely and Medium Impact	B3 Major (Orange) Risk: Likely and Medium Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	Yes
50. Placements for Children Looked After	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	February 2024 Review	Trend since last report	Within Risk Appetite
51. Economic and financial environment worsens and results in the inability to set a balanced budget.	B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact	C1 – Critical Risk: Possible / Very High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No
52. Insufficient funding leads to withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered	B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact	B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact	Risk reviewed and updated.	Same	No

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## **Appendix 2**

### **Corporate Risk Register – February 2024**

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# Corporate Risk Register (February 2024)

February 2024 Review changes are summarised under each risk title summary.

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

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

**Risk Owner:** Nicola Stubbins

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

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

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

### **Description**

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

There is a national recruitment and retention crisis in social care (see also [risk 48](#)). Social care frequently loses staff due to the superior pay and conditions offered by recruitment

agencies, other local authorities and the health board, often for similar but less demanding roles. Our services are often only able to replace experienced staff with newly qualified or inexperienced workers that require significant support and are unable to independently work with the increasingly complex cases referred to the service. Many new starters are younger, newly qualified staff and rates of maternity leave in some teams are high.

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

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

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

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

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

**Anticipated direction of travel:**

The impact of Covid-19, the continued pressures with recruitment and retention, the deterioration in the economy and the pressures people are facing, all escalated this risk in terms of its inherent and residual risk scores, with the overall risk score being heightened to its maximum level in September 2022. Since the situation has not improved. We will

ensure continued extremely close management at the most senior operational, corporate and political levels of the council, and we continue to raise this risk at a national level.

## **Impact / Consequences**

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

## **Inherent Risk**

A1 – Critical Risk: Almost certain / Very high impact

## **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

In addition to the controls listed further below, CET and Cabinet will be reviewed as an when by exception at their monthly meetings.

Critical controls:

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

Organisational leaders have a shared vision with a positive approach to regional safeguarding arrangements.

- This clear strategic commitment has resulted in the commissioning of a sufficient range of effective local services to support children and families.
  - This was a new multi-agency inspection by four regulators and was the first in Wales to be carried out.
  - The first risk focus session for CET took place on October 17, 2022 following the escalation of this risk and discussion at CET on October 13, 2022. CET agreed to focus on progress in relation to key actions, which it now discusses every month. The actions under review bring together the critical operational, strategic and political actions the council is undertaking to manage this risk.
  - Cabinet now receives monthly verbal updates at Cabinet Briefing, from Lead Members, the risk owner and Heads of Service.
- [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) and Governance and Audit Committee received reports on the September 2023 risk review. To follow up on previous lines of enquiry at Governance and Audit - and to support discussions related to the interconnected nature of this risk with other risks contained within this register - a report on recruitment and retention issues in Social Services was submitted as an information report.
- [Governance and Audit Committee received a report on October 4, 2022](#), about a Care Inspectorate Wales inspection. The report highlighted recruitment and retention challenges and the Committee was reassured that safeguarding was being managed as a critical risk on the council's corporate risk register and that steps were being taken to try to alleviate the situation.
  - Meetings with Welsh Government have taken place to discuss the extent of our concerns and how the risk has escalated. We are having internal meetings involving CET, and with the Leader and lead members. There is now a memorandum about children's agency workers, and is being led by All Wales Children's' Heads of Service, and is being adhered to.
  - We have set the care fees to ensure that providers can pay their social care staff the Real Living Wage. Although the Welsh Government settlement notification states that they have included funding to enable authorities to continue to meet the additional costs of introducing the Real Living Wage for care workers, the total

Revenue Support Grant fell well short of funding all pressures within social services so the commitment remains a pressure for the Council.

- Ongoing discussions with HR are taking place and we are taking action as part of our efforts to resolve recruitment and retention issues in social care and health and more widely across council service ([see also controls for the recruitment and retention risk 48](#)).
- The Corporate Social Care Recruitment & Retention Board has been stepped down and work is continuing – any outstanding actions are being pursued by the Corporate Director as usual business.
- The Corporate Director and Lead Members continue to raise this issue with the WLGA and WG.
- We have a statutory responsibility for safeguarding and the operational delivery of our statutory functions, alongside our partners', are our critical controls to mitigate the risk. Other services, and our wider corporate response, is about understanding and awareness so that people know what to do if and when they have concerns about a person or family's welfare.

#### Ancillary controls:

- We have asked other councils in North Wales how they are evaluating and managing any safeguarding risks on their corporate risk registers.
- We have responded to a Welsh Government call for evidence regarding independent schools' legislation and guidance in Wales. Some of the proposed changes to safeguarding are a direct result of issues and concerns raised by Denbighshire County Council.
- The North Wales Safeguarding Children Board Local Delivery Group, developed by Denbighshire, has been recognised as good practice.
- The Corporate Parenting Forum continues to progress well and is well attended.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.

- Safeguarding policy and procedures are in place. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and updated in line with legislation.
- Corporate Safeguarding Training Programme.
- Framework of self-assessment for schools in relation to safeguarding has been established.
- Section 28 audit tool in place for voluntary sector to ensure safeguarding practices are in place.
- Compliance with safeguarding practises is part of the annual HR audit of schools.
- Regional arrangements for safeguarding a) children and b) adults at risk are in place. The regional safeguarding boards set priorities and actions regionally, e.g. training and policies & procedures. This includes, for example, working in partnership with North Wales Police on such issues as County Lines.
- Risk assessments in place for recruiting staff who require a DBS check and/or references and this is monitored and scrutinised by the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.
- Safeguarding policy review has taken place with Schools and guidance has been developed
- Key posts within the Council that could have an impact on safeguarding have been identified and Heads of Service are reviewing the posts to ensure that adequate checks are undertaken by the Council or and external body. All employee contracts make reference to safeguarding.
- Corporate Safeguarding Panel has been reviewed including the terms of reference, roles and responsibilities.
- Heads of Service have been asked to ensure they consider safeguarding when reviewing their risk registers and that safeguarding be included in service challenge where appropriate.
- Briefing sessions on safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation have been delivered to County Council. Safeguarding features in three Cabinet Members' portfolios.
- Improvements have been made to safeguarding arrangements with contractors including (i) DBS contract checks, (ii) ensuring that Council staff responsible on site for the contractor and managing the tendering / contract process are clear of their responsibilities in respect of safeguarding, (iii) ensuring contacts terms and

conditions (including JCT) in relation to DBS checks are appropriate, (iv) ensuring that self-assessment arrangements as part of contract management are appropriate.

- Safeguarding e-learning module in place and compliance is monitored and scrutinised by the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.
- Recording and sharing safeguarding incidents and near misses is a standing item of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. It also shares case reviews where there is a corporate perspective for lessons learned. Service representatives are responsible for reporting any key messages from panel meetings to members of staff within their services.
- Adoption of Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

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

Assurance:

- A joint inspection of the multi-agency response to keeping children and young people safe in Denbighshire was published May 2023.
- Corporate Support Services: People took a report on Workforce Planning, Recruitment & Retention to Performance Scrutiny in July 2023.
- Senior Leadership : All recruitment to the vacant Head of Service posts have now been completed with the following appointments and start dates:



Head of Adult Social Care & Homelessness Services – commenced post 1st July 2023

- In summary, the report confirmed that Human Resources (HR) have robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the Corporate Workforce Plan. The development of some policies and guidance has been delayed due to vacancies within the team and workload pressures, however these have new revised completion dates.
- A Corporate Recruitment and Retention paper was presented to January 2023 [Governance and Audit Committee](#), which included aspects of social care issues.
- This risk is a standing item on Cabinet Briefing and Corporate Executive Team monthly meetings.
- The North Wales Safeguarding Children Board Local Delivery Group and Adult Local Delivery Group continue to meet and influence policy and practice.

## **Residual Risk**

A1 – Critical Risk Almost certain / Very high impact

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

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

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

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

**Risk Owner:** Graham Boase

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

The residual risk score remains unchanged as:

C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact.

### **Description**

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

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

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

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

In addition Corporate Executive Tema (CET) are on a 24/7 Gold Rota, so a Senior Officer is always available to lead on an emergency. In the event of an emergency the Senior Officer on call via the Gold Rota will initially coordinate the Council's response, including

considering calling an SEMT meeting. Depending on the circumstances of the emergency the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is likely to take overall strategic control.

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

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

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

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

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

**Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

**Impact / Consequences**

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

## **Inherent Risk**

A2 – Critical Risk: Almost Certain / High Impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

Critical controls (strategic relevance):

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

Ancillary controls:

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

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CSPHS1001i RIDDOR accident rate (National measure – No. of RIDDOR x 100,000 / No. of FTE employees)

- PDA904i Denbighshire County Council achieves Public Services Network (PSN) security Standard compliance (0 = pass; 1 = fail)

Qualitative indicators:

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

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

## **Residual Risk**

C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact

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

Yes

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

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

**Risk Owner:** Gary Williams

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

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

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

### **Description**

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

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

Governance and Audit Committee received a report on October 4, 2022, about a Care Inspectorate Wales inspection. The report highlighted recruitment and retention challenges

and the Committee was reassured that safeguarding was being managed as a critical risk on the council's corporate risk register and that steps were being taken to try to alleviate the situation.

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

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

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

The score has been considered in relation to current performance and is felt to be accurate. The current position is generally positive. We expect this risk to always feature in our corporate risk register, but one that may increase or decrease in line with other factors, for example the financial environment. This risk will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure all necessary controls are effective and operating as they should be.

### **Impact / Consequences**

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

### **Inherent Risk**

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

Regulation we are subject to includes: CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales); WAO Office; Estyn; HSE (Health & Safety Executive); ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) Public

Services Ombudsman. Information, studies and other reports are also published by other commissioners such as the Welsh Language Commissioner for Wales or the Older People's Commissioner for Wales.

Critical controls:

- SLT, Estyn, CIW and Audit Wales hold an annual Audit Risk Assessment meeting to reach consensus on the regulatory inspections to take place throughout the year.
- SLT on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 received this year's Joint Audit Risk Assessment setting out the programme of assurance planned for the year ahead. The report included the priorities of the inspectorates, and their intentions at a national and local level to identify strengths and areas of concern. The issues identified within the report affect all local authorities across Wales and nothing was raised as a specific local concern regarding Denbighshire. Estyn highlighted some local concerns but these are issues we are already aware of and managing.
- A joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA), involving Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn, was undertaken in Denbighshire during the week commencing 6th February 2023.
- We maintain positive and proactive relationship management and ongoing communication with external regulators. We have healthy and open relationships with our regulators.
- The corporate performance management framework (PMF) is the main control in this area.
- Head of Corporate Support Services: Performance, Digital & Assets, Strategic Planning Team Manager and Chief Internal Auditor meet monthly with Wales Audit Office to understand and respond to their concerns.
- Regulators sit on Service Performance Challenges.
- Protocol developed for addressing recommendations from WAO national studies: services' response will be the subject of performance scrutiny and service challenge.

Ancillary controls:



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

Relevant indicator of the effectiveness of controls:

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

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

C3 – Moderate Risk: Possible / Medium Impact

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

Yes

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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Julie Matthews

**Risk Owner:** Gary Williams

**February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

Critical controls have been updated and the Residual Risk score remains as E2 –

Moderate Risk: Rare / High Impact

**Description**

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

**Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

**Impact / Consequences**

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

## Inherent Risk

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

### Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

- Dedicated health and safety team within property services that are responsible for elements for building safety.
- In response to National concerns regarding Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) the Council has revisited surveys of schools and other buildings to identify the presence of RAAC and any measures required to mitigate any risk posed by it.
- Many staff continue to work from home some or most of the time. The New Ways of Working Project team, led by our Corporate Director: Governance and Business, continues to monitor the situation. There may be risks associated with a potential lack of fire wardens and first aiders in the office buildings under these current working arrangements. This is being explored and any actions or solutions identified will be added to our controls.
- Strategic leadership is provided by the Corporate Director: Governance and Business, with delegated responsibility for Health and Safety.
- Competent H&S advisors are employed by the organisation to provide competent advice, guidance and training on H&S to all Council employees and services.
- H&S maintain Service Level Agreements with all Local Authority Schools.
- A Corporate Health and Safety Policy is in place, which defines the H&S organisation and arrangements in the council.
- There is an established H&S Management System in place.
- H&S training programme focussed on council activities and the way we manage H&S.
- “Managing safely in Denbighshire” training is mandatory for all managers.
- The Corporate H&S team carry out a programme of targeted monitoring
- An online accident, incident reporting process is in place. There is an expectation that all accidents and incidents are reported.

- An online Staff Protection Register where staff can search for or request the addition of records in connection with their authorised activities. All access requests are monitored by the system and records of all access is recorded by the system for auditing purposes.
- Quarterly Health & Safety newsletter is published to keep staff up to date with health and safety management within the Council.

Ancillary controls:

- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- An established Corporate H&S Committee is in place as part of the Joint Consultative Committee for Health and Safety and Employee Relations which is a forum for the employer and employee representatives to discuss and consult on H&S.
- A number of service level H&S committees meet to provide a forum for service managers and employee representatives to discuss and consult on H&S.
- Significant H&S related accidents, incidents and near misses are investigated internally.
- Schools have effective health and safety practices.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

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

- Gas servicing, fixed wire testing and water hygiene are relevant indicators that are also monitored regularly

Assurance:

- Annual Corporate Health & Safety Report reported to Governance & Audit Committee. The latest report presented in November 2023 for 2021 to 2022.
- Annual Fire Safety Programme and Performance is reported to Governance & Audit Committee

## **Residual Risk**

E2 – Moderate Risk: Rare / High Impact

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

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

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

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

**Risk Owner:** Nicola Stubbins

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

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

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

### **Description**

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

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), which covers the whole of North Wales, was placed back in special measures on Monday 27, February 2023 having previously been in the category between 2015 and 2020. Health at a local level, and the effectiveness of health and social care working together, is subject to increased political and regulatory scrutiny. This requires a level of scrutiny and a strong commitment to partnership. There is a national agenda to drive effective partnership working.

Relationship management and communication is critical to successful mitigation.

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

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

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

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

### **Impact / Consequences**

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

### **Inherent Risk**

A1 – Critical Risk: Almost certain / Very high impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

Critical controls:

- Delivery of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Plan.  
The 2022 to 2023 annual report was presented to [Partnerships Scrutiny Committee](#) on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023.
- The posts of Chief Executive and the Chair of the Health Board have been made permanent.
- Other Senior posts remain as vacant or interim and pose a challenge to the integration agenda.
- The Regional Partnership Board and the North Wales Social Care and Well-being Improvement Collaborative have reviewed needs in relation to social care and health services as part of our population needs assessment (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014).
- Four Community Resource Teams have been established.
- The Regional Partnership Board is in place to progress cooperation and integration.
- BCUHB is a member of the Conwy/Denbighshire PSB, which has shared priorities and a shared governance vision.

#### Ancillary controls:

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

#### Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

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



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

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

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

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

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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

**Risk Owner:** Gary Williams

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

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

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

### **Description**

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

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

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

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

### **Impact / Consequences**

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

### **Inherent Risk**

C2 – Major Risk: Possible / High Impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

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

Critical controls:

- Internal Audit held Fraud Awareness Sessions for Schools in January 2023 to raise awareness and promote the Corporate Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption and Bribery to schools.
- The fraud policy has been updated.
- The Council has appointed a Corporate Director: Governance and Business.

- The Governance & Audit Committee received in September 2023 the Annual Whistleblowing Report.
- Internal Audit has conducted a review of ethical culture. As a result, we introduced clearer guidance about our code of conduct (for officers) to strengthen arrangements for declarations of conflicts and interests, including gifts and hospitality.
- Strategy for the Prevention and Detection of Fraud, Corruption and Bribery which includes fraud response plan, was updated and ratified by Governance and Audit Committee in July 2021. The purpose of the Strategy and Fraud Response Plan is to provide management with a tool to ensure progress and transparency with regards to counter-fraud activities. It is designed to heighten the Council's fraud resilience and demonstrate its protection and stewardship of public funds.
- In developing this Strategy, the Council has adopted the guiding principles included in "Fighting Fraud and Corruption Locally 2020" (FFCL2020) which is the counter fraud and corruption strategy for local government. It provides a blueprint for a coordinated response to fraud and corruption perpetrated against local authorities with the support of those at the top.
- IT systems have authorisation controls in place, which reduce the risk of fraud (remote working does not increase the risk)
- The Code of Corporate Governance
- The Code of Conduct for Elected Members
- The Employees' Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations including Contract Procedure Rules
- The Whistleblowing Policy
- The Anti-Money Laundering Policy
- Recognition and monitoring of the risk of fraud in service risk registers
- Systems of internal control
- Recruitment processes
- Annual review by the council's Internal Audit team
- Regular internal and external review of our systems and procedures
- The risk of fraud and corruption is also managed at a service level

Ancillary controls:

- The Communications team has a close working relationship with Internal Audit and low assurance rated reports are flagged up at an early stage.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Engagement with the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)
- E-learning modules on Whistleblowing and Code of Conduct

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

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

## **Residual Risk**

E2 – Moderate Risk: Rare / High impact

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

Yes

## Risk 34: The risk that there is insufficient regulated care

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

**Risk Owner:** Nicola Stubbins

### February 2024 review:

Risk reviewed and updated.

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

### Description

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

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

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

- **Recruitment and retention** – This is a national issue for the care sector. At the root of this are many factors, including the relatively low wages, high demands, and sometimes a perceived lack of esteem/value in the care career path. Even internally in DCC, we struggle to recruit to care work positions.
- **Increase in scale and complexity of needs** – The ageing population brings obvious additional pressures in this area. We have seen an increase in need for double-handed packages. Some individuals currently awaiting domiciliary care have

also had previous agencies withdraw, due to their being unable to manage the level/complexity of need.

- **Denbighshire's rural geography** – This presents a number of challenges, including because of costs, e.g. travel time can make a rural care package much less attractive to prospective providers, and recruitment, e.g. as usually care workers covering more rural areas must be able to drive.
- **Citizens' choice** – A number of individuals currently awaiting care have been made offers that they have declined, on the basis that they are unhappy with the specific hours being offered.
- **The prevention and reablement agenda** – Enabling people to remain independent and prevent the need for residential care, prolonged hospital stays etc. as far as possible - while of course significant wellbeing goals and priorities for the council - naturally creates additional pressures on domiciliary care/interim services.

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

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

#### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

## **Impact / Consequences**

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

## **Inherent Risk**

A2 – Critical Risk: Almost certain / High Impact

## **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

Critical controls:

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

- Develop a new Children's Assessment Centre (Bwthyn y Ddôl) jointly with Conwy CBC. This is an ongoing project.
- Micro-enterprises/micro providers has been brought back in-house, previously we paid a provider called Community Catalysts to run our Micro-Provider project. We now directly employ a full-time Deputy Team manager to run the service whose role includes: recruitment, training and monitoring of micro-providers. Maintenance of the Micro-Provider Directory. Promoting Micro-Providers as an effective alternative to traditional forms of care support, amongst health and social care staff designing packages of care for vulnerable citizens and their un-paid carers.
- Denbighshire now has a pool of over 50 Micro-Providers. Collectively, the 52 businesses provide around 850 hours of care and support in Denbighshire to over 220 residents each week.



- Implementation of Welsh Government's decision to fund the Real Living Wage (RLW) for registered social workers.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss. The Communications Team manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Our in-house teams (Reablement, Interim and Health & Social Care Support Workers) are covering as many outstanding care packages as possible.
- We are currently looking at how we can safely (in compliance with CIW/SCW requirements) draw on more support from other internal social care staff who do not currently deliver personal care.
- Working closely with health colleagues to manage workload and explore the potential to tap into their care applicants.
- Continue to explore alternative ways of meeting people's needs, within a strengths-based, enabling approach.
- We are working with Procurement to look at contractual arrangements to respond to the exceptional circumstances.
- We are returning to discussions with other local authorities to look at opportunities for joint commissioning.
- We will continue working to ensure that carers have the support they need.
- We are looking at ways that we can try to manage the expectations of citizens/families; to continue to honour preference as much as possible, while at the same time ensuring that we are realistic about what we can provide, and that we are ultimately led by need.

*Critical controls under usual circumstances include:*

- Single Point of Access is fully established and proving successful in providing advice and information to individuals in order for them to access community services themselves.
- Community Led Conversations 'What Matters' project changing the way staff support individuals enabling them to take control of their own well-being and utilising other external resources where possible.

- Developing a range of staff skill mixes through workforce development in order to enable staff to work in new ways that complement the new government agenda.
- Series of meetings with providers across Adult Social Care are underway to discuss annual fee setting process.
- Review and re-assessment project to ensure individuals are still eligible under new criteria
- Further development of support budgets
- Regional project considering issues.
- Recommissioning domiciliary care project in progress - this includes the implementation of the new regional domiciliary care framework in Denbighshire to include patch based commissioning for difficult rural areas.

A number of posts remain un-recruited to Reablement and Health and Social Care in the south of Denbighshire. This does limit our ability to pick up care packages. We have successfully recruited 4 staff members who will work across the whole of Denbighshire with the more complex cases, however this is funded with temporary funding. We continue to work on a rolling recruitment programme with the support from a dedicated HR officer.

Ancillary controls:

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

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- Vacancies (internal and external) and recruitment activity
- Budget variance
- ASCHAD005: Of the number of new assessments completed for adults, the number where needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

B2 – Critical Risk: Likely / High Impact

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

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

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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Jason McLellan

**Risk Owner:** Graham Boase

### **February 2024 update:**

The risk has been reviewed and updated.

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

### **Description**

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

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

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

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

## Inherent Risk

B1 – Critical Risk: Very Likely / High Impact

### Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls (strategic relevance):

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

Ancillary control:

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

Assurance:

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

### Impact / Consequences

- Objectives not delivered.

- Failure to maximise opportunities to collaborate to resolve issues no single organisation is responsible for or capable of resolving on its own.
- Ineffective management of expectations among partners/public/Members leading to reputational damage.
- Investment of council resources with minimal return.

## **Residual Risk**

C2 – Major risk: Possible / High Impact

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

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

### **Further actions:**

To explore further the organisations understanding of current partnerships and support discussions at HoS, Directors, and/or Cabinet level as appropriate as to where partnerships aren't delivering as hoped.

Action due date: 31 March 2024

Person Responsible: Chief Internal Auditor

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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Barry Mellor

**Risk Owner:** Gary Williams

**February 2024 update**

Risk reviewed and updated.

Further actions have been updated

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

**Description**

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

**Anticipated direction of travel:**

This risk is not within our risk appetite. Following positive feedback from Audit Wales on our programme management and organisational ambition on this agenda we are reassured that we have a well-scoped action plan in place. However, a national report about the public sector’s response more generally, to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, broadly says organisations need to be bold and take risks if they are to stand a chance of

meeting this ambitious target. Analysis of 2022/23 data suggests we are not currently delivering at the pace required for us to feel assured we will achieve Net Carbon Zero Council by 2030 and interdependencies of elements outside our control is also a limiting factor. The assessment for Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 is more promising although recent challenges with extending wildflower meadow grassland management approaches are acknowledged as concerning to further progress on this goal. We will be reviewing the Strategy, its scope, the targets within and our now 7-year Programme during 2023/24. Careful communication planning will be required as part of that process and through the decision making board process the revised strategy document will go through (performance scrutiny, cabinet and council). This risk will require regular management to ensure controls are working as intended. We expect the likelihood to reduce, although the impact is anticipated to remain high.

## **Impact / Consequences**

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

## **Inherent Risk**

A2 – Critical Risk: Almost Certain / High Impact

## **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

Critical controls:

- 2023/24 Strategy Review and Refresh work has commenced. It has received public involvement and engagement through surveys and a workshop held in November.



- The draft strategy has been taken to CET and SLT and the public consultation is due to commence in March, followed by MAGs in April/May. The draft strategy will then be presented to Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council in June and July.
- Analysis of net carbon zero performance to date and forecasted progress to 2030 following 2022/23 data return indicates there is a gap between what we forecast can be achieved and the carbon reduction/carbon sequestration increase targets.
- A national report about the public sector's response more generally, to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, broadly says organisations need to be bold and take risks now if they are to stand a chance of meeting this ambitious target.
- The Climate Change and Ecological Emergency cross party political working group has been re-established and is meeting regularly. Cross party consensus around being upfront with our knowledge to date on progress and forecast within the updated strategy document.
- Communication representatives on the Greener Denbighshire Board and cross party political working group to enable the Communications Team to manage media and public relations and internal communications on the matter.
- Effective programme management is in place, including communications and risk management.
- Managers ensure the Communications Team is fully briefed, as early as possible, on any situation that may cause significant reputational loss.
- Climate Change team has been established, with a programme board in place. Resource plans are in place for services for key areas of the Climate and Ecological Change Programme.
- We have secured budget to deliver the 2023/24 programme, including recruiting a procurement business partner to reduce emissions in our procurements. Other roles being explored will largely be expansions of existing roles and teams.
- The Climate and Ecological Change programme actively seek opportunities for external grant funding
- Introduction to Climate Change training is available to all staff. All but one of the Senior Leadership Team have attended a one-day accredited Carbon Literacy course. Intranet pages launched to increase awareness of staff to the contribution they can make.

- Active participation in national, regional and local strategy and operational groups to leverage benefits from collaboration.
- Active engagement with Environmental Representative groups active in Denbighshire. Public engagement within strategy review and refresh every 3 years.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- NCZCORP: Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains)
- CTOTALCORP: Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) for the Net Carbon Zero goal
- STOTALCORP: Total carbon tonnage sequestered (Corporately) for the Net Carbon Zero goal
- SRHIGHCORP: Percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness
- SRLOWCORP: Percentage of DCC owned and operated land in lowest categories of species richness

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

C2 – Major: Possible / High Impact

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

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

### **Further actions:**

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

Action Due Date: Rolling

Person Responsible: Interim Climate Change Programme Manager

2. Roll out ecological literacy training

Action Due Date: 31/03/2025

Person Responsible: Interim Climate Change Programme Manager

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

Action Due Date: 31/07/2024

Person Responsible: Interim Climate Change Programme Manager

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

Action Due Date: 31/03/2024

Person Responsible: Communications & Marketing Officer

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

Action Due Date: 31/03/2024

Person Responsible: Communications & Marketing Officer

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

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

**Risk Owner:** Gary Williams

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

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

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

### **Description**

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

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

### **Impact / Consequences**

- Failure to recruit to and retain staff in key roles, including front line positions
- Difficulty in sustaining services

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

## **Inherent Risk**

B3 – Major Risk: Likely / Medium Impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

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

Critical controls:

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

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

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

Ancillary controls:

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

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

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

Qualitative indicators (delivery of activities):

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

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

B3 – Major Risk: Likely / Medium Impact

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

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



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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Gill German

**Risk Owner:** Nicola Stubbins

### **February 2024 review:**

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

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

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

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

### **Description**

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

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

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

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

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

This risk has been regionally agreed. We will review the anticipated direction of travel as our management of this risk progresses over the next few months. We always felt this would take time to be resolved but there have been delays, but there is a real desire from Welsh Government to implement but it is a complex and challenging issue to resolve. It is becoming more challenging to find placements. In some cases, where a placement is necessary but cannot be sourced due to national placement insufficiency a bespoke arrangement may have to be established. This is known by CIW as Operating Without Registration (OWR) and is an offence. Work is ongoing between CIW, ADSSC, AWHoCS and WLGA to agree a process for the monitoring of OWRs. It is accepted that national placement insufficiency is leading to an increased use of OWR arrangements.

### **Impact / Consequences**

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

### **Inherent Risk**

B2 – Critical Risk: Highly likely and High Impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

Critical controls:

- Work with Welsh Government to ensure children are supported as close to home as possible.
- Raise the issues connected with this approach with Welsh Government and stress that a detailed and informed approach, attuned timing, and compatible messaging is essential to the competent management of the journey.

- Identify other alternative provision that is available
- Raise awareness within the Regional Partnership Board and partner organisations.
- The Regional Commissioning Board to consider other models such as In-house delivery

Ancillary controls:

- None.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- Costs associated with care for CLA will be available.

## **Residual Risk**

B2 – Critical Risk: Highly likely and High Impact

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

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

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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

**Risk Owner:** Liz Thomas

### **February 2024 update:**

Risk reviewed and updated.

Risk updated to reflect how the 2024/25 budget has been set, future projections and plans.

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

### **Description**

The Local Government provisional settlement for 2024 to 2025 is 3.6% (on cash year on year comparison), this compares to a settlement of 8.2% in 2023 to 2024. There continues to be an ever growing list of significant economic and demand led pressures related to inflation (e.g. pay, energy), social care, support for schools, and homelessness that are outside of the council's ability to fully control.

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

Although the Council's budgetary position is based on a range of assumptions and estimates that can change, the projections at budget setting time indicated that pressures of £24.5m for 2024/25 required funding.. The budget was balanced by the increase in funding from WG (provisional settlement equated to an additional £6.7m), savings totalling £10.4m and a Council Tax yield of £7.5m. £10.4m is a significant and ambitious level of savings to deliver in a single year and comes with risk. At the time of setting the budget services were working through how to achieve their share of £3m (part of the £10.4m).

Council Tax was increased by 8.23% for council services and 1.11% for the increase in the fire levy, a combined total of 9.34%. Similar pressures are being experienced by other Welsh local authorities.

The position for the medium term (2025/26 and 2026/27) within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) look as equally as challenging as 2024/25. Funding is even more uncertain as the current UK Government spending plans end in 2024 to 2025 and therefore WG cannot provide an indicative settlement for that year. Based on information from the Wales Fiscal Analysis the Council is planning for no increase in funding for WG in the next 2 years, which coincides with continued increases for demand in services and costs pressures. Assuming Council Tax increases 3.8% for both years, there is a high level estimated gap of £15m and £13m already respectively.

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

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

The main areas of pressure relate to:

- Social Care (Adults) – this pressure relates to the ever increasing demand due to need and demographic pressure. It is also impacted by inflationary pressures especially the annual increase in the Real Living Wage and the impact this has on the care home fees that are agreed on an annual basis.
- Childrens Services – the main driver of pressures in this area is the increasing number and cost of external placements.
- Pay and grading – the pressure for increases in public sector pay is a major concern for the Council's finances when the expected settlement falls well short of inflation. It is expected that due to the RLW increasing at an even higher rate over a number of years that the Council's whole grading structure will need to be

redesigned – a project team has been established to carry out this work and we await the results of the 2024 pay negotiations before this work can be progressed.

- School Budgets – the Council provides schools with inflationary pressures each year and then decides whether or not a savings target is applied. All the inflationary pressures (e.g. pay and energy) also impact schools' budgets.

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

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

- Social Care (Adults) – the pressure (excluding pay) in 2023/24 was £8.2m, and a further pressure of £8m has been included for 2024 to 2025.
- Childrens Services - the pressure (excluding pay) in 2023/24 was £2.7m, and a further pressure of £2m has been included for 2024 to 2025.
- Pay and grading - this year the expected pay pressure is in excess of £4m (settlement agreed as this report is being written), a further pressure of around £5m is expected for 2024 to 2025. On top of this core pressure, the impact of the grading issue is currently included at a high level estimate of £6.5m
- School Budgets – Inflationary and demographic pressures of £4.2m was included in the 2023 to 2024 budgets. No savings target was given and a commitment was made to review the energy costs position in year. For 2024 to 2025 pressure of £7.6m were required – however a savings target will be required and schools have asked to plan for a 3% savings target.

## **Impact / Consequences**

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

## **Inherent Risk**

B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

### **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

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

Critical controls:

- Since September 2024 we are currently having two weekly CET and Cabinet meetings to discuss the Council's financial position. This forms the basis of how we identify the efficiencies, savings and cuts necessary in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the council. Each major savings proposal is shared with all Members through a report and a work shop session, and a detailed plan is developed including communication before final decisions are made.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be refreshed early in the new financial year. This will include high level plans for the transformation of the Council.
- Our level of financial reserves are kept at a sensible level so that shocks to economy can be dealt with.

- The collaborative approach to partnership working and sharing lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic (with Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association) has been mutually beneficial and we hope that this same approach could be established should we experience further economic shocks in the future. Working collaboratively, pan Wales, has been an effective way to develop solutions. However the financial capacity for Welsh Government to help is also very limited.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will be refreshed periodically throughout the financial year and will contain different scenarios to try to ensure that it can deal with changes in the external environment.
- We try to reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring, where we can, for example through individual, regional, national lobbying and through other meetings/fora.
- Annual, detailed budget setting process that considers economic environment
- Regular (usually monthly) financial planning meetings between services and management accountants are in place. Financial management will be strengthened in year, by the introduction of tracking savings monthly that are reported regularly. Enabling early identification of any issues, so prompt action can be taken.
- The Procurement Team supports services to ensure value for money and explore collaborative procurement where that may be a possibility.
- The budget setting process involves Members, so they understand that difficult decisions are necessary, and they are involved with developing the proposals. This should make them more likely to support the recommendations made.

#### Ancillary controls:

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



Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls: During 2023/24 the Head of Finance and Audit's service plan includes key performance indicators that are associated with effective management of this risk and provides a monthly budget report to Cabinet.

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

Consideration is being given to including key performance indicators regards budget and savings in all service plans.

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

C1 – Critical Risk: Possible / Very High Impact

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

**Lead Member(s):** Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

**Risk Owner:** Graham Boase

### **February 2024 update:**

The risk has been reviewed and updated.

Further Actions updates are as follows:

1. Implement the Budget Strategy agreed in April 2023 - Action Due Date: January 2024. This action has been completed, budget for 2024/25 was set in January 2024.
2. Take action in year to reduce the projected in year overspend in order to ensure reserves are still available to fund exit costs, delays to savings identification and implementation, and the future financial challenges - Action Due Date: September 2023 to end March 2024. This is ongoing until the end of the financial year. All Heads of Service are taking action to reduce, delay and cease expenditure and reduce the in-year over spend. Positive movement was seen at the end of January 2024 as reported to Cabinet in the monthly finance update report.

Residual risk score remains as : B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

### **Description**

### **Description**

The Local Government provisional settlement for 2024 to 2025 is 3.6% (on cash year on year comparison), this compares to a settlement of 8.2% in 2023 to 2024. There continues to be an ever growing list of significant economic and demand led pressures related to

inflation (e.g. pay, energy), social care, support for schools, and homelessness that are outside of the council's ability to fully control.

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

Although the Council's budgetary position is based on a range of assumptions and estimates that can change, the projections at budget setting time indicated that pressures of £24.5m for 2024/25 required funding.. The budget was balanced by the increase in funding from WG (provisional settlement equated to an additional £6.7m), savings totalling £10.4m and a Council Tax yield of £7.5m. £10.4m is a significant and ambitious level of savings to deliver in a single year and comes with risk. At the time of setting the budget services were working through how to achieve their share of £3m (part of the £10.4m). Council Tax was increased by 8.23% for council services and 1.11% for the increase in the fire levy, a combined total of 9.34%. Similar pressures are being experienced by other Welsh local authorities.

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

The main areas of pressure relate to:

- Social Care (Adults) – this pressure relates to the ever increasing demand due to need and demographic pressure. It is also impacted by inflationary pressures especially the annual increase in the Real Living Wage and the impact this has on the care home fees that are agreed on an annual basis.
- Childrens Services – the main driver of pressures in this area is the increasing number and cost of external placements.
- Pay and grading – the pressure for increases in public sector pay is a major concern for the Council's finances when the expected settlement falls well short of inflation. It is expected that due to the RLW increasing at an even higher rate over a number of years that the Council's whole grading structure will need to be

redesigned – a project team has been established to carry out this work and we await the results of the 2024 pay negotiations before this work can be progressed.

- School Budgets – the Council provides schools with inflationary pressures each year and then decides whether or not a savings target is applied. All the inflationary pressures (e.g. pay and energy) also impact schools' budgets.

### **Anticipated direction of travel:**

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

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

- Social Care (Adults) – the pressure (excluding pay) in 2023/24 was £8.2m, and a further pressure of £8m has been included for 2024 to 2025.
- Childrens Services - the pressure (excluding pay) in 2023/24 was £2.7m, and a further pressure of £2m has been included for 2024 to 2025.
- Pay and grading - this year the expected pay pressure is in excess of £4m (settlement agreed as this report is being written), a further pressure of around £5m is expected for 2024 to 2025. On top of this core pressure, the impact of the grading issue is currently included at a high level estimate of £6.5m
- School Budgets – Inflationary and demographic pressures of £4.2m was included in the 2023 to 2024 budgets. No savings target was given and a commitment was

made to review the energy costs position in year. For 2024 to 2025 pressure of £7.6m were required – however a savings target will be required and schools have asked to plan for a 3% savings target.

## **Impact / Consequences**

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

## **Inherent Risk**

B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

## **Controls to Manage Risk (in place)**

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

Critical controls:

- Since September 2024 we are currently having two weekly CET and Cabinet meetings to discuss the Council's financial position. This forms the basis of how we identify the efficiencies, savings and cuts necessary in order to ensure the financial sustainability of the council. Each major savings proposal is shared with all Members through a report and a work shop session, and a detailed plan is developed including communication before final decisions are made.

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be refreshed early in the new financial year. This will include high level plans for the transformation of the Council.
- Our level of financial reserves are kept at a sensible level so that shocks to economy can be dealt with.
- The collaborative approach to partnership working and sharing lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic (with Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association) has been mutually beneficial and we hope that this same approach could be established should we experience further economic shocks in the future. Working collaboratively, pan Wales, has been an effective way to develop solutions. However the financial capacity for Welsh Government to help is also very limited.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will be refreshed periodically throughout the financial year and will contain different scenarios to try to ensure that it can deal with changes in the external environment.
- We try to reduce the likelihood of this risk occurring, where we can, for example through individual, regional, national lobbying and through other meetings/fora.
- Annual, detailed budget setting process that considers economic environment
- Regular (usually monthly) financial planning meetings between services and management accountants are in place. Financial management will be strengthened in year, by the introduction of tracking savings monthly that are reported regularly. Enabling early identification of any issues, so prompt action can be taken.
- The Procurement Team supports services to ensure value for money and explore collaborative procurement where that may be a possibility.
- The budget setting process involves Members, so they understand that difficult decisions are necessary, and they are involved with developing the proposals. This should make them more likely to support the recommendations made.

Ancillary controls:

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

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls: During 2023/24 the Head of Finance and Audit's service plan includes key performance indicators that are associated with effective management of this risk and provides a monthly budget report to Cabinet.

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

Consideration is being given to including key performance indicators regards budget and savings in all service plans.

Assurance:

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

## **Residual Risk**

B1 – Critical Risk: Likely / Very High Impact

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

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

## Further Actions

1. Implement the Budget Strategy agreed in April 2023

**Action Due Date:** January 2024

This action has been completed, budget for 2024/25 was set in January 2024.

2. Take action in year to reduce the projected in year overspend in order to ensure reserves are still available to fund exit costs, delays to savings identification and implementation, and the future financial challenges.

**Action Due Date:** September 2023 to end March 2024.

This is ongoing until the end of the financial year. All Heads of Service are taking action to reduce, delay and cease expenditure and reduce the in-year over spend. Positive movement was seen at the end of January 2024 as reported to Cabinet in the monthly finance update report.



## Appendix 3: Risk Scoring Matrix

### Grading the likelihood of an event

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

### Rating the impact of an event

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

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

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

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

## **Risk Appetite : Classification and Description:**

**Averse** is the avoidance of risk and uncertainty. We are therefore **not willing to tolerate any risk** within this appetite classification.

**Minimalist** is the preference for ultra-safe options that have a low degree of inherent risk and have a potential for only limited reward. Within this classification, we are willing to accept only **minor risks**.

**Cautious** is the preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. In terms of our risk exposure rating, we would therefore accept a **minor or moderate risk**.

**Open** is the willingness to consider all delivery options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). Within this, we will accept **minor, moderate and major risks**.

**Hungry** is the eagerness to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher business rewards despite greater inherent risk. All risk exposure is accepted within this classification – **minor, moderate, major and critical**.

## Summary of Denbighshire's Risk Appetite Statement

(Reviewed April 2024):

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

- **Reputation and Credibility (risks about the trust / confidence people have in the council)– Open** risk appetite, willing to consider all options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). This means we will tolerate minor, moderate or major risks.
- **Operational and Policy Delivery (risks which focus on long term goals and the service which our customers receive) – Open** risk appetite, willing to consider all options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). Again, this means we will tolerate minor, moderate or major risks.
- **Financial Projects (risks about financial loss and value for money) - Cautious** risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Within this risk appetite, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks.
- **Financial Treasury Management (risks about financial loss and value for money) – Cautious** risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Within this risk appetite, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks.
- **Compliance and Regulation - Safeguarding (risks about adherence to law, regulations and guidelines) – Minimalist** risk appetite, preference for ultra-safe options where the well-being of individuals is concerned, with a low degree of inherent risk and have a potential for only limited (safe) reward. This means we will only accept minor risks in this area.

- **Compliance and Regulation - Other (risks about adherence to law, regulations and statutory guidelines) – Cautious** risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Again, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks in this area.
- **People (Workforce) Learning and Development – Cautious** risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. As above, minor or moderate risks only will be tolerated.
- **People (Workforce) – Cautious** risk appetite, preference for safe options that have a medium degree of inherent risk and may have some potential for rewards. Again, we will only tolerate minor or moderate risks in this area.

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## **Appendix 4 – Revised Approach to Corporate Risk Reporting**

- 1.1. The council's risk management framework previously required for six monthly reports to committee on the Corporate Risk Register. Reviews with risk owners took place each February and September, with our reports being presented to CET, SLT, Cabinet Briefing, and Performance Scrutiny in the months that follow. Our February review is shared with Governance and Audit for their information, and the September review is tabled with them each November (following input from CET, SLT, Cabinet and Scrutiny) so that members may be assured that the council's risk management processes are working.
- 1.2. At November's meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee, officers were challenged to consider 'a more iterative approach' to monitoring Corporate Risk, some members feeling that six months between having sight of the risk position was too long. A lot can happen in six months, particularly with the current financial climate. It was suggested that members would not need to see the whole register, only a snap-shot of current scores and trends, as is presented in our summary currently. The suggestion was that this would be included for information only within the papers of each Governance and Audit committee.
- 1.3. The difficulty with the suggestion is that work would still need to take place to update the register, and capacity is severely stretched. However, by distributing the workload throughout the year, it is felt that this request will free-up some time within the team during what have previously been 'pinch-points' in February and September.
- 1.4. Considering the suggestion therefore, the only way it could be achieved is by either i) circulating by email; or ii) tabling at a meeting with CET the risk summary to quickly check the position of each risk. The email approach would be preferable from the perspective of time, but there is also value in tabling this work for discussion. The best approach, therefore, will be to alternate between the two

approaches between updates. For thirteen risks this should not be an onerous task. Where there is significant movement in a risk, risk owners can then provide a timely update for the body of the main register, without having to wait for the six-monthly review.

1.5. The advantage of doing this exercise regularly in this way is two-fold:

- i) It gives risk owners an opportunity to think about the present position of their risks with more frequency, and informs other risk owners as to any significant changes that may impact their portfolios.
- ii) It should mean that there would be less time needed to update the register as a whole during the February and September reviews, as updates will have been made throughout the year. This applies to both risk owners and our designated risk lead within the Strategic Planning and Performance Team, who presently has weeks of meetings planned with risk owners to inform each review.

## How frequently?

2.1. During 2024, the Governance and Audit Committee will meet:

Jan 31	Mar 6	Apr 24	Jun 12	Jul 24	Sep 25	Nov 20
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Its meetings are frequent but irregular, which poses a challenge. Having only taken CET through an update exercise in March or June, we would then be required to repeat the task straight away in April and July. It is felt that this would add little value to our process and become onerous.

2.2. The alternative would be to stagger our updates to more of a quarterly pattern where Governance and Audit receive:

Jan 31: Risk Summary	Apr 24: Full Risk Register	Jul 24: Risk Summary	Nov 20: Full Risk Register
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(For information)	(For information)	(For information)	(Tabled for discussion)
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This frequency of the summary may be a compromise for committee members to accept, but it is a balance that needs to be struck with officer capacity, CET time, and not devaluing the exercise of risk management itself.

- 2.3. Crucially this being a new approach to pilot, we should review how it has worked and the appropriateness of frequency at the end of 2024 to 2025.

**What does this mean for reporting?**

- 3.1. Checking-in with CET on a more regular basis ahead of Governance and Audit meetings should mean that there is no longer a need for in-depth reviews of the risk register twice yearly. We would expect the information to be more current throughout the year.
- 3.2. As indicated in the table above, the full register would still be available to be shared with committees twice annually (albeit not the product of an in-depth review as it is currently). However, we are not proposing to change the present tabling of the full risk register for discussion. It would still be presented twice yearly to CET, SLT, Cabinet Briefing, and Performance Scrutiny; and once annually to Governance and Audit to support their role with seeking assurance around the process of risk management (in addition to sharing the full register with them for information in April). The January and July risk summaries would also be shared with all the above committees for their information, and should help inform Forward Work Plans and the call-in of specific risks of interest (such as finance, for example).

**Conclusion**

- 4.1. Accepting the above changes, our new risk timetable will look as follows:

<b>Dec/Jan:</b> CET give input by email to confirm content of Risk Summary, or detail any changes needed to main register.	<b>Jan:</b> Risk Summary circulated for information to SLT, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit.
<b>Mar:</b> CET meet to confirm content of Risk Register, or detail any changes needed.	<b>Mar/Apr:</b> Full Risk Register tabled with SLT, Cabinet Briefing and Performance Scrutiny. Circulated for information to Governance and Audit.
<b>Jun / Jul:</b> CET give input by email to confirm content of Risk Summary, or detail any changes needed to main register	<b>Jul:</b> Risk Summary circulated for information to SLT, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Governance and Audit.
<b>October:</b> CET meet to confirm content of Risk Register, or detail any changes needed.	<b>Oct / Nov:</b> Full Risk Register tabled with SLT, Cabinet Briefing and Performance Scrutiny; and with Governance and Audit for assurance.

- 4.2. The final change that would be needed to facilitate this altered programme is to the way in which we presently record changes to the register. Previously this has been done in a section at the start of each risk. For this to become a more iterative risk register with more frequent updates, it would be simpler to simply keep an ongoing log of changes, presented alongside the register when it is tabled.
- 4.3. The final word needs to be on risk with this approach. As with any database, the register will only be as good as the human effort that is put into it. This altered approach to risk management will put more responsibility on risk owners to take the time to ensure that their risks are up-to-date, particularly when carried out as a desk-top exercise, rather than through face-to-face discussion and prompting.

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>18 April 2024</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Scrutiny Work Programme</b>

## **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.

### Cabinet Forward Work Programme

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

### Progress on Committee Resolutions

- 4.9 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 18 March 2024. During that meeting no items were allocated to this Committee for consideration.

- 5.2 The Group's next scheduled to meet on 20 May 2024.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
6 June	<b>Cllr. Gill German1</b>	1. 2018 Estyn Inspection Recommendations  <b>[Education]</b>	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 regulator's 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 (rescheduled February 2024)
	<b>Cllr. Julie Matthews</b>	2. Recruitment, Retention & Workforce Planning	To provide details of: (i) the work underway to recruit, develop, support and retain staff (ii) interventions put in place to support and strengthen recruitment, retention & workforce planning across the Council; and identification of any hard to recruit services/positions across the authority and interim measures taken to alleviate the pressures caused within those services <b>(Heads of Service for those services to be invited to attend to discuss the impact of staffing pressures on operational service delivery)</b>	Identification of potential future workforce pressure areas and the formulation of recommendations with a view to alleviating those pressures and secure the Council's ability to sustainably deliver its services in future	Gary Williams/Lo uise Dougal	<i>July 2023</i>
	<b>Cllr. Barry Mellor</b>	3. Denbighshire's Revised Draft	To present the Committee with:	(i) Pre-decision scrutiny of the revised draft Strategy	Helen Vaughan-	June 2023 (reschedule

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated/ by
		Climate & Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22 – 2029/30	(i) the findings and conclusions of the consultation exercise undertaken to revise the Strategy; and the revised draft Strategy for detailed scrutiny	with a view to seeking Scrutiny’s support for its adoption and implementation; and 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	Evans/ Nicola Kneale	d November 2023 & March 2024 (RhE)
	<b>Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis</b>	4 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
18 July	<b>Cllrs. Gill German &amp; Elen Heaton</b>	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/Rhainn Morelle/David Soley	June 2023
	<b>Cllr. Gill German</b>	2. Christ The Word <b>[Education]</b>	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	Nicola Stubbins/ Geraint Davies/James Brown/GwE/Christ the Word staff &	September 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
				achieve their full potential; and ensure that the lessons learnt by all stakeholders are applied across all schools in Denbighshire as they introduce the new curriculum; and (ii) support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities of a learning and growing Denbighshire as well as a fairer, safe and more equal county.	Governing Body	
	<b>Leader</b>	3. Economic & Business Development Strategy	To: (i) consult with the Committee on the draft new Denbighshire Economic & Community Ambition Strategy for 2024 onwards; (ii) detail how the current and proposed new Strategy dovetail with the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Welsh & UK Governments and other economic development partners to support the 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	Formulation of recommendations in relation to the new Strategy that will help secure the delivery, in partnership with all stakeholders, of a more prosperous Denbighshire that provides employment and business opportunities for residents to improve the quality of lives and support thriving, cohesive communities	Emlyn Jones/ Gareth Roberts	By SCVCG November 2022 (rescheduled November 2023 & Jan 2024)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
			Council's Corporate Risk Register			
	<b>Cllr. Elen Heaton</b>	4. 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 (reschedule March 2024)(RhE)
26 September	<b>Cllr. Gill German</b>	1. Curriculum for Wales <b>[Education]</b> <b>(School staff to be invited to attend)</b>	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	Assurances that all educational establishments and staff are fully equipped and trained to deliver the new curriculum, identification of any gaps or risks associated with the provision and solutions to address them, with a view to ensuring that children and young people in Denbighshire realise their full potential in line with the Council's Corporate Plan	Geraint Davies/James Brown/GwE	July 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
			disadvantages of the new Curriculum for learners.			
	<b>Cllr. Gill German</b>	2. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation  <b>(School staff to be invited to attend)</b>  <b>[Education]</b>	To analyse: (i) the effectiveness of the funding provided to schools to meet the Act's requirements; (ii) progress made in recruiting and supporting Educational Psychologists; (iii) school-based educational practitioners' feedback on the resources and support 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."	To reduce the risk of the Authority not complying with any of the requirements of the Act and to ensure that every pupil and student in the County is given the required support and opportunities to realise their full potential whilst ensuring that school-based staff are adequately supported and equipped to deliver the required support.	Geraint Davies/Ruth Thackray/Joseph Earl	July 2023
	<b>Cllr. Gill German &amp; Cllr. Emrys Wynne</b>  <b>[Education]</b>	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
	<b>Cllr. Gill German</b>	4. <i>Promoting School Attendance and Engagement in Education</i>	<i>To detail the progress made in improving school attendance rates and educational engagement across the county's schools during the 2023/24 academic year in line with WG Guidance (report to include</i>	<i>Assurances that all possible steps are being taken to monitor pupils' engagement with education, including the provision of appropriate encouragement and support for vulnerable and hard to</i>	<i>Geraint Davies/Wayne Wheatley</i>	<i>January 2024</i>

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
			<i>illustrative data and anonymised case studies)</i>	<i>reach pupils to re-engage with their education and to help them understand the long-term implications of not engaging. All of which should support the county's pupils to reach their full potential and the Council to deliver its corporate priority relating to a learning and growing Denbighshire</i>		
28 November	<b>Cllr. Rhys Thomas</b>	1. Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan  <i>(1st business item on agenda)</i>	To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020	The identification of actions that will support and ensure the delivery of the Council's Corporate Theme of quality housing that meets people's needs and ultimately the Corporate Plan.	Emlyn Jones/ Angela Loftus/Jane Abbott	September 2023
	<b>Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis</b>	2. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (July – Sept)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	<i>Helen Vaughan-Evans/Emma Horan</i>	November 2023
	<b>Cllr. Julie Matthews</b>	3. Corporate Risk Register: September 2024 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	<i>Helen Vaughan-Evans/Iolo McGregor/Heidi Barton-Price</i>	November 2023
	<b>Leader &amp; Cllr. Julie Matthews</b>	4. Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding	To examine current Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding and maximising the	Establishment of a simple, effective and easily adaptable funding application process which can be	Tony Ward/Gary Williams/Emlyn	By SCVCG November 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
		(in the post-Brexit era)  TBC	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)	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	Jones/Helen Vaughan-Evans (with input from Liz Grieve on learning from SPF funding)	
	<b>Cllr. Emrys Wynne</b>	5. <i>Library Service/One Stop Shop Provision</i>  (TBC – possibly early 2025)	<i>To consider: (i) the initial findings of the Working Group established to measure the impact of the reduction in Library/OSS opening hours on residents, communities, and the authority; and (ii) alternative proposals or solutions under consideration for enhancing and/or expanding service delivery going forward</i>	<i>Formulation of recommendations on the best solutions for delivering a comprehensive citizen focussed service within the resources available for the future which supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan</i>	<i>Liz Grieve/Debbie Owen</i>	<i>January 2024</i>
January 2025	<b>Cllr. Emrys Wynne</b>	1. Library Service Standards 2023-24	To consider the results of the WG's annual evaluation of the Council's Library Service and receive information on how the Service has progressed and adapted its service provision during the year	Identification of any slippages in performance in order to formulate recommendations to redress the situation and ensure that the Service delivers the Council's Corporate Plan and its corporate themes in relation to a learning &	Liz Grieve/Debbie Owen	January 2024

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
				growing; healthier, happy and caring; better connected; fairer, safer and more equal Denbighshire; a Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language as well as a well-run and high performing Council.		



**Future Issues**

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<p><i>Learner Travel Measure (Wales)</i></p> <p><b>[Education]</b></p> <p><b>TBC</b> – once outcome of WG Review available (review summer 2024 &amp; report considered by CET)</p>	<p><i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i></p>	<p><i>Identification of potential changes to the Council’s learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications</i></p>	<p><i>Geraint Davies/Ian Land</i></p>	<p><i>January 2021 (rescheduled Sept 2022 &amp; Jan &amp; May 2023)</i></p>
<p>Denbigh Health and Social Care and the Rebalancing of Social Care Agenda <i>(now widened was Dolwen Residential Care Home (now to be considered as part of the future vision for health and social care services in the Denbigh area)</i></p> <p><i>Sometime during 2024/25 (tbc)</i></p>	<p>To review the future provision of services at Dolwen to meet the growing demand and complexity of need, whilst supporting people to live in a home that meets their needs and allows them to live an independent and resilient life.</p>	<p><i>Pre-decision scrutiny of the task and finish group’s findings and the formulation of recommendations for presentation to Cabinet with respect of the future provision of services at Dolwen with a view to ensuring that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs and are able to live independent and resilient lives</i></p>	<p><i>Task and Finish Group/Ann Lloyd/Katie Newe</i></p>	<p><i>July 2018 (delayed due to COVID-19)</i></p>

## Information/Consultation Reports

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
<b>Feb/May/Sept/November each year</b>  [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.  <b>Consideration of the information provided will assist the Committee to determine whether any issues merit detailed scrutiny</b>	Kevin Roberts/Ann Lloyd	September 2023
<b>June/July 2024</b>  [Information]	<i>Library Service Standards &amp; Performance 2023/24</i>	<i>To share the Service's draft performance statistics as submitted to the Welsh Government's Culture Division in accordance with the requirements of the Framework of the Welsh Public Library Standards (prior to the WG's assessment and production of its report on the Service, to be submitted to Committee in January 2025)</i>	<i>Liz Grieve/Debbie Owen</i>	<i>January 2024</i>
<b>March 2025</b>	<i>Elective Home Education</i>	<i>To provide data on the number of home educated pupils in Denbighshire along with</i>	<i>Geraint Davies/Ruth</i>	<i>March 2024 RhE</i>

[Education]		<i>information on current trends with respect of the number of families choosing to educate their children at home and the measures in place to support those families and those wishing to return to mainstream education.</i>	Thackray/Jayne Williams	
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**Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines**

Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
6 June	<b>22 May</b> (due to B/H)	18 July	4 July	26 September	12 September

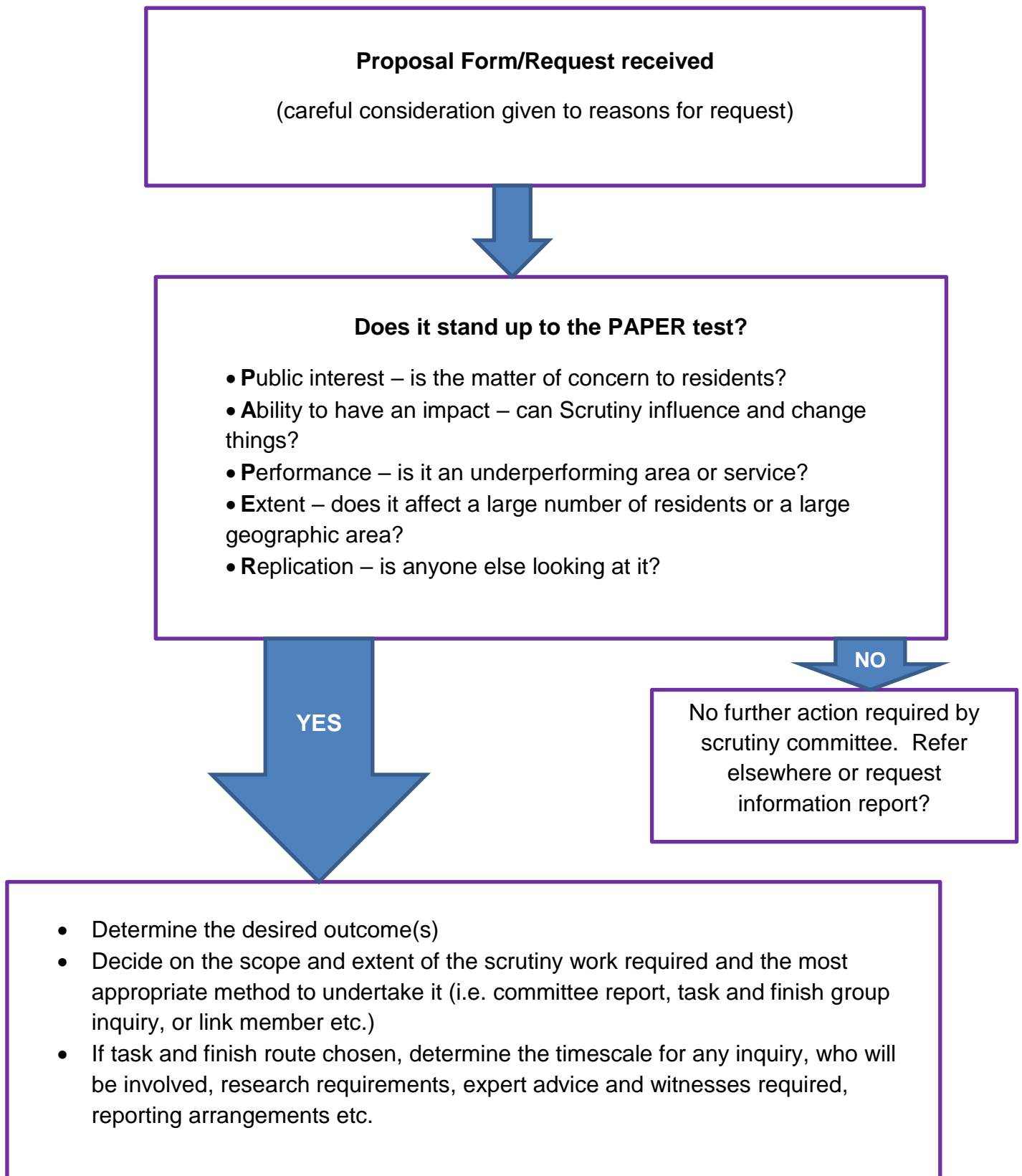
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<b>Member Proposal Form for Scrutiny Forward Work Programme</b>	
<b>NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	
<b>TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION</b>	
<b>TOPIC</b>	
<b>What needs to be scrutinised (and why)?</b>	
<b>Is the matter one of concern to residents/local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

## Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny



## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
<b>23 April</b>	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/Report Author – Liz Grieve/ Craig Berry, Sian Lloyd Price	
	2	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/Report Author – Geraint Davies/James Curran	
	3	UK Government Levelling Up Funding Award (Round 3) – Vale of Clwyd Constituency	To inform Cabinet of the UK Government Levelling Up Funding Award (Round 3) for the Vale of Clwyd Constituency and seek a decision to accept the Award	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Emlyn Jones/Kim Waller	18.03.24 KEJ
	4	Finance Report – Medium Term Financial Strategy and assessment of financial resilience 2025/26 – 2029/30.	To update Cabinet on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy including the Medium Term Financial Plan, and to consider the assessment of financial resilience that has been undertaken	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	21.03.24 KEJ
	5	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
<b>21 May</b>	1	Housing First Pilot - Audit Report	To present an update on the pilot audit report	Tbc	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Ann Lloyd / Bob Chowdhury	22.03.24 KEJ
	2	Denbighshire's draft Local Housing Market Assessment	To seek Cabinet approval of the assessment for submission to Welsh Government	Yes	Cllrs Rhys Thomas & Win Mullen James Lead Officer/Report Author – Angela Loftus/Sue Lewis	02.04.24 KEJ
	3	Finance Report (Financial Outturn 2023/24)	To present the final revenue outturn position for 2023/24	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	21.03.24 KEJ
	4	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	5	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>25 June</b>	1	Council Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024 (year-end)	To consider a report by the Strategic Planning Team for Council to approve the Performance Self-Assessment 2023 to 2024.	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Iolo McGregor, Emma Horan	



## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
	2	Reviewed and updated Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021-2030)	To consider the reviewed and updated Climate and Ecological Change Strategy prior to its submission to Council for approval	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Gary Williams / Liz Wilcox-Jones / Helen Vaughan-Evans	
	3	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	4	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>30 July</b>	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>24 Sept</b>	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item

## Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
<b>22 Oct</b>	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>19 Nov</b>	1	Council Performance Self-Assessment Update – July to September (QPR2)	To consider a report by the Strategic Planning Team for Council to approve the Performance Self-Assessment July to September	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans/lolo McGregor, Emma Horan	
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
<b>17 Dec</b>	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Deadline</b>	<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Deadline</b>	<i>Meeting</i>	<b>Deadline</b>
<i>23 April</i>	<b>9 April</b>	<i>21 May</i>	<b>7 May</b>	<i>25 June</i>	<b>11 June</b>

Updated 02/04/2024 – KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

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## Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
7 March 2024	5. Elective Home Education	<p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b> <i>subject to the above comments and observations to –</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>(i) endorse the policies, procedures and approach taken by the Council's Education Service to support and monitor the delivery of Elective Home Education (EHE);</i></li> <li><i>(ii) acknowledge the efforts of Education Service staff in ensuring that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities with regards to pupils who elect to be educated at home, whilst also ensuring they are appropriately supported and safeguarded;</i></li> <li><i>(iii) request that an Information Report be circulated to Committee members in 12 months' time detailing data and trends in relation to the number of pupils in the county who are educated at home; and</i></li> <li><i>(iv) recommend that the Lead Member for Education, Children and Families, in conjunction with Education Service officers, write to the Welsh Government's Minister for Education and Welsh Language seeking the Government to introduce regulations governing the responsibilities of those who choose to educate their children at home.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations and observations.</p> <p>(iii) the requested 'Information Report' has been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for circulation in March 2025 (see Appendix 1 attached).</p>

	<p><b>6. Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?</b></p>	<p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b> <i>subject to the above observations to acknowledge the progress made to date by the Council –</i></p> <p><i>(i) in addressing the two recommendations laid out in the May 2023 Audit Wales review 'Are the Council's Corporate Support Functions Effective?'; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) in sufficiently resourcing its wider corporate services' functions.</i></p>	<p>Lead Members and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations.</p>
	<p><b>7. Scrutiny Work Programme</b></p>	<p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b> <i>subject to the inclusion of the information report on Elective Home Education for March 2025, and the rescheduling of the Revised Draft Climate and Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22–2029/30 from April to June's meeting and the Cefndy Performance Report 2023/24 from June to July's meeting, to confirm its forward work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.</i></p>	<p>Agreed inclusions and amendments made to the Committee's forward work programme – see Appendix 1 attached.</p>