

To: Members of the Performance
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 November 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, 28 NOVEMBER 2024** in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE.**

Yours sincerely

G. Williams
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Pages 3 - 4)

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

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

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

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 5 - 16)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on the 26 September 2024 (copy attached)

10:05am – 10:10am

5 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (Pages 17 - 108)

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

10:10am – 11:00am

BREAK 11:00am - 11:10am

6 CORPORATE PLAN (Pages 109 - 190)

To consider a report on the Corporate Plan Performance Update: April to September 2024 to discuss the council's performance and the improvement actions (copy enclosed).

11:10am – 12:00pm

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 191 - 218)

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.

12:00pm – 12:20pm

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

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

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Hugh Irving (Chair)

Councillor Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair)

Ellie Chard
Bobby Feeley
Martyn Hogg
Carol Holliday

Alan Hughes
Paul Keddie
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 a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 26 September 2024 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Bobby Feeley, Martyn Hogg, Carol Holliday, Hugh Irving (Chair), Paul Keddie, Terry Mendies, Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair) and Andrea Tomlin along with Colette Owen (Education Co-opted Member).

ALSO PRESENT

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People. Diane King and the Lead Member for Welsh Language, Culture and Heritage, Emrys Wynne at the Committee's invitation.

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (GW), Head of Education (GD), Inclusion Officer – Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Implementation (JE) , Principal Education Managers (JB & RT) and the Headteachers of Ysgol Pen Morfa (SD) and Denbigh High School (GW), Education Social Work Team Leader/Safeguarding Officer (WW), Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Development Officer (MLIJ), Scrutiny Co-ordinator (RhE), Committee Administrators (RhT-J Minute Taker) & Webcaster (ED).

GwE representatives/advisors - Jacqueline Chan (Primary Sector) and Mair Herbert (Secondary Sector)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alan Hughes and from Neil Roberts (Co-opted Member for Education).

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following members declared personal interests in business items 5, 6, 7 and 8:

Councillor Ellie Chard – Local Education Authority (LEA) Governor at Ysgol Tir Morfa and a Town/Community Council Governor at Christchurch School

Councillor Martyn Hogg – Parent Governor at St Asaph VP School

Councillor Carol Holliday – Town/Community Council Governor at both Ysgol Penmorfa and Ysgol Clawdd Offa

Councillor Gareth Sandilands – LEA Governor at Ysgol Clawdd Offa

Councillor Andrea Tomlin – as a close family member was on the teaching staff of one of the county's secondary schools. In addition, a personal acquaintance was a member of the Council's Educational Social Work Team (business item 6).

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

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

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 July 2024 were submitted. It was:

Resolved: that the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 July 2024 be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Matters arising:

Pages 11 – 12, ‘Cefndy Year End Report 2023/24’: members queried if the enterprise had changed its name from Cefndy Enterprises to Cefndy and also whether the visits for county councillors to the manufacturing site had yet been arranged. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator advised that the enterprise’s name on its website was ‘Cefndy Healthcare and Manufacturing’. Three potential dates, during November, would shortly be circulated to councillors enabling them to book a visit to the manufacturing site.

5 ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People, alongside the Head of Education, presented the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Update September 2024 report (previously circulated). The report aimed to provide a further update on the progress made to ensure the Local Authority and schools were meeting their statutory requirements under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, 2018.

The update focused on the progress in implementing the Welsh Government’s ALN reforms, which were aimed at improving support for children and young people with learning difficulties. During the past year, Denbighshire’s education team successfully transitioned from the old Special Educational Needs (SEN) system to the new ALN framework. The transition included the introduction of Individual Development Plans (IDPs), which replaced the existing statements of SEN. These IDPs ensured a more personalised approach to supporting learners, aligning with the new legislative requirements outlined in the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

Officers reported that all staff supporting students with ALN had undergone comprehensive training. This training equipped them to handle the new processes and ensured that they could effectively collaborate with schools, parents, and other stakeholders. Additionally, efforts had been made to improve multi-agency cooperation, particularly with health and social services, to provide a more holistic approach to learner support.

The update highlighted several challenges encountered during the transformation, particularly around resource allocation and meeting the increased assessments demand. Despite these, officers had met critical deadlines set by the Welsh Government to implement the new system. The Head of Education advised that the Service was constantly monitoring and scrutinising schools' compliance with the Act's requirements, as were Estyn. Since the pandemic approximately half of the county's schools had been inspected by Estyn, of the 26 schools inspected only one had received a recommendation relating to improving the provision of ALN services.

Responding to Members questions the Lead Member, officers and the Primary Headteacher:

- confirmed that there was a robust communication plan in place to inform parents on the requirements placed on local education authorities (LEA) and schools by the 2018 Act and how the LEA and schools proposed to deliver the duties placed upon them. This helped to manage expectations. All the details and information on the work carried was available on the Council's website. There was also much communication between local schools, which helped with sharing lessons learnt, best practice etc. This was in addition to regional and national work to share best practice and support a consistent approach for the transformation process. All the open dialogue made the process somewhat easier.
- advised that whilst funding was currently available for the 2 temporary ALN advisory teachers posts until August 2025 the financial situation was difficult for the entire Council, and some difficult decisions would need to be made regarding the funding for the next financial year. The demand for ALN support was increasing, nevertheless the Service had to prioritise all educational needs and deliver its services within the budget that was available to it.
- confirmed that the education team took a multidisciplinary approach to meet the needs of each individual. The Inclusion Officer—ALN Implementation added that there were close working relationships with the health board and children's services to ensure that the needs of the individuals were met and wherever possible tailored accordingly to support their unique needs.
- agreed with members that budget constraints and the staffing shortages across all sectors was an ever-present challenge, particularly recruiting specialist staff. However, each school had an Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) who worked with the school to mitigate the challenges that arose. Each school's ALNCo worked closely with their counterparts in their school cluster to support each other, share experiences and best practice. The headteacher of Ysgol Penmorfa illustrated how that school were currently facing challenges as their ALNCo had recently stood down. in the interim her and the deputy headteacher were maintaining the workload but were extremely grateful for the support and advice provided by the LEA as and when they required it.

Following an in-depth discussion, the Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above observations and acknowledging both the local and national challenges faced in meeting the statutory requirements of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, to –

- (i) congratulate all stakeholders and endorse the work undertaken to date to deliver the transformation work required to comply with the duties placed upon them under the Act; and***
- (ii) request that a further progress report be presented to the Committee in twelve months' time when all schools and the Local Education Authority (LEA) are expected to be fully compliant with the duties placed upon under the Act.***

6 PROMOTE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People, accompanied by the Head of Education, presented the Promote School Attendance and Engagement in Education report (previously circulated). The Education Social Work Team Leader/Safeguarding Officer, Principal Education Managers and the headteacher of Denbigh High School were also in attendance for the discussion. The report provided the current position regarding school attendance and engagement in education and outlined the process taken to address matters where concern existed at the individual pupil's level of engagement with their education. It also provided the Committee with information on the measures utilised to support vulnerable pupils to re-engage with their education. It also provided an understanding of the regional and national context in addressing the current level of concern nationally. School attendance was a national priority and was also one of Estyn's priorities.

Officers stated that school attendance rates in the 2018/19 pre-pandemic school year ended with primary schools achieving an overall figure of 94.8% and secondary schools at 93.7%. In the academic year September 2023 to June 2024, primary /secondary combined school attendance was 90.6%. This had increased from 89.2% over the same period in 2022/23 across Wales. In Denbighshire, the overall figure for primary / secondary combined for the academic year 2023 / 2024 was 89.9 %, 0.7 % less than the Wales average. Nationally, 10.3 % of pupils met the persistent absence threshold of 10% of sessions missed for the academic year, again an improvement from 12.9% over the same period in 2022/23. Denbighshire's figure was 15.2% for the same period 2022/23.

Members were informed that Denbighshire County Council had received additional WG funding through the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) to address and support education and schools. The Education Service continued to develop cohesive community links across the authority in an attempt to address this trend, with a strong focus on community belonging and access to services. This approach was aimed at ensuring that children had access to their full-time education entitlement and access to broader and more expansive services than just education alone. As part of this, the Service had developed a pupil engagement strategy which drew upon the many services supporting this agenda and set a clear strategic direction for the Service.

Responding to members' question the Lead Member, officers and Headteacher:

- clarified that the “reduced timetable” policy in education referred to situations where schools or educational settings reduced the number of hours or days that a child or young person attended school, usually due to specific needs or behavioural issues. This practice was sometimes necessary to address a student’s challenges, the reduced timetable would only be used as a short-term, temporary solution to help a student reintegrate into full-time education. The Welsh Government did not endorse long-term or permanent use of reduced hours. The goal was to support the child while addressing underlying issues, such as behavioural challenges, anxiety, health issues, or special educational needs.
- Provided assurances that one child's absence, be it authorised or unauthorised would not affect the education of other children. Nevertheless, teachers would assist and support students who had been ill and missed out on work; the level and extent of support provided would differ from student to student and dependent upon the student's needs. If the absence of students was due to long-term illness, schools would follow established codes and practices set out by WG. At LEA level, the information collated would be general data such as absence for illness/medical ground; however, at school level, the data would be collected based on the detail parents/guardians provided.
- Reassurances were provided that unauthorised absences for family holidays purposes was not a widespread problem in Denbighshire.
- confirmed that there were links between low attendance and areas of deprivation. The impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis had compounded the problem, the work to address these matters was complex and would take time to come to fruition.
- advised that Fixed Term Penalties (FPNs) were a deterrent, and warning notices to parents/guardians regarding absence were effective. The systems available to them were effective, with school attendance rates increasing. If financial penalties for unauthorised absence were not paid, the matter could end up in court.
- The new Education, Schools and Children’s Services Attendance Policy for 2024/25 emphasised that pupil absence from schools would need to be taken as a whole council approach as factors outside education impacted on attendance. For most other services, the pandemic was a historical matter, however, its legacy still had a significant impact on schools and education.
- confirmed that the council's financial situation had a negative impact on the Education Service. The Education Social Worker Team had been reduced from twelve to four core members of staff, which made the workload difficult to sustain. Whilst these core staff members were supported by three other staff, the funding for their roles was dependent upon grants from WG, which was reviewed annually in March.
- Advised that there would always be a level of unauthorised absence in school, therefore it was important to utilise a multidisciplinary approach to try and breakdown barriers to pupil engagement. There was an element of apathy amongst some pupils about what their future would look like, with a view to addressing this apathy and insecurity work needed to be undertaken

with the commerce and business sectors to try and map out career pathways for young people.

- assured members that no pupils should be missing school due to the Council's School Transport Policy, as that policy was in line with the requirements of the WG's Learner Travel Measure and stated that free transport would be provided to their nearest suitable school subject to the criteria set out in the Measure. A copy of the policy was available on the Council's website.

Following a comprehensive discussion, the Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above observations –

- (i) ***to endorse the schools and the Local Education Authority's efforts and approach to date to promote the importance of school attendance and engagement in education with both pupils and parents/guardians; and***
- (ii) ***with a view to monitoring the effectiveness of the new template attendance policy for 2024/25 along with any other initiatives deployed on pupils' school attendance and their engagement with education, to request that a further progress report be presented to members in twelve months' time.***

7 WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN TRANSFORMATION

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People, alongside the Head of Education, presented the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) Transformation report (previously circulated). The WESP Development Officer was in attendance to support on technical aspects of the Plan. The report informed the Committee on the progress made to date in delivering the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in all the county's schools in line with the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh language provision; the Committee requested the report following discussion on a progress report in September 2023 in respect of the Delivery of Welsh Medium Provision.

Members were reminded that the Council had a ten-year vision for increasing and improving the planning of the provision of Welsh-medium education in the county. This was articulated in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). By September 2032, it's Denbighshire's aspiration that 40% of all seven-year-old pupils would attend Welsh Medium Education. Members were informed that to achieve this vision, the plan sets out seven outcomes that will contribute towards this aspiration. The Council was required to submit an annual report to the Welsh Government on the progress against this Plan, a copy of which was included as an appendix to the report.

The main progress against the plan included a clear vision and support to develop projects. A dedicated Welsh Language Support Team provided excellent support and guidance to school staff in Denbighshire. Information highlighting the benefits of bilingualism and Welsh medium education was available on DCC's website. To date 6 English medium primary schools had changed their language category and become T2 schools, committed (over a period of ten years) to increase the amount of Welsh taught at school with an aspiration of teaching 50% of lessons through the

medium of Welsh. The number of latecomers to Welsh medium education and receiving specialised support was increasing. In addition, close collaboration with the Welsh Advisory Team in Conwy County Borough Council was in place to share good practice, which was developing well.

In response to members' questions the Lead Member, officers and the Headteacher of Denbigh High School –

- advised that the Welsh in Education Strategic Group regularly monitored the progress made with the WESP's delivery.
- confirmed that, as reported in Paragraph 4.6 of the report, it was encouraging that the number of pupils receiving their education in two of the largest Welsh medium schools was beginning to return to pre-Covid levels. There had been a number of factors for the reduction in numbers following Covid, the first being that during lockdown children from non-Welsh speaking households who attended Welsh medium schools had not been able to hear or speak the language for a prolonged period of time therefore the families felt they could not support the child's education, hence their reason for sending them to English-medium education settings once the schools reopened. Another factor was that pre-school activities were closed due to COVID-19, this had a massive impact on Welsh education, as that the first seven years of any child's education was vital and losing the early Welsh language education was a huge detriment to Welsh medium education. Nevertheless, the Education Service had worked closely with the schools, Mudiad Meithrin, yr Urdd, Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG) – (Parents for Welsh Medium Education)) etc. in a bid to reverse the trend. Latest statistics indicated that this work was now beginning to bear fruit with the numbers attending Welsh-medium education returning to near pre-Covid levels.
- illustrated how the day-to-day use of the Welsh language within English-medium schools was being introduced and progressed. Denbigh High School was an excellent example of how the 'Cymraeg Campus' initiative in encouraging the use of the Welsh language was working. The drive for the initiative's success was coming from the top down and was having a positive impact throughout the school. The Headteacher outlined the development plan that they had put in place which included all staff, not only teaching staff e.g. canteen staff were taking pupils' orders etc. in Welsh. 'A' Level Welsh was a popular subject at the school on Year 7 pupils, who were already familiar with the day-to-day use of the Welsh language at their primary schools were extremely comfortable with the Cymraeg Campus approach on transition to the high school. The school had already been awarded the 'Cymraeg Campus' bronze level award for their encouragement and use of the Welsh language but was about to be awarded the silver level accreditation. The county's 7 English-medium or Dual Language secondary schools had contributed towards the 'Cymraeg Campus Framework' and were all currently striving to achieve different levels of accreditation. The 'Cymraeg Campus Framework' was a DCC initiative, however the WG were currently taking a keen interest in this approach and were closely monitoring its development. The ultimate aim was to 'normalise' the use of the language in day-to-day situations.

- emphasised that one of the significant challenges they faced in being able to deliver the WESP was staffing, especially in recruiting teaching staff in specialist subject areas through the medium of Welsh. Welsh Government had created various bursaries to encourage people to enter the profession, however this would not resolve the shortage in the short-term.

Councillor Hogg praised the team on developing the 'Sglein Ar-Lein' resource, which his daughter used and which he had found to be particularly useful to him as a learner of the language. He felt it was excellent tool to assist with all things Welsh. He believed ensuring that the Welsh language was around children all the time would result in the language becoming intrinsically linked and engrained into day-to-day life, it would then reach a tipping point which would result in more people speaking the language. Officers agreed to pass on the praise about the 'Sglein Ar-Lein' resource to the relevant officers.

The Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above comments –

- (i) to endorse the progress achieved to date in delivering the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in all of the county's schools in line with the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh language provision; and***
- (ii) that future monitoring of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan's delivery be undertaken by the Welsh in Education Strategic Group on the proviso that if significant issues or obstacles to the Plan's delivery are encountered, they are referred to Scrutiny for detailed examination.***

8 CURRICULUM FOR WALES

The Lead Member for Education, Children and Young People, alongside the Head of Education, presented the Curriculum for Wales report (previously circulated). GwE advisors were also in attendance to support Education Service staff. The report aimed to provide an update on the progress made by schools since the Curriculum for Wales became statutory in September 2022. The report provided information on lessons learnt from evaluations across schools during the initial implementation phase and of the impact on staff and learners.

The report detailed the progress made in implementing and embedding the new Curriculum for Wales in primary schools and years 7 and 8 in secondary schools – what worked well, areas for improvement and lessons learnt by all stakeholders during the initial implementation phase. In addition, it provided an evaluation of the implementation process across all key stages, the Curriculum's impact on staff recruitment and retention, an overview of the feedback received from headteachers, teachers and school-based staff on their experiences of the implementation process and the advantages and/or disadvantages of the new Curriculum for learners.

The Committee was informed that In September 2022, the new Curriculum for Wales became statutory for all learners from Nursery to Year 6. All secondary

schools and settings had started their first teaching of the Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 by September 2023.

All primary schools had designed their curriculum in line with the Four Purposes to meet the mandatory requirements of Curriculum for Wales, with a balanced curriculum offered to meet all learners' needs. The staggered rollout in secondary schools had a different effect to that of the shorter implementation of rollout in primary schools, with leaders and practitioners involved in ongoing and significant change every year between 2022 and 2026. Year 9 would begin the new curriculum in September 2024. Two further stages of implementation would follow as these learners started the new 14-16 qualifications in 2025 and the current Year 8 learners in 2026. Curriculum summary documents had been developed by each school and made available to parents and local community as required by Welsh Government.

Officers added that the rollout of the new curriculum was a major piece of reform. In addition to the ALN changes, the work carried out with the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and post-Covid recovery work it had entailed a tremendous amount of work for the Education Service and school staff. However, all the schools had embraced the changes and the work entailed with the reform.

In response to the Committee's questions the Lead Member, Officers and GwE representatives: –

- advised that the lessons learnt from the primary sector had assisted the rollout in the secondary sector, emphasising that the cluster way of working had assisted greatly with the workload involved with the rollout in the secondary sector, particularly the planning for progression. However, there were differences in how primary and secondary sectors worked, such as primary having a holistic approach to education, whereas secondary was more discipline-based. The introduction of the new Curriculum had challenged the service and the schools to think what they were teaching, why, and how it was taught. The new Curriculum involved a lot more outdoor and motivational learning, therefore more attention was given to utilising skills and content into the learning.
- confirmed that funding to support professional learning was always a challenge. However, schools were creative in ensuring that they achieved the maximum benefits from any grant funding received. They would continue to engage in professional learning as much as possible, share best practice and resources, utilising approaches such as school to school learning in addition to accessing an element of bespoke professional training. Each school was required to draw up an improvement plan, GwE as part of its work would challenge the school's capacity to achieve and deliver its improvement plan, part of this challenge process was focussed on the school's confidence in securing the required training to enable it to deliver its Improvement Plan.

Members commented on how encouraging it was to see pupils being taught coding and other IT skills to assist them with future employment. The Welsh Government was encouraging IT education and skills. However, this created challenges as hiring

staff with the appropriate digital knowledge and skills was at times difficult. Staff confidence in their own digital skills was at times an issue, however the 'School Cluster' approach proved useful in most instances as there more often than not was an 'expert' or 'digital confident' member of staff in one or more of the schools who could provide support to colleagues in other schools. At times it was just a matter of providing support to nurture colleagues' confidence in their own skills. There tended to be a shortage of teachers who were confident in teaching IT skills through the medium of Welsh. Modern foreign languages and British Sign Language (BSL) were other specialist area where there seemed to be a shortage of individuals who were competent to teach the subjects, particularly in the primary sector. When this occurred, support was sought from local secondary school to enable the teaching of these subjects. This also has its benefits as those schools were able to get to know their future pupils well in advance of them transitioning. Following a comprehensive discussion, the Committee:

Resolved: subject to the above observations to –

(i) acknowledge the work undertaken to date in implementing and embedding the Curriculum for Wales in the county's primary schools, and in years 7 and 8 in secondary schools, including identified best practices, lessons learnt and areas for improvement for the continuing staggered roll-out of the Curriculum in the secondary education sector; and

(ii) request that a further progress and evaluation report on the Curriculum's implementation be submitted to the Committee in September 2026 following the introduction of Wave 1 of the new GCSE qualifications.

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator informed the Committee that at their next meeting on 28 November they had a full work programme, two of which would be substantial items 'Recruitment, Retention & Workforce Planning' and the monitoring report on 'Christ the Word School'.

Members were also made aware that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group had met the previous week. No items had been added to the Performance Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan. The Group's next meeting was scheduled for 25 November.

The 'Information Brief' document circulated to Committee members via e-mail earlier that week contained information reports detailing the latest performance updates against the Council's 'Your Voice' Corporate Complaints Procedure and the 'Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Plan'. Members were advised if, having examined these reports, they had any concerns regarding the Council's performance they could request that any areas of concern be examined in detail by

Scrutiny. This could be done via the completion of the Member Proposal Form, attached as Appendix 2 to the Scrutiny Work Programme report.

The Committee:

Resolved: to confirm its future forward work programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The Vice-Chair reported on a recent meeting he had attended with representatives from the Peer Review Group that had recently visited the Authority. The Committee:

Resolved: to note the report.

Meeting concluded at 1pm.

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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	28 November 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Helen Vaughan-Evans – Head of Corporate Support: Performance, Digital & Assets / Cllr Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
Report author	Heidi Barton-Price, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer
Title	Corporate Risk Review, September 2024

1. What is the report about?

1.1 An update on the September 2024 review of the Corporate Risk Register and the Council's Risk Appetite Statement. Please see the following appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Summary
- Appendix 2 – Full details of Corporate Risks updated as at September 2024
- Appendix 3 – Risk Appetite Statement
- Appendix 4 – New Risk 53

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 This report asks the Performance Scrutiny Committee to review the risks facing the Council including the recommendation to add a new risk to the Corporate Risk Register (appendix 4).

2.2 This report asks the Performance Scrutiny Committee to review the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (appendix 3) as part of this review ([last reviewed April 2024](#)) taking into account the Corporate Executive Team's (CET) recommendations (See 4.9 below)

2.3 We are also informing the Performance Scrutiny Committee of our amended Risk Appetite Statement regarding project financing: Reflecting the present financial environment, it would be appropriate to now amend the council's 'cautious' risk appetite in relation to project financing to 'open'.

3 What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That the Performance Scrutiny Committee considers the suggested amendments to the Corporate Risk Register as at September 2024 (appendix 2), and discusses any further amendments that may be required, including new risks - noting and feeding back in particular to the new risk [risk number 53 - Appendix 4].

3.2 That the Performance Scrutiny Committee considers the status and risk appetite (appendix 3) of each risk, the appropriateness of risk owners and the effectiveness of risk controls.

3.3 That the Performance Scrutiny Committee provides any initial feedback as to the council's present Risk Appetite Statement, having taken into account CET's feedback in paragraph 4.9 below and the recommendation to move to a "open" risk appetite for financial projects.

4 Report details

4.1 The Corporate Risk Register is developed and owned by Senior Leadership Team (SLT) alongside Cabinet. It is reviewed twice yearly by Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing. Following the February and September reviews, the revised register is then presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee and Governance & Audit Committee. A summary of reviews is shared for information only at these committees at their January and July meetings.

- 4.2 The Council's Risk Appetite Statement has been applied during the reviews by the 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 for this period are provided at the start of each risk in appendix 2. No risks have been de-escalated during this review. A new risk is proposed to be added to the Register. The addition of the new risk (risk 53, see appendix 4) would bring the Corporate Risk Register to 14 risks.
- 4.4 Please see appendix 4 for the draft of the new Risk as follows: The risk that Transformational Programmes and Major Project benefits are not fully realised.
- 4.5 The Lead Member, Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German for Risks 01, 21, 34 and 50.
- 4.6 Whilst all risks have been reviewed, the residual risk scores remain unchanged for all 13 Corporate Risks.

Risk Appetite Statement

- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 It is now timely for us to review the Council's Risk Appetite Statement (appendix 3), which was last revised in April 2024. The statement should reflect our appetite now reflecting on the key external factors (Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental) that influence an organisation along with internal dynamics and demands. An initial discussion was sought at Budget and Transformation Board in July 2024 and CET in October 2024 (see 2.3 above) to provide feedback as to the appropriateness of the present Risk Appetite Statement.
- 4.9 Discussions at Budget and Transformation Board and CET drew particular attention to our current cautious risk appetite in relation to financial projects. It is proposed to move this risk appetite to "open" to provide a more appropriate framework to support

the transformation being asked of the organisation to achieve financial sustainability and creative responses to requirements of our residents.

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 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 The Budget and Transformation Board reviewed the Corporate Risk Appetite statement in July 2024 in light of the transformation programme and ideas coming to the fore to save the organisation money. Subsequently the request from Cabinet and CET is for the Risk Appetite Statement for financial projects to move from cautious as it is currently to open.
- 8.2 Prior to SLT, CET Risk Owners were requested to review their risks via email and discussed by CET on October 21st 2024.
- 8.3 Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing supported the updated register on November 4th 2024.

8.4 The updated register is now being presented for scrutiny to Governance and Audit Committee (November 20th) and Performance Scrutiny Committee (November 28th).

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 the review of our risk register.

10.2 Failure to review our risk appetite statement may lead to greater risk being inappropriately taken on by the Council, or conversely to risk opportunities being missed.

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.

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Appendix 1

Summary of Corporate Risk Register September 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](#).

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

Summary of current corporate risks and score (September 2024)

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

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER – SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2024 REVIEW

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2024 Review	Trend since last report (July 2024)	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	<p>Risk reviewed and confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.</p> <p>The Lead Member, Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German for this risk.</p>	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2024 Review	Trend since last report (July 2024)	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate. The Lead Member, Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German for this risk.	Same	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2024 Review	Trend since last report (July 2024)	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate. The Lead Member, Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German for this risk.	Same	No
37. Partnerships	B1 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and Very High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk reviewed and confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	Same	Yes

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2024 Review	Trend since last report (July 2024)	Within Risk Appetite
45. Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically positive	A2 Critical (Red) Risk: Almost Certain and High Impact	C2 Major (Orange) Risk: Possible and High Impact	Risk reviewed and confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate. The Lead Member, Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German for this risk.	Same	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2024 Review	Trend since last report (July 2024)	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	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 confirmed scoring and narrative as accurate.	Same	No

Risk Title	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	September 2024 Review	Trend since last report (July 2024)	Within Risk Appetite
53. The risk that Transformational Programmes and Major Project benefits are not fully realised.	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	B2 Critical (Red) Risk: Likely and High Impact	Proposed new Risk 53	Not applicable	No



Appendix 2

Corporate Risk Register – September 2024

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Corporate Risk Register (September 2024)

September 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 Diane King, and Councillor Julie Matthews

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2024 update:

Risk reviewed and updated.

The Lead Member Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German.

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

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 2024, 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 review as and 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 by exception. 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 by exception.
- [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) and Governance and Audit Committee received reports on the February 2024 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.
- The Corporate Director Social Services and Education is the new Chair of the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Risk assessments in place for recruiting staff who require a DBS check and/or references and this is monitored and scrutinised by the Corporate Safeguarding Panel.
- Safeguarding policy review has taken place with Schools and guidance has been developed
- Key posts within the Council that could have an impact on safeguarding have been identified and Heads of Service are reviewing the posts to ensure that adequate checks are undertaken by the Council or and external body. All employee contracts make reference to safeguarding.

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

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CSP102m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date DBS (DCC)
- CSP103m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date reference check or risk assessment (DCC)
- CSP104m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date DBS (schools)
- CSP105m: The percentage of eligible staff that have an up-to-date reference check or risk assessment (schools)

- CPCSP47i Percentage of employees that have completed all 10 mandatory e-learning modules (including Safeguarding) by the end of the year (excluding schools)

Assurance:

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

Residual Risk

A1 – Critical Risk Almost certain / Very high impact

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

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

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

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

Risk Owner: Graham Boase

September 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

September 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.

A recent CIW inspection of Dolwen Care Home was very positive.

An inspection report was received regarding the Joint Youth Justice Service of Conwy and Denbighshire. The report highlighted problems in partnership working at a strategic level but was positive about the work of staff within the service.

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, NRW (Natural Resources Wales). Information, studies and other reports are also published by other commissioners such as the Welsh Language Commissioner for Wales, the Children's and Older People's Commissioners for Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations 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 2nd 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 as agreed appropriate with the regulatory body.
- Protocol developed for addressing recommendations from WAO national studies: services' response will be the subject of performance scrutiny and service challenge.
- Procurement controls in place to minimise risk of Environment Act (2016) breaches through contracted construction work.

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

Further actions:

Explore the following process changes with the procurement department:

- Ask potential suppliers about any recorded breaches of environmental law
- Include consideration of supplier's record of breaches in the selection process for contractors
- Review the standard contracts DCC offers suppliers to reduce risk of breaches occurring and to indemnify the council from any penalty for such breaches.

Action Due Date: March 2025

Person Responsible: Climate Change Manager

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

Lead Member(s): Councillor Julie Matthews

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 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)
- PDA608m The percentage of properties with asbestos where a re-inspection has been carried out in line with the asbestos management plan
- PDA607m 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 [September 2024 for the period 2023/24](#).
- Annual Property Compliance report which includes fire safety compliance, gas and electricity testing, asbestos re-inspection and legionella testing is reported to Governance & Audit Committee. The most recent report was presented in [September 2024](#).

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 Diane King

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2024 update:

Risk reviewed and updated.

Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German as Lead Member.

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 12th September 2024.
- 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.
- NWWSIC 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: Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow Out of Hospital – North Wales Region was [presented to Governance and Audit Committee on 25th September 2024](#)
- 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 in the Corporate Risk Register

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 2024 update:

Risk reviewed and updated.

Indicators of the effectiveness of controls have been reviewed and revised. New relevant indicators have been identified and will be developed with Corporate Support Services:

People for this risk:

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 has been updated with refresher training being rolled out in 2024 / early 2025
- The Employees' Code of Conduct is in the process of being updated and a refresher training carried out across services (by mid-2025)
- 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 include checks on identity and document verification

- Bi-annual review of UK and local government fraud risk trends and emerging issues from Fraudscape shared with the Corporate Executive Team - <https://www.fraudscape.co.uk/>
- Annual review by the council's Internal Audit team
- Regular internal and external review of our systems and procedures using the [FFCL Checklist](#)
- 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 with relevant low assurance rated reports flagged up at an early stage.
- Internal Audit team are due to launch a fraud awareness training package targeting 2,500 staff at an up-coming leadership conference (2024/2025)
- 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, and seek opportunities to highlight the value of whistleblowing and consequences of fraud to individuals and the council.
- Engagement with the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)
- E-learning modules on Whistleblowing and Code of Conduct in place, and a mandatory e-learning module on Fraud is under development (due for launch early 2025)

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

Indicators of the effectiveness of controls have been reviewed and revised. The following new relevant indicators have been identified and will be developed with Corporate Support Services: People for this risk:

- The number of whistleblowing incidences reported to DCC relevant to fraud
- The number of disciplinary processes pursued relevant to fraud
- The number of fraud issues referred to the police
- The number of reported whistleblowing incidences related to fraud not pursued

- % of new employees where detailed identity checks completed
- % of DCC funding schemes reviewed by fraud leads prior to launch
- % of staff trained in fraud awareness (training package under development)

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 Diane King and Councillor Elen Heaton

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2024 review:

Risk reviewed and updated.

Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German as Lead Member.

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 were in a position of having circa 1,000 hours that we were unable to meet / commission for domiciliary care agency allocation (some of which had been handed back by providers exiting the market). Although this figure is reducing as we have now managed to bring that figure down to just under 500 hours 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

September 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 October 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

September 2024 update

Risk reviewed and updated.

Further actions have been updated : Actions 3 to 5 regarding the review and refresh of the Strategy were completed.

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. This Strategy was reviewed and refreshed in 2024 and renamed the [Climate and Nature Strategy](#). The refreshed strategy was adopted by [Council](#) in July 2024. 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 been completed. It received public involvement and engagement through surveys and a workshop held in November 2023.
- The strategy was adopted by [Council](#) in July 2024.
- 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.
- Procurement controls in place to minimise risk of Environment Act (2016) breaches through contracted construction work.

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: Climate Change Manager

2. Roll out ecological literacy training

Action Due Date: 31/03/2025

Person Responsible: Climate Change Manager

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

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

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

September 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 July 2024.

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 Diane King

Risk Owner: Nicola Stubbins

September 2024 review:

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

Councillor Diane King has replaced Councillor Gill German as Lead Member.

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 Lead Member is Councillor Diane King but should it become a risk for adult placements Councillor Elen Heaton will be added as a Lead Member.

Description

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

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

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

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

Anticipated direction of travel:

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

Impact / Consequences

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

Inherent Risk

B2 – Critical Risk: Highly likely and High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

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

Ancillary controls:

- None.

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- Costs associated with care for CLA will be available.

Residual Risk

B2 – Critical Risk: Highly likely and High Impact

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

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

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

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Liz Thomas

September 2024 update:

Risk reviewed and updated to reflect current assumptions in Medium Term Financial Plan.

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

Description

The Local Government provisional settlement for 2024 to 2025 was 3.6% (on cash year on year comparison), this compares to a settlement of 8.2% in 2023 to 2024. There continues to significant demand led pressures related to inflation (e.g. pay,), social care, and support for schools, 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. The costs of delivering services are forecast to increase by £12m to £26m in 2025/26, and £14m to £25m in 2026/27. 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. The current MTFP includes a range for Council Tax increases between 6% and 12%, even with a working assumption of Council Tax increase of 9%, there is an estimated gap of £12m to set a balance budget in 2025/26. (Please note: no decisions regarding Council Tax have been made).

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 expect that financial settlements won't keep up with the increasing demands and complexity for services from the most vulnerable in our society - 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, £8m in 2024/2025 and a further pressure of £4.2m has been included for 2025 to 2026.
- Childrens' Services - the pressure (excluding pay) in 2023/24 was £2.7m, £2m in 2024/25 and a further pressure of £4.3m has been included for 2025 to 2026.
- Pay and grading - this year the estimated pay pressure is included at £4m (unions balloting members for industrial action as this report is being written), a further pressure of around £3.5m is expected for 2025 to 2026. On top of this core pressure, the impact of the grading issue is currently included at a high level estimate of £3m
- School Budgets – Inflationary and demographic pressures of £7.6m was included in the 2024 to 2025 budgets. After which a savings target of 3% was applied bringing the net position to an increase of schools' budgets of £4.9m. For 2025 to 2026 pressure of £4.7m is forecasts – however a savings target will be required and schools have asked to plan for savings target of between 3% - 5%.

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 group is now called the Budget and Transformation Board. 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 workshop session, and a detailed plan is developed including communication before final decisions are made.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is reported regularly to Cabinet, Governance and Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny. This includes high level plans for the transformation of the Council to make longer term savings.
- 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) is refreshed periodically throughout the financial year, contains different scenarios to try to ensure that it can deal with changes in the external environment and is reported regularly alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 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 2024/25 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)

Key performance indicators regards budget and savings are included 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

September 2024 update:

The risk has been reviewed and updated.

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, £8m in 2024/2025 and a further pressure of £4.2m has been included for 2025 to 2026.
- Childrens' Services - the pressure (excluding pay) in 2023/24 was £2.7m, £2m in 2024/25 and a further pressure of £4.3m has been included for 2025 to 2026.
- Pay and grading - this year the estimated pay pressure is included at £4m (unions balloting members for industrial action as this report is being written), a further pressure of around £3.5m is expected for 2025 to 2026. On top of this core pressure, the impact of the grading issue is currently included at a high level estimate of £3m
- School Budgets – Inflationary and demographic pressures of £7.6m was included in the 2024 to 2025 budgets. After which a savings target of 3% was applied bringing the net position to an increase of schools' budgets of £4.9m. For 2025 to 2026 pressure of £4.7m is forecasts – however a savings target will be required and schools have asked to plan for savings target of between 3% - 5%.

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 group is now called the Budget and Transformation Board. 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 workshop session, and a detailed plan is developed including communication before final decisions are made.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is reported regularly to Cabinet, Governance & Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny. This includes high level plans for the transformation of the Council to make longer-term savings.
- 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) is refreshed periodically throughout the financial year, contains different scenarios to try to ensure that it can deal with changes in the external environment and is reported regularly alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 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 2024/25 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)

Key performance indicators regards budget and savings are included 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.

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Appendix 3:

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 September 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) - Open** risk appetite, willing to consider all options and choose one that is most likely to result in successful delivery with an acceptable level of reward (and value for money). As above, we will tolerate minor, moderate or major risks.
- **Financial Treasury Management (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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New Risk 53: The risk that Transformational Programmes and Major Project benefits are not fully realised.

Lead Member(s): Councillor Gwyneth Ellis

Risk Owner: Gary Williams

October 2024

This risk was added to the Corporate Risk Register in October 2024 recognising the increasing number and complexity of transformation / change projects we are delivering and the growing significance of delivering cost savings and benefits associated with projects.

Description

The council is embarking on a series of transformation projects within and across services, in addition to its portfolio of major projects. The requirement for transformation projects is driven by changes in the current and anticipated operating scenario across financial, social and environmental issues. Projects are likely to encompass restructuring and innovation which will touch on elements of other risks in our corporate risk register. However, adding this as a separate risk draws together the heightened risks from expanding cross-service working and the risk of investing in changes that do not deliver the anticipated benefits, partly or wholly. This would lead to reputational and financial consequences, especially where significant funding is coming from Welsh and UK governments, which could affect their confidence in us in the future.

Benefits management within projects is the responsibility of the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and requires clear identification and – to the extent possible – *quantification* of benefits, weighed up against the costs and risks carried by the project. These should be tested for optimism bias and sensitivity to major risks, with assumptions challenged through the design and implementation of the project.

Existing processes within the council to assess benefits and costs include:

- Business Case options appraisal - delivery options have been considered for the project
- Wellbeing impact assessments as live documents - amended for the project, updating where there are significant project changes, including cumulative assessments considering the potential for compounding impacts of multiple change projects.

The majority of council projects deliver benefits as scoped, with notable recent successes including:

- East Rhyl Coastal Defence - protection against flooding
- Corwen Town Centre Improvements – partnership with community council
- Electric vehicle charging points in car parks across Denbighshire

However, there are opportunities to strengthen processes as we begin to work across services to ensure consistent and joined-up approaches to managing change, risks and benefits. This will support more effective delivery of the whole transformation portfolio, and key programmes such as the Transformation Programme and the Climate Change & Nature Recovery Programme. In addition, strengthening programme and project management will support delivery and governance associated with the Sustainable Communities for Learning Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and any successor funding programmes.

Processes to be reviewed and enhanced that would help mitigate this risk include:

- Project definition and budgeting
- Benefit identification, analysis and realisation
- Risk identification, analysis and mitigation
- Cost benefit analysis, including optimism bias and sensitivity testing
- Change management at project, programme and portfolio levels
- Communications.

Anticipated direction of travel:

The risk was raised in October 2024 to reflect the range of transformation / change projects we are and will be delivering, against anticipated instability in costs and delivery scenarios.

Impact / Consequences

The changes anticipated in business cases do not materialise and, hence, neither do their benefits.

While benefits could be underestimated and additional benefits be realised, the greater risk to Denbighshire County Council is where programmes or projects have a greater negative impact than anticipated, which could result in the following:

- The council's ambition and the scope of projects and programmes are curtailed due to increased costs.
- Services that are important for our residents are no longer available
- Performance deteriorates in important areas of our business (for our residents)
- Reinstatement/correction in performance is difficult and slow to achieve
- Reputation can suffer if performance deteriorates
- Reputation can suffer if messages are not managed
- The impact of not fulfilling our programmes and realising benefits could result in poor social, cultural, economic and environmental outcomes.
- Financial liabilities
- Regulatory liabilities
- Deteriorating staff morale and wellbeing
- Inability to meet statutory obligations
- Disproportionate return on investment.
- Failure to maximise opportunities for the benefit of communities and businesses in Denbighshire.
- Failure to agree a regional approach to funding projects.

Importantly, as resources reduce, there is less capacity to respond to new, emerging and unplanned issues of importance to residents, councillors or partners. As it is expected this coming period will be characterised by continued environmental, social

and economic turbulence, management of this risk becomes more significant for the organisation.

Inherent Risk

B2 – Critical Risk: Likely / High Impact

Controls to Manage Risk (in place)

Critical controls:

- Budget & Transformational Board established.
- The Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 has been approved by Members and a performance management framework is in place. This captures the ambition of elected members for their term of office.
- Strategic Planning team supporting the appropriate governance arrangements for the corporate plan, and also support performance management in the organisation, therefore there's a strong alignment between 'change' and business-as-usual.
- More robust challenge is being directed at project sponsors around costs, contingency allocation and optimism biases; through CET, programme and project boards, at Cabinet, the Capital Scrutiny Group and through other committees.
- Programmes and projects are developed within robust management and governance systems. Notably, both the Corporate Programme Office and the Post-Brexit funding team includes project trained and experienced officers.
- Corporate Project register goes to CET on a quarterly basis and provides information about the status of projects.
- We ensure we have senior-level representation at board meetings. The North Wales Economic Ambition Board is attended by Denbighshire's Leader. Director-level representation is in place for the officer groups that support the Board and relevant key officers are represented on work stream meetings.
- Impact assessments are undertaken and form part of the cover report for decisions.
- Risk are considered and form part of the cover report for decisions.

- The Verto project management platform records project benefits
- Significant outcomes from projects are identified as part of Service Planning processes.
- Finance remove savings from budgets to ensure financial savings are delivered.
- Performance Reports on the Corporate Plan are sent to SLT, Cabinet and Scrutiny every 6 months.
- SLT reviews key projects every three months.

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.
- As a result of lessons learned previously, Corporate Plan Theme Boards have had a standing agenda item about communications and proactive communications management.
- Communications and stakeholder management are core parts of project briefs, businesses cases and project/programme management.
- The council partakes in government consultations on new legislation (either directly or through the WLGA).

Relevant indicators of the effectiveness of controls:

- CPPRCORP: The percentage of Council projects whose delivery confidence was updated within the past three months (Corporate Project Register)
- [TBC] The percentage of completed Council projects that include a closure report in Verto

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. Our risk appetite statement says that at most, this risk should be a major risk at most.

Further Actions

- Identify code for risk indicator above
- Establish a project managers forum comprising champions from each service to support with project management skills and the use of Verto
- Develop an internal project management training programme
- Develop an introduction to Project Management and Verto module available to any interested employee
- Further embed our approach on project closure and lessons learned
- Further embed our approach on benefit realisation and evaluation post project closure

Action Due Date: July 2025

Person Responsible: Lead Project Manager, Corporate Programme Office

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	28 November 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets Helen Vaughan-Evans, Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets
Report author	Emma Horan, Planning and Performance Officer
Title	Corporate Plan Performance Update: April to September 2024

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The Council's performance against its [Corporate Plan](#) during April to September, including Strategic Equality objectives and the seven governance areas (corporate planning; financial planning; performance management; risk management; workforce planning; assets; and procurement).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. Regular performance reporting is part of our [values and principles](#). It is an essential monitoring requirement of the Council's performance management methodology, and our statutory duties as set out in section 11.

2.2. This report aims to support discussion about our performance and the identified improvement actions.

3. What are the Recommendations?

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

4. Report details

4.1. The report contained within appendix 1 is our familiar Performance Update Report, which is our process for ongoing self-assessment, for the period April to September

2024. The report should be seen as a tool to support constructive, open and honest discussion about our performance, helping to identify good practise and areas for intervention or further scrutiny. We are seeking to answer the questions of 'How well are we doing', 'How do we know', and 'What and how can we do better'?

4.2. The report is presented in two parts that seek to outline progress against our performance objectives. These comprise of our Corporate Plan / Strategic Equality Objectives (which also form our Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and the seven governance areas (as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).

4.3. This report also identifies indicators or activities that are Equality Objectives or contribute to Welsh Language and Culture (this is a work in progress). The report also now contains case studies to exemplify good work that has taken place. Any further opportunities to continually improve the Performance Management Framework and Performance Update Reports, as always, will be taken by Strategic Planning Team.

4.4. Whilst it is not possible to highlight all significant points of interest here (see appendix 1), positive highlights and areas for improvement from April to September 2024 include:

- Reducing reliance on Bed and Breakfasts (although a significant number of people are on the housing waiting list).
- According to Welsh Government's [Social Landlords' Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024](#), Denbighshire is the highest performing stock-holding council in Wales, in terms of tenants' overall satisfaction with Denbighshire Housing.
- Some excellent community benefits from two large procurements.
- Positive preventative community-based work; with 99% of those receiving assistance from Talking Points not needing to be referred into Adult Social Care.
- Early years support is resulting in a good take up of the childcare offer.
- The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy was carried out during 2023 to 2024, with the final version following consultation being adopted by Cabinet and Council in June 2024.
- Some exciting areas for action are emerging from the closer to communities task and finish group. We hope these will help address the dichotomy that seems to exist between stakeholder responses in our stakeholder survey and the actual performance of, and experience working for or with, the Council.

- We continued to provide robust financial management despite deepening financial challenges around our budget, which all local authorities are experiencing. Tracking of savings has been implemented and budget and transformation will be a focus of Service Performance Challenges. We continue to examine and find ways to mitigate the impacts of budget proposals, building on the cumulative impact assessment presented to [County Council](#) in January. For example, a workshop with Headteachers was held on June 18.
- The budget situation remains extremely challenging and will place further pressure on the Council's ability to deliver on customer expectations.
- We need to ensure momentum in respect of developing a new Economic Strategy and ensure that it will take account of the county's cultural offer and its contribution to economic, environmental, community and personal well-being.
- Attendance at primary and secondary schools is concerning and the number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures has risen from 3 to 4. There will be continued development of relationships with colleges and further education institutions following the closure of Llwybrau and developments in regional school improvement continue to be carefully monitored in the light of the impending cessation of GwE
- The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that insufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero.
- This last period has been particularly challenging for the Council as the new waste collection and recycling service had a difficult start. We pulled together as "One Council" to support our waste service and continue to work closely with members and residents to understand and resolve issues.
- Finally, the Panel Performance Assessment was very positive. One Panel member, during the fieldwork week, said that Denbighshire was "The kind of place I would really enjoy working!" Further detail will be provided in next reporting period once the final report has been received by the Council.

4.5. Three improvement actions have been identified through discussions about this report (the first builds upon a previous improvement action). The first two demonstrate the interplay between resources, performance and risk.

- Consider performance relating to the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale), which has fallen short of the 95% target time for some years. The service continues to struggle with meeting the demands of the asset within the limited budgetary and staffing resources available, and a substantive discussion is needed about the

prospects of improvement and what continuing poor performance is likely to mean given expected increased impacts of flooding, landslips and heat risks on road condition and community connectivity.

- Linked to last period's improvement action to keep our Corporate Plan commitments and performance expectations under continual review going forward, the next Corporate Plan Tranche Review should consider the impact of reducing capacity and ceased projects such as Llwybrau, and how these will impact on our ability to deliver the Corporate Plan and outcomes.
- Publish details of the engagement network of people and groups with protected characteristics on our website.

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

5.1. This report includes an evaluation of our success in delivering the Corporate Plan.

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

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

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

7.1. A [WIA](#) was undertaken on the Corporate Plan, which has been updated as part of the revision of the Corporate Plan, and should be reviewed following the Tranche Review.

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

8.1. The report has been compiled in consultation with council services. The report has been discussed at the Tranche Review and has been shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) by email for comment. It was discussed by Cabinet on November 19.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. No statement is required with this report.

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

10.1 That we fail to improve areas of concern leading to unsatisfactory outcomes. Failure to publish our Self-Assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, with implications for the reputation of the Council. The risk of poor performance being reported out of context, impacting on our reputation. On this basis, we have already shared the draft report with the Communications Team.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

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

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

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

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Corporate Plan Performance Update: April to September 2024

This document presents the council's performance against its Corporate Plan themes and governance areas between April to September 2024, including our application of the Sustainable Development principle, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Socio-Economic Duty.

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Contact details and more information

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

By email: strategicplanningteam@denbighshire.gov.uk

By telephone: 01824 706291

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

By post:

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

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

To keep up-to-date:

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

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

Subscribe to the [County Voice Newsletter](#)

Summary position

The chapters below provide a summary of activity that has taken place during the last period beneath our Corporate Plan themes, with a round-up of contributing news and committee items.

Corporate Plan theme summary

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

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The Corporate Plan Housing and Homelessness Board (CPHHB) continues to oversee this theme though hasn't had an opportunity to convene since June 2024. At that meeting, the Board reviewed the update on the affordable housing outturn and Programme Development Plan / Social Housing Grant for 2023 to 2024 where the Council, in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), successfully brought forward 156 additional affordable housing units in total over the year. The number of people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) register has increased to 1,842 this period and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. During April to June, as part of efforts to reduce reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens, we reduced the reliance on Bed and Breakfasts. This work progressed for July to September, where we saw the numbers reduce to 130. We are confident that further solutions, working with the Sanctuary Trust, should contribute to less use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation moving forward. Other housing projects are likely to continue into the next financial year, for example the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru will soon be working with the Housing and Communities Service to carry out a standards review. Denbighshire will be the first council in Wales to undertake this partnership work, and this will inform the future direction of our Tenants Engagement Framework, which is reviewed annually.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The measures status for this theme has been summarised overall as a 'Priority for Improvement'. The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire and the cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits have both declined from April to June, while still considered to be 'Excellent'. The particularly strong performance in the first quarter reflects two significant contracts that were awarded to Denbighshire-based construction companies during that time. Community benefits were also included in all contracts during April to June. This level of performance cannot be sustained every quarter because it largely depends on the scale of procurements, but it does demonstrate that good procurement can deliver excellent results. Deaths and Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population are both considered a 'Priority for Improvement', with business births being half the rate of those that started in 2019 (109). Recognising the local and global economic challenges it faces, the council is currently developing an Economic Strategy to include green, rural, and urban economic growth plans as well as enhancing tourism, which significantly increased during the reporting period. The new Economic Strategy will also take into account the county's cultural offer and how it contributes to wider economic and well-being outcomes. Overall, progress has been made with the twenty-four programmes, projects and activities identified in support of this theme. However, four projects are now showing as 'At Risk'. The overall summary has, therefore, been amended from 'On Target' to 'Experiencing Obstacles' to reflect this current position.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

Most of the data we currently publish in relation to Children's Social Care is released annually and it is therefore difficult to summarise performance at this stage in the year; we will be in a better position to make a judgment on this in the next performance report. That being said, safeguarding enquiries for adults completed within the target time remained at an 'Excellent' level and community-based support for health and well-being continued to be provided, with 99% of those receiving assistance from Talking Points between July and September not needing to be referred into Adult Social Care. The number of schools adopting a Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being has remained fixed at

67% since the last reporting period, and is considered to be 'Acceptable'. We continued to monitor data giving us an indication of the prevalence of crime in our communities, and worked with partners to address these issues. Many projects were 'On Target', including those providing support to citizens in relation to community well-being and cost-of-living pressures. However, the Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project continued to report an 'At Risk' delivery confidence status due to being behind schedule.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In support of early years' child development, 642 children (considered 'Good') took part in the childcare offer across Denbighshire in the quietest period, between July and September. The learning and development of Denbighshire's children continues to be a priority for the council, and we plan to improve the way we work with schools to collect data. This includes data to help us monitor bullying in schools and the use of the Welsh language in education. We have received the results of the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey conducted during the previous academic year, which showed that 81% of pupils responded positively in terms of feelings about school (considered 'Good'). Attendance in primary and secondary schools for the academic year 2023 to 2024 improved but remains a 'Priority for Improvement' at 92.3% and 88.2% respectively. We monitor schools' attainment data held internally, supporting and challenging schools to improve their attainment. There will be continued development of relationships with colleges and further education institutions following the closure of Llwybrau, the project designed to support young people to reduce their risk of disengagement. The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures rose from 3 to 4, which is 'Acceptable' while disappointing. Developments in regional school improvement continue to be carefully monitored in the light of the impending cessation of GwE as the regional school improvement service for North Wales. The council will explore whether any new project is needed to ensure that progress continues and updates will be provided in time. For this period, most projects were 'On Target' or 'Experiencing Obstacles,' which shows good progress overall in support of this theme, including improving the well-being of children from low income and disadvantaged families. However, delays to a number of projects continued to impact the progress of the Modernising Education Programme - designed to provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the current and future needs of pupils and families as part of the Welsh

Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme - meaning that this particular stream of work remained 'At Risk'.

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy was carried out during 2023 to 2024. The final version following consultation was submitted for adoption by Cabinet and Council in June 2024 and is now called the [Denbighshire County Council Climate and Nature Strategy 2021 to 2022 to 2029 to 2030 \(Year 3 Updated Version\)](#). The percentage of council owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness has very slightly increased to 42.5% in 2023 to 2024 and indicates we are making 'Acceptable' progress towards becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030. Our 2023 to 2024 carbon emissions data has now been reported to Welsh Government as part of the annual public sector reporting. The Council's Net Carbon Zero position as at 31 March 2024 has increased by about 600 tonnes (roughly the equivalent of driving 1.5m miles in a car) to 12,653 tonnes, which, by 2030, needs to be zero tonnes. This indicator remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. Whilst we have concerns about the methodology relating to this indicator, the total carbon tonnage emitted (corporately) through supply chains rose from 36,912 in 2022 to 2023 to 50,233 in 2023 to 2024, and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that insufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero. The financial pressures all local authorities are facing now and in the coming years will continue to impact on that pace. We have maintained our Climate and Ecological Improvement ambition and have not adjusted our targets - despite their challenge. During the period we saw the roll out of the new recycling service. It soon became apparent that some of the assumptions were flawed and several rounds per day were not being completed, resulting in large and unacceptable numbers of missed collections.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The measures status for this theme remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. This reflects the stakeholder survey responses, and also other key indicators, such as one-to-ones and

sickness absence, where we are not meeting our expected thresholds for Excellence (it is important to acknowledge that these are ambitious thresholds, particularly given increasing workforce pressures). This last period has been particularly challenging for the Council as the new waste collection and recycling service had a difficult start (the significant increase in external complaints upheld or partly upheld reflects this). We pulled together as “One Council” (see our [values and five principles here](#)) to support our waste service, and continue to work closely with members and residents to understand and resolve issues. Notwithstanding these issues, the council continued to provide robust financial management despite deepening financial challenges around our budget, which all local authorities are experiencing. During the period, the Panel Peer Assessment took place which engaged a wide range of council stakeholders including city, town and community councils, elected members and more – and which has resulted in some very positive feedback for the council. A draft report is anticipated in the Autumn. One-to-ones, sickness absence and completion of e-learning remain areas for concern. These indicators, alongside Services’ financial management and budget and transformation ideas will be explored as part of Service Performance Challenges commencing in November. Our new Welsh Language Officer is in post and will be working alongside officers and members to increase opportunities to use Welsh and celebrate our culture. The Well-run, high performing council Board will be focussing in future on how our culture can facilitate effective transformation and ways in which we can work more closely with our communities. The Board will also be examining the general decline in responses to our stakeholder survey. As stated previously, this decline is perhaps unsurprising but there does seem to be a dichotomy between stakeholder responses in the survey and the actual performance of our council (and indicative feedback from the Panel Performance Assessment). It is important that we demonstrate improvement in these areas and respond to the expectations of our customers. We are looking to build on the positive findings from the recent closer to communities work, which seeks to build stronger and more responsive relationships with communities.

Governance areas

Significant work continues to ensure we respond effectively to the significant financial pressures the council is facing (along with all local authorities) in order to try to protect the most vulnerable as far as possible. Tracking of savings has been implemented and budget and transformation will be a core focus of Service Performance Challenges commencing in November. We continue to examine and find ways to mitigate the impacts of budget

proposals, building on the cumulative impact assessment presented to [County Council](#) in January. For example, a workshop with Headteachers was held during the period. The budget situation remains extremely challenging and will place further pressure on the council's ability to deliver on customer expectations. Significant engagement across the council, with members and with communities, will continue. The months ahead will involve key milestones or many governance areas. The September Risk Register Review has now been completed and the final reports are due to be presented to Governance and Audit and Performance Scrutiny Committees in November. A People Strategy has been drafted and will be presented to the Well-run Board in October for feedback. A revised staff survey will be presented to our Senior Leadership Team for approval in October for a November launch. Approval for a new Asset Management Strategy 2024 to 2029 will be sought from Cabinet in October 2024. This will be a critical development and has interdependencies with workforce planning. Our Procurement Team continues to prepare the organisation, businesses and partners for the changes in procurement legislation, and the opportunities for greater local benefits. Efforts continue to be targeted at decarbonising the supply chain and the third generation North Wales Construction Framework was launched in May 2024.

A Note on Measuring Performance

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

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

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

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

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

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

Phase 2 of Llys Awelon in Ruthin is open and existing tenants have been decanted over to the new site. The Phase 1 site is now closed off ready for the refurbishment. New tenants are being supported to move into the new site on an incremental basis.

Prevent homelessness, and ensure that any instances of it are rare, brief, and unrepeated. This includes young care leavers (Equality Objective)

The number of referrals received into the Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) fluctuated during the reporting period. For April, May and June it rose from 64 to 93, however at the end of September this had much reduced to 59. During the period, there was also fluctuation in the percentage of referrals that have been prevented from presenting to our homeless prevention services, where for April, May and June the figure rose to 95.81% and then dropped to 93.22% ('Excellent') for July, August and September. Both figures are an improvement on the last financial year recording of 90.62%.

Upgrade the council housing stock to ensure it is safe, secure, and well-maintained and where possible, suitable for the needs of residents, for example, those with disabilities (Equality Objective)

The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time is 95.24% for the period July to September, which, though 'Acceptable', has reduced slightly from 96.26% from the previous period. A total of 315 emergency jobs were completed in the period with fifteen falling outside of target. A further 122 disabled adaptations were carried out for council house tenants between April and September.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) is a government scheme that helps homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes and is the newest activity in support of this theme. It is promoted and administered via Flintshire County Council for energy efficiency in private sector dwellings and has resulted in 197 properties having ECO4 measures approved for Denbighshire between April and September. The scheme was on hold in early August due to staffing reasons and reopened in mid-September. We are still developing the energy pathway to meet the 2030 submission. Retrofit works, including some photo voltaic installations, are planned to commence from October in Rhyl and Denbigh, which will all count towards the pathway.

According to Welsh Government's [Social Landlords' Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024](#), Denbighshire County Council is the highest performing stock-holding Council in Wales, in terms of 'the percentage of tenants that were satisfied with Denbighshire Housing, taking everything into account' with 85% tenants in agreement.

Deliver more homes to meet local need and demand

The delivery confidence for Additional Council Housing Developments has improved and reflects the completion of the new apartment development at Llys Llen on Nant Hall Road in Prestatyn, the new apartments in the former tax office building at Llys Elizabeth in Churton Road, Rhyl; and the appointment of a contractor to complete the fit out works at the terrace of Victorian houses at 2-16 Aquarium Street in Rhyl.

During 2023 to 2024 there were a total of 258 new homes completed in Denbighshire. This is two more than the figure for 2022 to 2023, which was 256.

Delivery confidence remains unchanged for the affordable housing project Edward Henry Street – whilst further progress has been made with the construction of the new homes, completion has been delayed until autumn 2024.

Following on from the completion of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), the GTAA Site Selection can now progress. It is, though, still at project brief stage.

There has been no progress update on the Rhyl Residential Strategy, now running under the activity, "Work with Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to contribute to progressing Rhyl Residential Strategy" for this financial year to date however we are advised this project is down on the Forward Work Plan for the Prosperous Denbighshire Board to be discuss and decide whether it should continue.

Case study: Llys Elizabeth

[Llys Elizabeth](#) is designed for people aged 55 and over and contains 12 new homes comprising eight two-bedroom apartments and four one-bedroom apartments. Each home is designed to offer high levels of energy efficiency to support the new tenants with the cost of living and help the council and Wales achieve its targets of lowering carbon emissions. The development is part of the council's [commitment to tackling accommodation waiting times](#) by enabling the creation of more social housing. At an [event](#) designed to bring the tenants and their neighbours together, one tenant said: "It's really lovely, I can't fault it at all. It's been like winning the lottery really, we have got such a beautiful place... Denbighshire Housing have all been very attentive and I can't say anything bad."

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

The number of people on the SARTH register increased to 1,842 between April and September, which is an increase of 7.97% on the previous reporting period and is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity related to the support offered to those experiencing homelessness please see our [learning and growing theme](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time - Benchmarked Locally	96.90% Acceptable Worse	95.82% Acceptable Worse	95.57% Acceptable Worse	96.26% Acceptable Better	95.24% Acceptable Worse

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The number of disabled adaptations carried out for council house tenants – Count Only (Equality Objective)	56	68	51	61	61
The number of people on the SARTH waiting list (live applications only) - Benchmarked Locally	1,760 Priority to Improve Better	1,560 Priority to Improve Better	1,706 Priority to Improve Worse	1,831 Priority to Improve Worse	1,842 Priority to Improve Worse
The number of referrals received into Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) – Count Only (Equality Objective)	64	54	64	93	59
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that have been prevented from presenting to homelessness prevention service - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	92.18% Excellent Better	92.59% Excellent Better	90.62% Excellent Worse	95.81% Excellent Better	93.22% Excellent Worse

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	66 Priority to Improve Worse	63 Priority to Improve Worse

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The number of people who were on the Complex Disabilities Specialist Housing Needs Register for whom supported housing has been secured - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	16 Excellent Better	8 Good Worse
The percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (section 66) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	38.35% Priority to Improve Worse	37.11% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (section 73) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	15.96% Priority to Improve Worse	11.68% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households positively discharged from homelessness (section 75) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	50.22% Priority to Improve Better	54.18% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	15% Priority to Improve	17% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of council properties compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Benchmarked Nationally	100% Excellent Same	100% Excellent Same
The percentage of tenants that were satisfied with Denbighshire Housing, taking everything into account - Benchmarked Locally	No data: does not apply	85% Excellent
The percentage of existing and acquired Council housing stock achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above - Benchmarked Locally	41.89% Acceptable Better	46.1% Acceptable Better
The additional supply of Council Homes provided - Benchmarked Locally	15 Acceptable Better	25 Good Better
The total number of (new) homes completed during the year in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	256	258

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The number of empty private properties brought back into use through direct action by the local authority - Benchmarked Locally	181 Good Worse	150 Acceptable Worse

Stakeholder Survey

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
	With an opinion, and agree	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is sufficient, good quality housing in Denbighshire, which meets people's needs - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	40% Priority to Improve	31% Priority to Improve Worse

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Deliver and monitor the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan (Equality Objective)	On target	No exception however for information, ownership on this has now transferred from the LDP Team to the Housing and Communities Service moving forward.
Llys Awelon (Phase 2) (Equality Objective)	On target	No exception
Reduce the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens (Equality Objective)	On target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses	Complete	A new activity (directly below), reflects the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards and replaces this project, thus it is marked Complete.
Devise and implement a plan to achieve SAP 75 housing by 2030 (including revising current baseline assessment methods and producing a costs analysis) along with a Targeted Energy Pathway	On Target	No exception
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (Equality Objective)	Complete	
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) Site Selection (Equality Objective)	At Project Brief stage	
Denbighshire replacement Local Development Plan	At Business Case stage	
Edward Henry Street	On Target Better	No exception
Additional Council Housing Developments (Equality Objective)	On Target Better	No exception
Work with Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to contribute to progressing Rhyl Residential Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles	There has been no update since 10 May (where this was 'yellow', experiencing obstacles). This work will be discussed on the Forward Work Plan of the Prosperous Denbighshire Board to see whether or not it should continue.
Develop a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing	Complete	
Signpost to Welsh Government's NEST Scheme	Complete	

Title	Status	Exception
Promote and administer the Energy Company Obligation Scheme (ECO4) via Flintshire County Council – energy efficiency in private sector dwellings	On Target Same	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council’s website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of categories. The [Communities Scrutiny Committee](#) considered a report in May regarding the voids maintenance process and challenge to the budget, mainly as a result of impacts of the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) 2023. In May, [Cabinet](#) considered the draft Local Housing Market Assessment for Denbighshire, seeking approval of its submission to Welsh Government. The [Communities Scrutiny Committee](#), in September, considered an update on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and homelessness triage service. In September, [Partnership Scrutiny Committee](#) considered the draft Asset Management Strategy for 2024 to 2029.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Work collaboratively with communities and partners to deliver projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic growth](#)

The measures status for this theme has been summarised overall as a ‘Priority for Improvement’. However, it should be noted that these include broad and long-term indicators such as those from the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation and stakeholder survey responses.

In September 2023, the UK Government launched the Long-Term Plan for Towns initiative as part of its Levelling Up programme. In March 2024, it was announced that Rhyl would receive circa £20m as one of the second tranche of towns to be included in the initiative.

The funding was awarded to Denbighshire County Council and we remain accountable for the funding and for delivery of the plan. In May, [Cabinet](#) received and supported the actions to be taken to meet the requirements of the funding, which included the creation of a new Town Board and the appointment of an independent [Chair](#). A further report to [Cabinet](#) in June confirmed these arrangements and Cabinet was also advised of actions required by the Board to be undertaken by 1 November 2024, which include agreeing governance, engagement plans, reviewing data and developing a ten year vision and a delivery plan for the first three years.

The council has also secured funding from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme to offer the Transforming Towns Property Development Grant to regenerate commercial properties located in Rhyl town centre. [Applications opened in August.](#)

[Develop an economic strategy](#)

Recognising the local and global economic challenges it faces, the council is still developing an Economic Strategy. We are currently consulting on an assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats as part of the first phase of development.

We can now report that Denbighshire's tourism figures have seen a rise for 2023 in comparison to the previous year. The latest STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures show that the total visitor numbers for Denbighshire in 2023 reached 6.39 million, an increase of almost 6% (5.9%) in comparison to 2022 figures. The data also shows that the number of day visitors to the county for 2023 was 4.72 million, a 7.5% change when compared to 2022. The total economic impact of tourism was £736.05 million, an increase of 17.1% on the previous year and is considered 'Excellent'.

[Work in partnership to support an economy that promotes fair work, justice, and socially responsible public procurement, benefitting the local supply chain and local communities \(Equality Objective\)](#)

The total spend via procurement, including grant funding, during the 2023 to 2024 financial year was £226,978,810; £83,426,447 of this being spent within Denbighshire (35.2%). 56% of relevant procurements contained community benefits and work is ongoing to align these with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023. Our April to June performance was 'Excellent' and reflects two significant contracts that were awarded to Denbighshire-based construction companies during that time. Community benefits were also included in all contracts during April to June. This level of performance cannot be

sustained every quarter because it largely depends on the scale of procurements, but it does demonstrate that good procurement can deliver excellent results.

[Support access to education, employment, services, goods, and activities](#)

There are a number of benchmarked measures that give an indication of performance compared to other local authorities in Wales. The data for A, B and C classified roads that are in overall poor condition for 2023 to 2024 is unavailable. The percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) has seen an improvement from 27.60% in April to June to 44% between July and September. However, this remains a 'Priority for Improvement' (and a continuing Improvement Action) as the service continues to struggle with meeting the demands of the asset within the limited budgetary and staffing resources available.

Case Study: [Young Carer Secures Full-Time Employment After Work Placement](#)

Mali, a dedicated young carer, has transitioned into full-time employment following a Working Denbighshire Work Start placement. Mali's journey began with a "Taster to Care" training course and work experience, leading her to secure a 12-week placement at Dolwen Care Home. Supported by her Work Start Placement Mentor, Mali completed the application process for a permanent 24-hour contract at Dolwen Care Home and she accepted the job on her 18th birthday. Mali's exceptional performance during the placement earned her a permanent position, marking a significant step towards a prosperous career. This case study also links to efforts under our [A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire theme](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment please see our [learning and growing theme](#) and the [well-run, high performing council](#) for further activity connected to the local economy.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The percentage of working age people who are claiming Out of Work Benefits - Benchmarked Nationally	3.6% Priority to Improve Better	3.5% Priority to Improve Better	3.8% Priority to Improve Worse	Data pending	Data pending
The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	15.90% Priority to Improve Worse	41.8% Excellent Better	38.6% Good Worse	78% Excellent Better	36% Good Worse
The cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits – Benchmarked Locally	53.3% Good Worse	55.60% Good Better	56.00% Good Better	100% Excellent Better	87% Excellent Worse
Year to date average for the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) Benchmarked Locally	23.33% Priority to Improve Worse	52.33% Priority to Improve Better	42.00% Priority to Improve Worse	27.60% Priority to Improve Worse	44.00% Priority to Improve Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	28.1% Priority to Improve Better	Data pending

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
Average gross annual pay for people who live in the area and work full time (£) - Benchmarked Nationally	27,121 Priority to Improve Better	Data pending
External funding (in pounds) secured for economic development – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	£1,041,250
STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) - Benchmarked Locally	£628.58m Excellent Better	£736.05 Excellent Better
Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	56 Priority to Improve Worse	Data pending
Deaths of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	69 Priority to Improve Better	Data pending
The percentage of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	2.2% Excellent Better	Data unavailable
The percentage of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	3.5% Excellent Better	Data unavailable
The percentage of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	16.4% Priority to Improve Worse	Data unavailable
The percentage of premises that receive less than 30Mbps broadband speed - Count Only	4.57%	3.88%
The percentage of premises that receive less than 10Mbps broadband speed - Count Only	2.88%	2.4%

Stakeholder Survey

Title	2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree	2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has a prosperous economy that provides access to the right skills, jobs, and income - Benchmarked Locally	40% Priority to Improve	30% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the transport and road infrastructure to support thriving, cohesive, and well-connected communities - Benchmarked Locally	31% Priority to Improve	28% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the digital infrastructure (such as good broadband connectivity, good mobile internet or mobile phone signal) to support thriving, cohesive, and well-connected communities – Benchmarked Locally	52.2% Acceptable	52% Acceptable Same
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the rich cultural heritage and natural assets of Denbighshire are being used to their full potential - Benchmarked Locally (Welsh Language and Culture)	51% Acceptable	49% Priority to Improve Worse

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Programme: Shared Prosperity Fund	On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
	Same	
Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd South	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The tight delivery timeframe remaining for sub-project 3d (Active Travel) and the uncertainty over the budget position is a concern.
Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd West	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There is a level of uncertainty and increased risks that require monitoring and mitigation at this stage of the programme
Placeholder: Levelling Up Fund Round 3 – Vale of Clwyd	At project brief stage	Awaiting final confirmation from UK Government. Plans for funding for this year and next year are expected to be released in October.
Enabling and supporting North Wales Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Quarterly reports are provided to the Partnership Scrutiny Committee. The annual report from Ambition North Wales will be presented in November
Former North Wales Hospital	At Risk Same	The project remains ‘At Risk’ until all the necessary funding and planning agreements are in place.
Queen’s Buildings Rhyl	At Risk Worse	‘At Risk’ due to delays in securing an operator to manage and funding deadlines.
Coordinating Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding programme streams	On Target Same	No exception
Develop Town Centre Place Making Plans	On Target Same	No exception
Develop the council’s new Economic Strategy (Welsh Language and Culture)	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Victorian Post Office (Rhyl)	On Target Same	No exception
Progress the Rhyl Public Realm Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Discussions about the best way forward with the Strategy are ongoing.
Reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach (Rhyl promenade)	At Risk Worse	The project is currently on hold due to LUF3 UK Government funding.
Seeking to improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties	At Risk Worse	The Planning Compliance Team has halved, and this is expected to result in targets for this project being missed.
Co-Relocation of Rhyl Tourist Information Centre and Rhyl Museum	At business case stage	No exception
Develop the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Tourism Plan and work with local businesses to develop the actions	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver the Denbighshire Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027	On Target Same	No exception
Raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for adults who work in the business community (Welsh Language and Culture)	On Target Same	No exception
Complete feasibility report for move-on accommodation at St Asaph Business Park	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a Community Benefits Framework to align with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act	Experiencing Obstacles Same	This is complete, as far as possible, while we await full implementation of the Act. Reporting on the duty will be reliant on contract management reporting.
Aim to deliver the most viable option to replace the Llannerch Bridge	On Target Same	No exception
Contribute to the development of the new Regional Transport Plan	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Work with partners on the proposed designation of a National Park in North East Wales (Welsh Language and Culture)	On Target Same	No exception
3rd Generation - North Wales Construction Framework	Complete	The Framework has been launched.

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council's website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of categories. In April, we reported on another successful [March For Business](#). Through the Transforming Towns Grant provided by Welsh Government, we managed to work with a number of businesses and business owners in Rhyl, helping them to add [visual improvements to their buildings](#). In April, [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) received a report on Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

Corporate Plan Update

[Ensure that the council's social care offer is of a high standard](#)

There continues to be a steady increase in the number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with the right type of specialist equipment. Some recognised benefits of right-sizing care include improved outcomes for citizens and improved staff efficiency. With regard to projects in relation to this theme, the council has a number of ongoing activities in support of those with additional learning or complex needs, as can be seen in the table of projects below. There has been a change in delivery confidence to 'Experiencing Obstacles' for the project at Ysgol Tir Morfa to develop a hydrotherapy facility at the school. Successful delivery remains probable, though delays are likely due to the funding and design work required to mitigate surface water drainage issues.

In July, the council's [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) considered the draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023 to 2024, endorsing it as a clear account of the council's performance whilst acknowledging the financial and resource pressures within which the services are operating. At the same meeting, the Committee endorsed the [Cefndy year end report 2023 to 2024](#), noting the progress made in planning for the future viability of the enterprise. July also saw the council's [Cabinet](#) consider a report on the replacement of the Social Care Information Management System. The council's [Governance and Audit Committee](#) reviewed the recent Care Inspectorate Wales inspection report on Dolwen Care Centre, fully supporting the positive inspection report. In news related to the council's social care offer, topics included local authority [fostering services](#), [Hafan Deg Day Centre](#), the [Micro-provider initiative](#), [adaptation in social care](#), and the [Community Resources Team](#).

[Support the well-being, mental-health, and resilience of individuals within communities \(Equality Objective\)](#)

The Talking Points service takes place in libraries across Denbighshire and is a way for people to find out what help and support is available in their local area to improve health

and well-being. The number of people supported at Talking Points has increased since the previous reporting period and the percentage of citizens accessing this support who did not need to be referred into the Adult Social Care Service has also increased to 99%.

Case study: Future Generations thinking

Talking Points is an example of the way the council is applying the five ways of working for the well-being of future generations, by thinking about the long-term needs of our citizens, working collaboratively with partners in health services to prevent problems from worsening, increasing involvement by reaching out to people in their communities, whilst taking an integrated approach to supporting other well-being goals including those that are social and cultural as well as the goals of our partner organisations such as the local health board.

During the period we publicised topics such as [Ageing Well](#), [support for people living with dementia](#), [mental health support](#), raising [mental health awareness](#), and [community food](#) initiatives.

Promote personal and community well-being

A good number of community well-being projects have received support from the council during this period. Many of these projects provide support to citizens in relation to cost-of-living pressures. Key projects include developing Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the county and the 'Cogog' project supporting community food initiatives, which is designed to address issues of food waste and food poverty. Both of these are 'On Target.' The Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project continues to report an 'At Risk' delivery confidence status and this is due to being behind schedule. There has been successful collaboration between the two organisations, though joint arrangements around funding are yet to be finalised.

We publicised a range of news this period related to Welsh language, culture and heritage included the [Summer Reading Challenge](#) and [art workshops](#) at libraries; [young rangers](#) volunteering; [pupils volunteering](#) with the Salvation Army; Ruthin Gaol [immersive activity](#) and [summer events](#); [St Asaph Workhouse](#) events; [Plas Newydd volunteering](#); and North East Wales Archives [funding](#), [digital content](#), and [1920s](#) events.

Foster community cohesion by ensuring people are protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation (Equality Objective)

The council continues to monitor the prevalence of reported domestic abuse, hate crime and youth offending in Denbighshire. According to North Wales Police, repeat victims are people who have been a victim of crime on three or more occasions in 12 months. There were 207 repeat victims, and 48 repeat offenders of domestic abuse reported during this period. In comparison to the same period last year, for reported repeat victims this is a decrease of around 26% (from 279) and for reported repeat offenders this is an increase of around 30% (from 37). Reports from the Domestic Abuse Support Unit show that referral rates in Denbighshire have remained above 400 each quarter since April 2024, and that 27 of the 433 referrals recorded between July and September were for children. The number of hate crimes reported for Denbighshire to North Wales Police was 48 between April and June, with the majority of those categorised as related to sexual orientation. Between July and September, 46 reports were made, with the majority of those categorised as racial hate crime.

The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire was reported as 106 for July to September, this is an increase of around 39% from the same period last year (at which point the number was 65). In July, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) considered a report by the Corporate Director for Social Services and Education regarding feedback on the recently published HMIP Joint Inspection of Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service. Of the 12 areas rated, 2 were deemed inadequate: governance and leadership and partnerships and services. Related to these, seven recommendations were made. The Committee acknowledged that the report did not contain good news; however, good comments ran throughout the report. The committee sought and was given reassurance that the actions identified within the report would be carried out. It was agreed that the Denbighshire Youth Justice Service Board and Partnership be discussed at the relevant scrutiny committee.

In September, the council's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered the [Community Safety Partnership Annual Update for April 2023 to March 2024](#), accepting the performance update within the report. In other news related to community cohesion, topics included Rhyl town centre [Public Space Protection Order](#), [Armed Forces Day](#), and [Emergency Services Day](#).

[Continue to support and resettle refugees through the UK Global Resettlement Scheme, in support of Wales’s declaration to be a Nation of Sanctuary \(Equality Objective\)](#)

The council continues to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children, 15 of whom were looked after by the council between April and June, and 14 of whom were looked after by the council between July and September.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For information about our work to reduce deprivation and inequality, please see our [prosperous](#) and [well-run, high performing council](#) themes respectively. For further detail around our work to support learning, development and well-being, see our [Learning and Growing](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse - Benchmarked Locally	99% Excellent Worse	96.5% Excellent Worse	98% Excellent Better	98% Excellent Same	97% Excellent Worse
The number of referrals and enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway - Count Only	4,020	3,731	4,001	4,169	2,548
The number of children looked after in Denbighshire – Count Only	206	209	210	207	196

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with the right type of specialist equipment – Baseline Year	11	16	12	22	31
The percentage of schools in the county using the Public Health Wales Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Tool – Benchmarked Locally	No data.	66% Acceptable Better	67% Acceptable Better	67% Acceptable Same	67% Acceptable Same
The number of Single Point of Access contacts for information, advice and assistance – Count Only	4,911	4,821	4,259	4,936	5,075
The number of Talking Point contacts for information, advice and assistance (libraries, One Stop Shops and hosted by Community Navigators etc) - Count Only	218	214	194	305	297
The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care - Baseline Year	87%	97%	92%	97%	99%
The number of projects or groups supported by the Community Resilience Team - Benchmarked Locally	73 Excellent Worse	75 Excellent Better	53 Acceptable Worse	87 Excellent Better	61 Good Worse

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse reported including non-crime occurrences (3 or more in 12 months, measured as year to date) - Count Only (Equality Objective)	279	360	490	128	207
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat offenders of Domestic Abuse reported (3 or more in 12 months) - Count Only (Equality Objective)	37	63	88	23	48
The number of referrals to the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit North Wales (DASU) for Denbighshire to support victims of domestic abuse – Count Only (Equality Objective)	Data reported from January 2024	Data reported from January 2024	382	466	433
Denbighshire hate crimes reported (from North Wales Police) – Count Only (Equality Objective)	54	52	34	48	46
The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire – Baseline Year	65	78	78	117	106
The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) looked after by	20	18	17	15	14

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
Denbighshire – Count Only					

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally	77% Priority to Improve Better	65% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of child protection conferences held within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally	95% Good Better	93% Acceptable Worse
The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided - Count Only	1,159	1,094
The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year (cumulative) – Count Only (Equality Objective)	401	370
Number of micro providers in existence in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	30 Excellent	57 Excellent Better
The number of schools that have achieved Trauma Informed School status by 2027 - Benchmarked Locally	1 Excellent	1 Priority to Improve Worse
The number of young people who receive school-based counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	338 Acceptable Better	301 Acceptable Worse
The number of contacts provided through the council's Edge of Care volunteer service - Count Only	795	333
The cumulative number of families resettled within Denbighshire – Count Only (Equality Objective)	41	50

Stakeholder Survey

Title	2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree	2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that they can live safely, happily, and independently, in Denbighshire and also receive good support when needed to promote resilience and well-being - Benchmarked Locally	55% Acceptable	46% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the social infrastructure needed to support personal and community well-being – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	62% Acceptable	66% Good Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agreed that people in Denbighshire are treated fairly and equally, and have access to opportunities to promote their well-being and community cohesion - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	46% Priority to Improve	53% Acceptable Better

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Monitor and implement requirements of Foster Wales and monitor effectiveness of national approach.	On Target Same	No exception
Implement Post 16 of Additional Learning Needs work	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The regional inclusion group continues to seek further information from Welsh Government.

Title	Status	Exception
Develop an in-county residential short breaks and emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire	On Target Same	No exception
Implement and embed the Autism Code of Practice requirements at local authority level across Children's Services.	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Numerous workstreams are progressing with key partners and support is available to people who are awaiting a diagnostic assessment.
Bwthyn y Ddol Phase 2 (Activity) Develop and implement, including staffing, a new Children's Assessment Centre jointly with Conwy County Borough Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	On Target Same	No exception
Ysgol Tir Morfa - Hydrotherapy pool	Experiencing obstacles Worse	This is delayed due to the availability of funding and design work required to mitigate surface water drainage issues.
Work with local unpaid carers to identify the respite opportunities they need, and how barriers are overcome to enable this.	On Target Same	No exception
Work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire, with World Health Organisation, in partnership with Ageing Well in Denbighshire multi-agency group.	On Target Same	No exception
Work in partnership regionally to contribute to the embedding of the All Wales Dementia Pathway of Standards	On Target Same	No exception
Progress towards digitalisation of telecare services before the 2025 deadline for ceasing of analogue telephone services.	On Target Better	No exception
Bruton Park, Rhyl (working with Bruton Park residents to maximise community well-being).	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Develop Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the County.	On Target Better	No exception
Develop and deliver the county wide Food Strategy and Food Partnership Network (including social supermarket project – Cogog) around Denbighshire	On Target Same	No exception
Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project	At Risk Same	Delivery of the project is behind schedule and joint arrangements around funding are yet to be finalised.

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council's website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of categories. At September's meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee considered an information report on [Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow out of Hospital – North Wales Region](#) and recommended that the item be referred at the relevant scrutiny committee for discussion. In September, the council's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered the [North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2023 to 2024](#), taking account of the work undertaken by the Board.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Promote the learning and development of our children and young people](#) [\(Equality Objective\)](#)

Between July and September, 642 children took part in the childcare offer across Denbighshire, which is considered as 'Good' performance given this is always the quietest period as the children start school. We plan to improve the way we work with schools to collect data. This includes data to help us monitor bullying in schools and the use of the Welsh language in education. The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures rose from 3 to 4, which is 'Acceptable'. Christ the Word Catholic School remained in Special Measures and Ysgol Clawdd Offa was in need of Significant Improvement. These are the two statutory categories into which schools may be placed by the inspectorate if they are causing concern, with Special Measures being the category of highest concern. Ysgol Pendref and Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn were in Estyn Review, a status applied if inspectors have seriously considered but rejected placing a school in a statutory category, but are concerned that follow-up action is necessary. Developments in regional school improvement continued to be carefully monitored in the light of the impending cessation of GwE as the regional school improvement service for North Wales. The council is working on creating a new project to ensure that progress continues in this area of work and updates will be provided in time.

Attendance in primary and secondary schools for the academic year 2023 to 2024 improved, though the figures remain a 'Priority for Improvement' at 92.3% and 88.2% respectively. In news related to learning and development, there was an update on the expansion of the [Flying Start](#) childcare offer, an article detailing the installation of a [sensory path](#) in Rhyl, and guidance on Denbighshire's new [schools admissions system](#). During the period, school pupils celebrated [GCSE results](#), [A Level results](#), and the [80th anniversary of D-day](#).

Provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the needs of pupils, families, and the wider community, including working with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme

The council continued to progress its long-term plans for delivering this pledge. Unfortunately, delays in the progression of certain projects within the Modernising Education Programme - designed to provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the current and future needs of pupils and families as part of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme meant that this stream of work remained 'At Risk.' The Community Focussed Schools pilot project in Prestatyn remained 'On Target' and continued to strengthen, with work being undertaken to grow this initiative. In April, [Cabinet](#) approved the submission to Welsh Government of the draft Strategic Outline Programme for the Sustainable Communities for Learning. In May, the [Partnerships Scrutiny Committee](#), considered a review of the Cabinet decision relating to Sustainable Communities for Learning, in accordance with the Council's call-in procedure, and it was resolved that Cabinet's original decision be upheld.

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

We are no longer able to report on Llwybrau data, as it has not been possible to secure funding to extend the project, which supported young people to reduce their risk of disengagement. There was continued development of relationships with colleges and further education institutions following the closure of Llwybrau and the council continued to work collaboratively with partners such as Ambition North Wales and the Regional Skills Partnership, to enhance people's opportunities to develop skills and receive training. The council's Working Denbighshire Service continued to support citizens seeking employment, further education or training through the [Work Start Scheme](#). We have now received the results of the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) surveys which were conducted during the 2023 to 2024 academic year and these show that a 'Good' proportion (81%) of pupils responded positively against feelings about school.

Improving the well-being of children from low income and disadvantaged families (Equality Objective)

Projects in support of this pledge were 'On Target', including the roll-out of [universal free school meals](#) for all primary school pupils. We are working on gathering data around the numbers of primary and secondary school pupils that are eligible (based on household income) for free school meals as this will help us to understand the levels of child poverty in Denbighshire. We will publish this data as soon as it is available. The council also issued guidance for families to support them to access the [School Essentials Grant](#). In September, [County Council](#) considered and agreed a notice of motion brought by the Plaid Cymru group proposing that the council write to all the members of parliament who represent Wales in Westminster on the matter of the two-child benefit cap supporting the need to abolish it.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [healthier, happier and caring theme](#) and for further detail around our work to support employment and the economy see our [prosperous](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The number of children taking part in the childcare offer – Benchmarked Locally	624 Good Better	701 Excellent Better	772 Excellent Better	822 Excellent Better	642 Good Worse
The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures – Benchmarked Locally	2 Good Same	2 Good Same	3 Acceptable Worse	4 Acceptable Worse	4 Acceptable Worse

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally	82% Excellent Better	83% Excellent Better
The percentage of parents that have reported a positive impact through attending Bookstart and Rhyme-time – Benchmarked Locally	99% Excellent	99% Excellent Same
The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – Benchmarked Locally	85% Good Worse	81% Good Worse
The number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	No data	Data expected October 2024
The percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools – Benchmarked Locally	90.8% Priority to Improve Worse	92.3% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools – Benchmarked Locally	86% Priority to Improve Worse	88.2% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of reception pupils receiving Welsh medium education - Count Only (Welsh Language and Culture)	27.4%	28.4%
The number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D – Benchmarked Locally	27 Excellent Same	27 Excellent Same
The percentage of Year 11 Leavers from schools know Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), at the preceding 31 August in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	2.3% Priority to Improve Worse	2.4% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of Year 11 pupils that do not have an identified Post-16 pathway in place – Benchmarked Locally	10.5% Priority to Improve Worse	2.4% Good Better

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of children or young people who are looked after that have a Personal Education Plan in place – Benchmarked Locally	96% Good Worse	98% Good Better
The percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the collection year – Count Only	73% Excellent Better	75% Excellent Better
The percentage of primary school pupils assessed as eligible for Free School Meals (Denbighshire) – Benchmarked Locally	Data expected October 2024	Data expected October 2024
The percentage of secondary school pupils assessed as eligible for Free School Meals (Denbighshire) – Benchmarked Locally	Data expected October 2024	Data expected October 2024
The percentage of primary school pupils taking up the offer of a free school meal – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	61% Priority to Improve Worse	76% Excellent Better
The percentage of secondary school pupils taking up the offer of a free school meal – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	76% Excellent Better	81% Excellent Better
The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally	82% Excellent Better	83% Excellent Better

Stakeholder Survey

Title	2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree	2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that good quality learning and training is available in Denbighshire, allowing people of all ages to reach their personal and professional potential – Benchmarked Locally	62% Acceptable	56% Acceptable Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is a county where the Welsh language is a living,	62% Acceptable	56% Acceptable

Title	2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree	2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree
thriving language - Benchmarked Locally (Welsh Language and Culture)		Worse

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Flying Start Expansion	On Target Same	No exception
Implement School Improvement Guidance: Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Delayed by reforms in the Welsh Government School Improvement Partnership Programme.
Support the regional project on Emotional Health, Well-being and Resilience Framework, which will provide resources for parents	On Target Better	No exception
Support schools in developing digital competency through educational leadership of the EdTech project	Experiencing Obstacles Same	A change in systems is required and the Schools Digital Strategy will need to be revised to reflect these changes, which were overseen by Welsh Government.
Implement the WESP to support 1 million speakers by 2050 (Welsh Language and Culture)	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
In partnership with GwE, Support schools and non-maintained settings to deliver the new curriculum for Wales to ensure our learners become capable, ambitious, enterprising, ethical, healthy and confident adults	On Target Same	No exception
Implement requirements of the of ALN Reform Act within Education and Children's Services to ensure compliance	On Target Same	No exception
Modernising Education Programme	At Risk Same	Delays continue in the progression of Sustainable Communities for Learning projects.
Community Focussed Schools: Prestatyn High Pilot	On Target Same	No exception
Engage with the North Wales Ambition Board and the Regional Skills Partnership to ensure that skills and training secured through our Community Benefits Policy is fit for the future and / or transferrable	Experiencing obstacles Worse	We are working with the Ambition Board on a procurement and social value conference which will be held in November.
Through our Community Benefits Policy, secure business led strategy workshops for the benefit of residents seeking to upskill	Experiencing obstacles Same	We are still working with Balfour Beatty to deliver workshops.
Universal Free School Meals for all Primary School Pupils (Equality Objective)	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the School Holiday Enrichment Programme to support children to eat well	On Target Same	No exception
Reducing the impact of poverty on Education Attainment, including implementing the Price of Poverty project (Equality Objective)	On Target Same	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council's website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of

categories. In June, the council's [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) considered, and was satisfied with, a report on the progress made in addressing the recommendations in the 2018 Estyn Inspection Report of Denbighshire County Council education services. In July, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) received a report regarding the recent CIW and Estyn inspection at Little Acorns at Christ the Word and fully supported the positive inspection report. In September, the council's Performance Scrutiny Committee received and discussed the [Additional Learning Needs Transformation Update](#) report. At the same meeting, the Committee considered a report on the current position with regards to [School Attendance And Engagement In Education](#). The Committee also reviewed the [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) Transformation Update](#) report. Finally, the Committee considered a report providing an update on the progress made by schools since the [Curriculum for Wales](#) became statutory in September 2022.

A Greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Deliver our Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030](#)

The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy was carried out during 2023 to 2024. The final version following consultation and feedback received was submitted for adoption by Cabinet and Council in June 2024. The document approved now being entitled : [Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Nature Strategy 2021/22 to 2029/30 \(Year 3 Updated Version\)](#).

There are a number of key performance indicators that are being used to judge the performance of the council in achieving its 2030 goals, including: reducing carbon emissions the Council emits from various sources, increasing carbon sequestration of land the Council owns/leases and manages and increasing the species richness of the land the Council owns/leases and manages. Data for the year 2023 to 2024 is now contained within this report. The percentage of council owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness has very slightly increased to 42.5% in 2023 to 2024 and indicates we are making 'Acceptable' progress towards becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030.

Our 2023 to 2024 carbon emissions data has now been reported to Welsh Government as part of the annual public sector reporting. The Council's Net Carbon Zero position as at 31 March 2024 is 12,653 tonnes, which, by 2030, needs to be zero tonnes. This indicator remains a 'Priority for Improvement'.

The total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains rose from 36,912 in 2022 to 2023 to 50,233 in 2023 to 2024. The target is a reduction by 35% from 2019/20 baseline. This indicator remains as a 'Priority for Improvement'.

The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that insufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero. The financial pressures all local authorities are facing now and in the coming years will continue to impact on that pace. We have

maintained our Climate and Ecological Improvement ambition and have not adjusted our targets - despite their challenge.

Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

In June 2024 we introduced a new recycling system to help us meet Welsh Government's 70% recycling target which has been set for all local authorities in Wales. The new household waste collection model is a specific project within this Greener theme because it will help us to increase the quantity and quality of recycling collected from households and increase opportunities for "closed loop recycling". Through adoption of low carbon technologies at the new Waste Transfer Station and inclusion of infrastructure for Zero and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, the aim is to minimise the impact of the service in support of the wider corporate goals on net zero by 2030. The project also supports the Prosperous theme, which aims to support economic recovery, capitalising on opportunities to enable residents to access decent employment and income. The project has led to the creation of additional jobs within the waste service. In addition, the building of the new depot enabled the creation and protection of many local private sector jobs. We worked with four important local businesses at the Colomendy Business Park, Denbigh, as part of the development of the new Depot. This allowed them to unlock and develop new employment land to enable those four businesses to remain in Denbigh and expand their operations.

It soon became apparent after the roll out of the new service that some of the assumptions were flawed. The main issue being some of the daily recycling rounds had been designed with too many properties requiring collection. This meant we were seeing several rounds per day not completing, resulting in large and unacceptable numbers of missed collections. At [Cabinet](#) in June, the Leader raised the roll out of the new recycling and waste collection service as an urgent item, apologising on behalf of the council to residents affected by problems associated with the roll out of the new service and to elected members who had been working hard on behalf of residents. He also thanked members for reporting missed collections in their wards and residents for their patience and efforts in recycling. A report will be taken to Cabinet on 1 October regarding [Additional resources required for the new weekly trollibocs recycling service and associated waste collection functions](#). There will be a full review of how the roll out was planned and implemented, which will include an examination of the assumptions underpinning the design of the new service. Elected Members and residents will be involved in the review.

[Support communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change](#)

Case study: Rhyl Coastal Defence Scheme provides work experience

This is an example of the community benefits that can be delivered through our procurement and the ways in which our themes complement each other. The [work experience](#) was arranged between the council's Llwybrau project (that supports young people at risk from disengaging from education) and Balfour Beatty, the contractor undertaking the works for the Rhyl and Prestatyn Coastal Defence schemes. Nine young people from Rhyl College and Christ the Word Schol were given the work experience placements to gain an insight into civil engineering.

Two participants said: "I think the positives about Balfour Beatty are that what they are doing is amazing and will help Rhyl out in the long run. The staff are also really nice and the stuff behind how machines work and what the actual plan is for the sea defences is really interesting."

"I liked how nice the people were and how they treat you with respect. I really enjoyed going out on site to see how things get done and why they do it."

[Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan that makes travel and tourism within our county 'greener'](#)

The Sustainable Transport Plan project has now been closed and removed from the Corporate Plan as recommended in our last report. Working closely with the Corporate Joint Committee on the Regional Transport Plan is now the council's priority going forward. The unreported Active Travel measures have also been removed. To learn more about active travel you can visit the [Active Travel page](#) on our website.

We are now able to report the cumulative number of journeys using the Fflecsi bus service and cumulative number of concessionary journeys and have provided data in this report.

[Support our county's green infrastructure](#)

By August, our [EV charging public network](#) reached its first anniversary by providing thousands of green miles for motorists to travel around Denbighshire. The network located at all towns have provided 239,146kwh of charging for motorists using the

facilities, the equivalent of 837,000 miles of greener lower carbon travelling and nearly 34 times travelling around the circumference of the earth.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of greener initiatives please see our [Housing](#) theme for energy efficiency and our [Prosperous](#) for sustainable travel.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
Cumulative number of journeys using Fflecsi bus services – Count Only	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	3,644	6,915
Cumulative number of concessionary journeys – Count Only	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	178,922	370,709

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains) – Benchmarked Locally	12,062 Priority to Improve Worse	12,653 Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness – Benchmarked Locally	42.00% Acceptable Better	42.50% Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through fleet – Benchmarked Locally	2,302 Acceptable Better	2,166 Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through business travel – Benchmarked Locally	251 Excellent Worse	276 Excellent Worse

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains– Benchmarked Locally	36,912 Priority to Improve Priority	50,233 Priority to Improve Worse
Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed in our buildings (owned and operated) - Count Only	1Mw	1.190Mw
The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted - Benchmarked Nationally	65.91% Good Worse	67.59% Excellent Better
The number of properties with a high or medium risk of flooding (DCC wide) - Count Only	1,171	1,171

Stakeholder Survey

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
	With an opinion, and agree	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is resilient against the impacts of climate change and nature's decline - Benchmarked Locally	52% Acceptable	44% Priority to Improve Worse

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Programme: Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 – 2030	Experiencing Obstacles Same	This is due to delays in some projects and their delivery not being at the

Title	Status	Exception
		pace required to meet our ambition.
Deliver the annual programme of Ash Dieback work	On Target Same	No exception
Rhyl Green Infrastructure	On Target Same	No exception
Remodelling Waste Service Operations	At Risk Worse	The roll out of the new service hasn't gone entirely to plan and the service has encountered a variety of issues.
Reduce plastics in schools and promote recycling in relation to the new waste model	On Target Better	No exception
Develop and implement a new Denbighshire Flood Risk Management Strategy for the county	On Target Same	No exception
Prestatyn Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	No exception
Rhyl Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	No exception
Review, develop and modernise rural, urban and inter-urban transport services, where appropriate, working with partners within the Metro project and alongside the emerging bus reform	On Target Better	No exception
Work with Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board to develop and assess our organisation's climate risk resilience	On Target New	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. The council's website contains a wealth of news about nature, our local environment and community activity around climate change, which can be found on our [news](#) page by applying the filter for "Climate and ecological change".

As part of the current programme of work on the Rhyl Coastal Defence scheme, Balfour Beatty will also be undertaking the demolition of the old SeaQuarium building [to improve the public realm](#) and declutter the promenade. In September, [Cabinet](#) agreed to endorse a [Local Area Energy Plan \(LAEP\)](#) for the county. The LAEP is an evidence-based, holistic plan that outlines the scale of change and opportunity to decarbonise Denbighshire's local energy system.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Embed a positive “one council” culture \(Equality Objective\)](#)

This last period has been challenging for the Council as the new waste collection and recycling service has had a difficult start (the significant increase in external complaints upheld or partly upheld reflects this). We pulled together as “One Council” (see our [values and five principles here](#)) to support our waste service, and worked closely with members and residents to understand and resolve issues. We are a learning organisation and are committed to listen and apply the lessons learned to future transformational projects.

Whilst wider communications about the Well-run, high performing council Board (that supports this theme of the Corporate Plan) were postponed during the period, the Board, in April, inputted into the annual self-assessment, service performance challenges and the peer-led Panel Performance Assessment, which has now concluded. Two further workshops were held with office-based staff, and a task and finish group consisting of officers, elected members and partners has progressed ideas about how the council could build stronger relationships with and improve its engagement, support and collaboration with communities and partners, including City, Town and Community Councils. This is likely to contribute to wider efforts to improve engagement in council business, for example Scrutiny Committees, which was also cited as part of the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees 2023 to 2024 provided to [County Council](#) in July. The Board’s July meeting was postponed and will take place in October. The theme for that meeting will be the emerging transformation agenda and how our culture can enable transformation; bringing staff along on that journey and to ensure our values and principles are reflected in the customer experience.

We aim to provide consistently good customer service, and a key part of that is about our systems. During the period, the council signed a new contract with Civica for C360 CRM, our customer relationship management system, until February 2027. This will enable us to consider opportunities to integrate, unify and streamline business operations and IT systems as well seek out digital transformation possibilities.

Case study: Example of our values and principles in action

Officers from across the council have been supporting [Llanfair Community Council | Dyffryn Clwyd DC Community](#) with its Llanfair Playground Planning Application. Our support has ranged from helping with the technical aspects of the Application, to supporting conversations with external funders on timescales.

Performance in relation to the percentage of staff who have had at least one or three one-to-ones in the last 12 months has deteriorated these last two quarters from 91% at the end of March to 72% at the end of September, and is considered a 'Priority for Improvement'. Every Services' performance in relation to one-to-ones will be included in Performance Reports for Service Performance Challenges in November and December this year. Sickness levels corporately have also increased slightly to an average of 9.07 working days / shifts per full time equivalent. Following a review of the thresholds that determine what excellent performance looks like, we have decided to retain existing thresholds rather than update them in line with wider sector averages. Our own thresholds, based on employee absence across all sectors and the public sector, are significantly more stretching and help us to maintain a focus on managing sickness absence. The percentage of employees that have completed all 10 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) has decreased to 45.79% and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'.

[Reduce inequalities by ensuring that the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds, seldom heard groups, and those at a socio-economic disadvantage are heard and inform decision making \(Equality Objective\)](#)

An engagement network of people and groups with protected characteristics has been developed in partnership with the Community Cohesion Team, the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC). The final list was presented to the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group in April 2024 and will be published on our website.

The Youth Council and youth forums are being relaunched. This work is closely linked our workstream to be closer to communities. A report to the Well-run Board will include recommendations about how we can enable young people's voices to be heard. This work also supports our [healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire theme](#).

Case study: [Denbigh Youth host consultation event for safer bike routes](#)

A group of young people from Denbigh Youth Club recently came together to start a “Bumps and Jumps” campaign to highlight the need for safer biking routes in the town for young people to be able to get out and about and keep active. The idea came when Osian Gregson, 13, who attends Denbigh Youth Club decided to take action after becoming frustrated that there wasn’t anywhere suitable in the town for him and other young people in the area to be able to play out on their bikes safely. He shared his concerns with a Youth Worker who advised him on what he would need to do to get his voice heard. The group also set up a portable pump track at the event to show off some of their biking skills and to exhibit the benefits of a potential pump track in Denbigh. Osian said: “The idea for this campaign came partly from the fact that I love being outside; I would rather be outside than on my PlayStation! But also, not everyone is able to easily get about. Some parents don’t drive and so young people rely on our bikes a lot to get around and I want to be able to feel safe riding from one place to the other in Denbigh. That’s why something like a pump track in the area would be great because it would offer a space for us to go where we can socialise and keep active and not just sit at home.”

[Play our part in achieving one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050, by building a culture and ethos that encourages the daily use of Welsh \(Welsh Language and Culture\)](#)

During the period, a new Welsh Language Officer was appointed and started in post in August. The Officer has recommenced ‘gair y wythnos’, delivered local celebrations on Diwrnod Owain Glyndŵr and will be recommencing monthly ‘paned a sgwrs’ sessions to provide staff with an informal opportunity to practice speaking in Welsh. There is now a cohort of 33 officers participating in Welsh language training and there continues to be a growing use of Welsh formally at committee meetings, and informally in the day-to-day business of the council. A meeting with our Welsh language partners will take place in October, to expand and promote Welsh-medium opportunities, in particular those available to young people in Denbighshire. Notwithstanding these positive developments, the percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning is not increasing and remains ‘Acceptable’. Corporate Support Services: People has been tasked with an action to support and encourage the greater use of Welsh, informally and formally, throughout the council following its Performance Challenge in March 2024. As reported previously, officers have been developing guidance to inform recruitment of staff

with Welsh essential and Welsh desirable skills. The aim is to move to a position whereby every job has, as a minimum, a Level 1 Welsh language skills requirement (some positions will require a Level 5 skill). During the period, we published our [annual report](#) to monitor the work done over the past year to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

[Working collaboratively to alleviate problems with recruitment and retention](#)

A social care workshop was hosted at County Hall in Ruthin on August 1, for people who are looking for a new opportunity to get into the social care field. The event provided information about Denbighshire’s successful social care teams and the specific job vacancies that were available. Information on how to apply was also shared at the event, with the chance for applicants to complete an application form. Interviews were also held on the day and four appointments were made. Another event was held on September 19 focussing on recruiting into vacancies in Domiciliary Support Services, community roles, and roles supporting citizens who are based in the south of Denbighshire, resulting in another four appointments.

Performance Framework: Measures Update

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

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The percentage of projects whose delivery confidence was updated in the last three months – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent Better	98% Good Worse	90% Good Worse	88 Acceptable Worse	88 Acceptable Same

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The cumulative number of Internal Audit low assurance reports, financial year to date – Benchmarked Locally	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same
Corporate and Service Budget Variance (£k) – Count Only	3,446 Priority to Improve Worse	3,229 Priority to Improve Better	513 Excellent Better	0 Excellent Better	-400 Excellent Better
Council reserves (£k) – Count Only	5,531 Excellent Same	5,600 Excellent Better	5,577 Excellent Better	5,531 Excellent Worse	5,531 Excellent Same
The percentage of forecast savings achieved for the year – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	No data. New to 2024 to 2025	45.4% Priority to Improve	53.3% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter – Benchmarked Locally	55% Acceptable Worse	20% Excellent Better	44% Good Worse	80% Priority to Improve Worse	95% Priority to Improve Worse
The rolling average number of working days / shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence – Benchmarked Nationally	8.82 Priority to Improve Worse	8.63 Priority to Improve Better	8.55 Priority to Improve Better	8.69 Priority to Improve Worse	9.07 Priority to Improve Worse

Title	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024	Quarter 3 2023 to 2024	Quarter 4 2023 to 2024	Quarter 1 2024 to 2025	Quarter 2 2024 to 2025
The percentage of staff who are eligible for one or three one-to-ones and who have had at least one or three one-to-ones in the last 12 months (by person) – Benchmarked Locally	56% Priority to Improve Worse	54% Priority to Improve Worse	91% Priority to Improve Better	75% Priority to Improve Worse	72% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of employees that have completed all 10 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	49.8% Priority to Improve Worse	39.5% Priority to Improve Worse	48.32% Priority to Improve Worse	50.06 Priority to Improve Better	45.79 Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning - Benchmarked Locally (Welsh Language and Culture)	79.26% Priority to Improve Worse	82.6% Acceptable Better	85% Good Better	84.59 Acceptable Worse	82.68 Acceptable Worse

Annual or biennial measures

2020 to 2023 data

Title	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of new appointees from applications where it was disclosed that they are either from a racial or religious minority group, have a disability, are gay or bi-sexual, or had their gender reassigned – Count Only (Equality Objective)	4%	21%	20%

2022 to 2024 data

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) that are women – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	80.7% Priority to Improve Worse	80.6% Priority to Improve Better
The number of community projects co-produced with the community and third sector - Count Only	No data: does not apply	15 Excellent

Stakeholder Survey

Title	2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree	2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council is transparent, well-run, and high performing – Benchmarked Locally	49% Priority to Improve	39% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council works well with partners – Benchmarked Locally	74% Good	63% Good Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is a good working relationship between political leaders and senior management – Benchmarked Locally	55% Acceptable	47% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its performance well – Benchmarked Locally	53% Acceptable	43% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its risks and challenges well – Benchmarked Locally	55% Acceptable	44% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its finances well – Benchmarked Locally	48% Priority to Improve	30% Priority to Improve Worse

Title	2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree	2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council has effective long-term plans in place – Benchmarked Locally	56% Acceptable	40% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats its workforce well – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	76% Excellent	67% Good Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council makes best use of its assets and resources – Benchmarked Locally	35% Priority to Improve	30% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council purchases its goods and services in a fair and efficient way – Benchmarked Locally	54% Acceptable	47% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council acts on the concerns of residents – Benchmarked Locally	48% Priority to Improve	44% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats all people fairly – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	58% Acceptable	51% Acceptable Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council's Corporate Plan and priorities reflect the needs of the local community - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	51% Acceptable	42% Priority to Improve Worse

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Projects Update

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Embed a positive culture of ambition, transparency and continuous improvement by placing our values of	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Whilst two workshops took place in the period, we need to examine progress by other workstreams to agree next steps. This will

Title	Status	Exception
integrity, respect, unity, and pride at the heart of everything that we do		be discussed by the Board in October.
Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Be close to our communities (Equality Objective)	On Target Same	No exception
Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Have clear performance expectations	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Two workshops have taken place with staff. A change in staff mood was apparent in the meetings in June. We await further direction from the Board when we meet in October.
Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Promote strong staff and elected member relations	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	This has been delayed and will re-commence in January 2025.
Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Ensure Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work (Equality Objective)	On Target Same	No exception
Implement new Panel Performance Assessment Process and report findings to Council	On Target Same	No exception
Review and revise the Youth Council for Denbighshire	On Target Better	No exception
Undertake an annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan 2022 to 2027	On Target Same	No exception
Improve the information we have about our workforce, including equality information, to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports (Equality Objective)	On Target Same	No exception
Subject to the outcome of the corporate conversation regarding corporate contact/customer service, review requirements for and procure a Corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system (including undertaking workshops with members and services to inform development of the new system)	Experiencing Obstacles	The activity has been delayed. The council has now signed a new contract for our CRM system. Workshops to inform further developments to the system will commence in the next few months.

Self-Assessment: Governance Areas

The following is our self-assessment against the seven key governance areas and seeks to paint a picture of how well the council is performing, how we know that (linking to evidence where it is available), and what we can do to improve. Our news round up is included in each governance section.

Corporate Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Corporate Planning is about how the council sets out and makes arrangements to deliver on its strategic objectives.

Corporate Plan Governance Arrangements

Since the revised Corporate Plan was unanimously adopted by County Council at its meeting in February 2024, governance structures have subsequently been amended (including revised terms of reference for our Boards) to align with the new themes. This has resulted in the cessation of the Fairer, Safer, More Equal Denbighshire Board, but will place greater importance on the work of the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group. Governance arrangements will be reviewed as part of the planned Corporate Plan Tranche Review¹ taking place in October.

Respond to the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Our first (and the first in Wales) Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) took place between 9-12 September 2024. Initial informal feedback was positive and we expect to receive the draft Panel Performance Assessment report in October. We will then be working on a Management Response to the final report which will be presented to Council in January 2025. The Management Response will be developed with input from our Senior Leaders, Cabinet, Governance and Audit Committee.

¹ The purpose of a Tranche Review is to review and evaluate performance and delivery, with an opportunity to both reflect and look ahead to consider progress towards achieving the ambitions set out in our Corporate Plan. Tranche Reviews take place around every six months and are attended by Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.

Transformation Agenda

Work is underway on establishing the council's transformation programme, with governance structures now in place, helping to move the council to a place where it can respond innovatively and collaboratively to the challenges ahead. The Strategic Planning and Performance Team has delivered a number of 'insight' projects during the period including about agricultural estates, city, town and community councils, housing voids, and social care delivery models. A project looking at building control is currently underway.

Training was delivered between May and July in Continuous Improvement theories and practices to support this work. Staff from across various Services participated to ensure the learning is shared across the organisation.

Other developments in the last period

New Ways of Working Journey Checker

We previously committed to an improvement action to consider the findings and recommendations of the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner's New Ways of Working Journey Checker. Findings of the checker (previously reported) informed the focus of the Panel Performance Assessment and a report about the findings, and their relationship to Well-being Impact Assessments (our integrated impact assessment screening tool), was presented to our Senior Leadership Team in September. The same report will be presented to Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing in October. We are also making improvements to our Well-being Impact Assessment resources, by offering new web pages and training for example, which will also offer information and guidance about the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working ([Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)) and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Financial Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Financial planning relates to the management of our income and expenditure.

Finance Update Reports

In April, [Cabinet](#) was updated on outstanding matters relating to the 2024 to 2025 budget. The report set the scene for budget setting in the medium term (2025 to 2026 – 2027 to 2028) and self-assessed the council's current level of financial resilience and

sustainability. Cabinet approved the commencement of the design phase for Ysgol Bro Elwern, Ysgol Henllan, Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch and Ysgol y Llys projects to enable the full business case to be submitted to the Welsh Government for approval. The same report was considered by [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in April.

At its meeting in [June](#), Cabinet received an update on the council's financial position. The 2023 to 2024 final Revenue Outturn figures were provided. The final position on service and corporate budgets (including schools nondelegated budget underspend of £115k) was an overspend of £513k. On the funding side, there was a small shortfall in Council Tax collection of £163k. This resulted in the requirement to use £676k of the Budget Mitigation reserve to fund the net overspend. The School overspend was £5.258m resulting in a total budget overspend of £5.934m. The 2023 to 2024 budget included savings and efficiencies of £8.172m, of which £6.09m were achieved from corporately held budgets and by schools at £0.82m. Services put in place measures and monitored the remaining £1.26m within overall budgets. Collectively services overspent by £3.2m during the year. Budgetary control measures to mitigate against increasing costs and demand for services, put in place in Autumn 2023 (and detailed in our Performance Update Report October 2023 to March 2024 [here](#)) due to the predicted level of overspend which reached a peak of £4.5m, helped to reduce the overall level of overspend. Most services ended the year with an underspend. To help deliver the overall budget strategy, it is proposed that services do not carry forward any under spends. Education and Children's, Highways and Environmental, and Adult Social and Homelessness Services ended the year in an overspend. Despite budgets increasing in 2023 to 2024, increases in demand and the complexity of delivering, what are mainly statutory services, has outstripped the enhanced budgets. Transfers to and from reserves had also been set out and most of the movements had been budgeted for or had been previously approved.

Cabinet received a Finance Update report in [July](#). The net revenue budget for 2024 to 2025 was £271.021m (£250.793m in 2023 to 2024). In setting its budget for 2024 to 2025 the Council faced pressures of £24.6m from inflationary increases such as pay and increases in demand and costs of providing social care. The increase in Welsh Government funding and in the level of Council Tax meant the 2024 to 2025 budget required service savings and efficiencies of £10.384m. These included:

- Major Savings Proposals – large-scale saving projects (£2.388m)

- Non-Strategic savings – Operational efficiencies/smaller scale savings within Head of Service delegated responsibility in consultation with Lead Members. These include both the proposals already identified in the budget setting report, as well as the further £3m target given to Heads of Service at the time of setting the budget to enable a balanced budget to be set (£5.296m)
- Schools received funding to cover all inflationary pressures including pay awards, pension contributions and energy, and an increase for demography. Given the scale of the challenges, schools were asked to find savings of 3% (£2.7m). The net position was an increase of £4.916m (5.82%).

The report emphasised that at that point it was still early in the financial year and the budget position in some service areas would not become evident until early Autumn. Delivery of savings approved as part of setting the 2024 to 2025 budget is being tracked and a status update was provided in the report. All of the major saving proposals were progressing and 62% of the non-strategic savings had already been achieved. Progress updates for the remaining non-strategic saving proposals will continue to be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis going forward.

Cabinet received an updated Finance Update Report in [September](#). High risk areas included changes to residential placements in Children’s Services, Homelessness, care fees in Adult Social Care and school transport. Pressures are emerging in some of these areas, which are on current forecasts, and will be mitigated by underspends recurring from last financial year in the centrally held contingency budgets. Significant service narratives explaining pressures and risks of over- and under-spend were detailed in the appendices. Cabinet agreed that the gainshare of £1.2m received from the refinancing of the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Partnership could be treated as income for the Waste Service and used to offset additional costs since the new service was launched.

Budget pressures

The council has faced a significant financial challenge in setting its 2024 to 2025 budget, which is set to continue in the medium term due to a combination of no increases in funding from Welsh Government (working assumption), the continued impact of inflation and increases in demand for services and the complexity of needs. The scale of the financial challenge facing the council should not be underestimated. Pressures are difficult to forecast but are ranging from £12m to £24m in 2025 to 2026 with a mid-range of £18m. Similar ranges are forecast for 2026 to 2027 and 2027 to 2028. Further detailed

information is available in the reports taken to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in July. [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) considered the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Plan (MTPF) in June and made observations about the key role of Scrutiny going forward, whose feedback would inform feedback to Cabinet.

The budget is being viewed as an evolving process rather than a one-off event every year in January, as it used to be. Significant engagement across the council, with members and with communities continues. Staff briefing sessions took place both in person at various locations (including depots) and online. These were well received, and staff appreciated the opportunity to speak with senior officers and lead members to gain a better understanding of the council's financial position. One of the main issues was better engagement with the public around the council's financial position and understanding how complicated local government finances are.

A meeting with City, Town and Community Councils (CTCC) took place in July to discuss the financial position and they were asked to continue those discussions at their own CTCC meetings to discuss how we can work together in the future. A report will be presented to the Budget and Transformation Board and Cabinet to explore ways in which we can support and work closely with CTCCs.

Statement of Accounts

The council has a statutory duty to produce a statement of accounts that complies with approved accounting standards. The annual statement of accounts reports on the council's position at the end of the financial year and transactions during that year. The draft [Statement of Accounts for 2022 to 2023](#) is available online.

The Responsible Financial Officer has not signed and certified the accounts for the years ended on 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024 and due to continuing work on the audit of 2022 to 2023 accounts, will work to an extended deadline for completion of the Statement of Accounts. After consulting with Audit Wales, it is currently planned that the audited accounts will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in autumn 2024 for formal approval.

Treasury Management

Treasury Management involves looking after the council's cash, which is a vital part of the council's work because approximately £0.5bn passes through the council's bank account

every year. At any one time, the council normally has up to £20m in cash so it needs to ensure that the best rate of return possible is achieved without putting the cash at risk. In April, Governance and Audit Committee examined the council's governance around [treasury management](#) (includes the council's borrowing, investments and cash flow) and in July, reviewed the [annual treasury management report for 2023 to 2024](#).

Other developments in the last period

T1

The council introduced its new financial system called T1 during the period. This is a significant change project to replace most of the council's existing financial systems to a new single finance system. We have encountered some issues but there are no major concerns. We are working to reduce the backlog of invoices, delays in implementation of the budget enterprise module and continuing to work on the salary worksheets for forecasting.

Audit Wales's Financial Sustainability Review – Denbighshire County Council

During the period, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) reviewed the report of the recent Audit Wales review and the management response to its recommendations. The review concluded that “the Council engages well with Members and officers when setting its budget, but it currently lacks an approach to find sufficient savings or an implemented transformation plan to bridge its funding gap.”

Changes to Libraries opening hours

In [June](#), the council announced the new opening hours of Denbighshire Libraries and One Stop Shops. No Library within Denbighshire is closing its doors permanently through these changes, and core Library services have been protected and are fully accessible during these new hours. We want to continue working with partners and community groups so that we can continue to keep Libraries at the heart of our local communities. For some areas, additional funding and support is received through local town councils, for example Rhuddlan Town Council has contributed additional funds to ensure that existing hours at Rhuddlan Library were maintained.

Consultation to develop a new Public Toilet Scheme

In July, the council launched a [public consultation](#) and needs assessment to support work to review the needs of the local population and to produce a public conveniences strategy that will set out how it will try to meet these needs. From the autumn, we will commence a two-stage process to develop and consult on a draft strategy. It is anticipated that the final strategy will be approved by Cabinet in April 2025.

Performance Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Performance management means the structures and processes we have in place to ensure that we deliver what we said we would, whilst encouraging active involvement and challenge from across the council, our elected members, and residents.

Internal Audit Reviews

The Chief Internal Auditor attended the Governance and Audit Committee in [June](#) to provide the annual internal audit report for 2023 to 2024 and to report on the Internal Audit Charter, strategy and quality assurance improvement programme for 2024 to 2025. At the same meeting a presentation was received on the outcomes of the [External Audit Assessment of Denbighshire Internal Audit function](#), which concluded in April. The assessment was undertaken by Ceredigion County Council, as a member of the Welsh Chief Auditor Group. In [July](#), Governance and Audit Committee reviewed the draft annual governance statement for 2023 to 2024, including progress made on the associated action plan. In [September](#), the Governance and Audit Committee received an update on the work of the Internal Audit Team and a summary of Internal Audit reports. Since the last Governance and Audit Committee update in March, 10 internal audit reports had been completed with six being awarded a high assurance rating and four receiving a medium assurance rating (ICT Contract Management; Wellbeing Impact Assessment Medium; Climate and Ecological Change; and Flood Risk Strategy). During the period, to support the new waste collection and recycling service, three members of the Internal Audit team were seconded over to support the waste service initially on a part-time basis, followed by two staff members working with the service on a full-time basis for a short period. This resulted in the Audit Plan falling behind schedule, which the team are now working towards getting back on track. It was also noted that the Internal Audit Team had been engaged in two special investigations during this period, affecting the capacity of the team.

As part of a plan to tackle recruitment challenges, we are pleased to report that two Career Pathway Senior Auditors have passed their level 2 qualification with the Association of Account Technicians (AAT) and are enrolled onto level 3.

Self-Assessment of Performance

Our annual Self-Assessment of Performance was approved by [County Council](#) in July, following discussion at [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) in April, and [Governance and Audit Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in June. The Self-Assessment summarises our performance and governance across the year 2023 to 2024 into some general observations about our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. It concluded that we have responded to the financial pressures all local authorities are facing responsibly; we have used our resources economically, efficiently, and effectively; our governance is good; and our focus is on securing the best possible outcomes for our environment and communities in Denbighshire. Our efforts to actively engage members and staff from across the organisation around the budget have been good and positively received, and we will build on this approach with our 2025 to 2026 budget. Our governance is well-functioning and responsive - demonstrated by the additional Scrutiny that was put in place, at the request of members, around aspects of our budget proposals. We want to capitalise on the growing understanding of our culture, what it means to be a part of the “Denbighshire family” and promote our One Council approach. In the year ahead, we want to establish an on-going programme of cross-service conversations and capitalise on the growing confidence of members and officers using Welsh informally and formally during council business. We must strive to be agile in recognising and resolving barriers to progress; and ensure we remain resilient as our capacity reduces. The report, including our October 2023 to March 2024 Performance Update Report, is published on our website – www.denbighshire.gov.uk/performance.

Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework and Tranche Review

In the context of the present difficult financial environment, we committed to an improvement action in our last performance report to keep our Corporate Plan commitments and performance expectations under continual review going forward. This will form part of the planned Corporate Plan Tranche Review taking place in October.

Update the Performance Management Guide

The updated guide may be viewed on [our website](#).

Annual Stakeholder Survey

Our last report identified an improvement action to “Consider the Stakeholder Survey 2023 to 2024 responses”. A report was presented to our Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet, and individual Corporate Plan Boards will be considering the results and comments that relate to their portfolio. We are now planning our next Stakeholder Survey, due to go live in October.

Service Performance Challenge

Service Performance Challenges will be concentrated over a one-month period during mid-November to early-December, which will support ongoing budgetary discussions with a greater focus on finance and transformation. Broadly the agenda will be in three parts – Identified Savings and Performance; Future Savings and Performance; Transformation, Change and Re-Shaping.

Risk Management

Risk management refers to our planned approach to identify, assess, control and monitor risks and opportunities facing the council. As per our guide [‘Managing Risk for Better Service Delivery’](#)

Corporate Risk Register

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. The September Review has now been completed and the final reports are due to be presented to Governance and Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committee in November.

Risk Appetite Statement

As part of the current September 2024 review the Risk Appetite Statement has also been revisited.

Risk Reporting

We are currently facilitating quarterly, lighter touch reviews with risk owners. Summaries are provided to Governance and Audit throughout the year and are tabled for discussion, as was previous practice, in November.

Workforce Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Workforce planning means the process by which we analyse, forecast and plan workforce supply and demand, and assess gaps to ensure that we have the people and skills - now and in the future - to deliver our services and fulfil our strategic objectives.

Staff Training, Development and Mental Health

A People Strategy has been drafted and will be presented to the Well-run Board in October for feedback. The strategy includes health and well-being, equalities, diversity and inclusion and Welsh language considerations alongside staff voice, pay and rewards. A revised staff survey will be presented to our Senior Leadership Team for approval in October for a November launch. Training has taken place for mental health champions and further work needs to be done with information to support mental health champions and publicise the initiative. Work will commence once the Learning and Development Specialist position is filled.

Improve the information we have about our workforce

Due to continual changes in staff, the equality information we have about our workforce tends to fluctuate. HR has completed a data collection survey, which asked staff to update the information we hold about them to ensure that we have as much data in the HR system as possible. It should be noted however that some staff choose not to disclose information about themselves. Updated data will be available from Autumn 2024 to support our Public Sector Duty Reports.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning is a continually important area of work and HR Business Partners work closely with all services on a regular basis by issuing monthly reports. Workforce planning will commence in the autumn/winter of 2024 (by which time the senior leadership structure will have been in place since November 2023) and will focus on supporting the pressures

associated with the budget and its impacts. A follow up review of the Internal Audit Review of workforce planning (previously Medium assurance) is being completed.

Impact on the workforce (and any risks to effective governance) as a result of budget proposals and the voluntary exit scheme remain under consideration and a report will be presented for discussion to the council's Strategic Equality and Diversity Group in October.

Other developments in the last period

A Pay Policy Statement for 2024 to 2025 was taken to [County Council](#) in May. A council policy on Member Training was discussed [County Council](#) in September. Our annual health and safety and annual whistleblowing reports were presented to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in September.

Assets

Below are updates on areas of governance for assets. By assets we are referring to our management of the council's estate (including office buildings and highway infrastructure owned and / or controlled by the council) and digital assets.

Asset Management Strategy

The Asset Management Strategy 2024 to 2029 was reviewed by Partnerships Scrutiny in September 2024 and will be submitted for approval by Cabinet in October 2024. The underlying principle is that "we will provide the right assets, in the right place, and in the right condition to meet current and projected future service delivery needs, considering who best to own and operate each asset and opportunities for collaboration". There are four priority outcomes in the strategy aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan, which are:

- Climate Action and Nature Recovery – which would include improving energy performance of buildings, reducing the overall building footprint, facilitating reduced travel, increasing carbon sequestration from existing and new properties, improving biodiversity on our sites, etc. In addition to increasing the understanding of, and improving, our assets resilience to climate impacts.
- Modernising Education – delivered primarily by Education but will involve significant investment in our school buildings over the next five years.
- Regeneration – where the council is directly intervening in the property market to promote regeneration and economic development, particularly in town centres.

- New Ways of Working (NWOW) and Collaboration – looking specifically at our office portfolio and how this needs to change considering significant increase in home working (post-COVID), along with progressing collaboration opportunities to create an asset ownership and operation model that is sustainable.

The New Ways of Working project continues to progress well. The Caledfryn office in Denbigh closed in August 2024, with staff now working from Russell House, Rhyl, County Hall, Ruthin and at the new Waste Depot in Denbigh. Plans for disposal of Caledfryn are progressing with informal tenders closing on 27 September 2024.

In September, the [Audit and Governance Committee](#) received an information report from the Asbestos Property Manager regarding the Annual Property Compliance Report.

ICT (Digital) strategy

The current ICT (Digital) Strategy runs until the end of 2025 and a review has taken place on delivery of each of the seven priorities listed in that strategy. This was reported to the [Partnerships Scrutiny Committee](#) in September 2024 addressing Audit Wales's recommendations (following its review of the Council's current Digital Strategy). Development of a new strategy from 2026 onwards will commence in the next period.

Procurement

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Procurement is the process by which the council meets its needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money and good outcomes for society, culture and the economy, whilst contributing to decarbonisation and nature's recovery.

Denbighshire Procurement Strategy

The council's Procurement Strategy reflects and supports the council's corporate priorities and the seven well-being goals and aligns with the UK Government Procurement Act and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. Expectations about what we buy and how we buy it are increasing, and we will be expected to deliver not only value for money but also have a positive impact on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities, known as socially responsible procurement. A joined up and streamlined approach to commissioning, procurement, contract management and

reporting will be required to ensure Denbighshire gains the best possible outcomes from new procurement regulations. This will involve working across the council to support Denbighshire's local supply chain. These outcomes include community benefits.

The Procurement Service is a collaborative service shared with Flintshire County Council. The Joint Management Board is the governing body of the joint procurement service, in place until March 2025, established as part of a collaborative agreement in 2014. Between now and March 2025, we will review, refresh or redesign the service, and consider the resources that are available to support and provide greater resilience for the collaboration. We are starting to explore opportunities that may exist for more collaborative working on a regional footprint.

During the period, just under 300 commissioning staff, across both councils, attended new procurement regulations "Knowledge Drop" sessions. New procurement forms and accompanying decision trees will be produced when statutory guidance is finalised and received.

Biodiversity Protection and Decarbonisation in Procurement

During the period, we have been working with other local authorities across Wales to develop a common approach to measuring decarbonisation through the life of all contracts. The Procurement team is signposting businesses to carbon reduction plan training delivered by Crown Commercial Services. We will be seeking agreement to use the WLGA procurement toolkit and to incorporate decarbonisation indicators within that toolkit. We have successfully completed a pilot for the North Wales Construction Partnership Framework. We can ask bidders wishing to join the Framework to provide Carbon Reduction Plans and each client local authority will apply their own carbon priority asks. Further work is required to work across the council to embed a decarbonisation approach at the earliest stages of procurement; when services are being designed or we are determining what and how something needs to be procured - this where most carbon savings can be achieved. During the period, we have been working with other local authorities across Wales to develop a common approach to measuring decarbonisation through the life of all contracts.

Contract Procedure Rules

Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) have been reviewed to reflect new UK Public Procurement legislation but we are still awaiting secondary legislation and statutory

guidance is to finalise CPRs. We will continue to report on progress through this report in the meantime.

Supporting Businesses and Partners to Adapt

Following on from carbon-themed events as part of the [2024 March for Business campaign](#), our Economic and Business Development Team is developing the draft Economic Strategy, which includes a theme around supporting small and medium sized enterprises with procurement. As reported previously, Balfour Beatty, as part of the coastal defence schemes, has committed to deliver workshops - supported by Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council - to community-led organisations on how to develop strategies. Whilst workshops have not yet taken place, the intention to deliver them remains.

North Wales Construction Framework Phase 3

The third generation of the North Wales Construction Partnership Framework is complete and has been launched. This is a framework for all North Wales local authorities and has been a catalyst for engagement and upskilling of local contractors operating within the regional supply chain.

Improvement Actions

Three improvement actions have been identified through discussions about this report (the first builds on a previous improvement action). The first two, in particular, demonstrate the interplay between resources, performance and risk.

Improvement Actions

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- Consider performance relating to the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale), which has fallen short of the 95% target time for some years. The service continues to struggle with meeting the demands of the asset within the limited budgetary and staffing resources available, and a substantive discussion is needed about the prospects of improvement and what continuing poor performance is likely to mean

given expected increased impacts of flooding, landslips and heat risks on road condition and community connectivity.

- Linked to last period's improvement action to keep our Corporate Plan commitments and performance expectations under continual review going forward, the next Corporate Plan Tranche Review should consider the impact of reducing capacity and ceased projects such as Llwybrau, and how these will impact on our ability to deliver the Corporate Plan and outcomes.
- Publish details of the engagement network of people and groups with protected characteristics on our website.

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	28 November 2024
Head of Service	Catrin Roberts, Head of Corporate Support Service: People
Report author	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

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

2. What is the reason for making this report?

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

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee

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

4. Report details

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

- Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues.

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.

Progress report on Christ the Word School

- 4.8 As Estyn officials are attending the school on the same day as the meeting is being held to meet with staff and governors the presentation of the above

progress report has had to be rescheduled. It will now be presented to the Committee at its meeting on 30 January 2025 (see Appendix 1).

Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning

- 4.9 The above report was scheduled for presentation to the Committee at the current meeting. However, the Head of Corporate Support Service: People requested that the report's presentation be deferred until March 2025. Following a discussion between the Head of Service and the Chair the deferral was permitted and the report now appears on the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting on 13 March 2025 (see Appendix 1 attached).

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.10 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

- 4.11 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's next scheduled meeting is on 25 November 2024. Any issues arising from that meeting that will have implications on the committee's work programme will be reported verbally to the committee at its meeting on 28 November.

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

- 6.1 Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its Corporate Plan in line with community needs and residents' wishes. Continual development and review of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council to deliver its corporate

themes, improve outcomes for residents whilst also managing austere budget and resource pressures.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

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

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

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
30 January 2025	Cllr. Diane King	1. Christ The Word [Education]	To consider the progress made in delivering the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and the joint local authority & GwE school support plan following the 2022 Estyn inspection of the school, along with the consequential impact of the plans' delivery on the school as a whole	Regular monitoring of the arrangements in place to address the recommendations contained in the Regulator's report will: (i) secure continual improvement in all aspects of the school's work to ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential; and (ii) ensure that the lessons learnt by all stakeholders are applied across all schools in Denbighshire as they introduce the new curriculum; and 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.	Nicola Stubbins/ Geraint Davies/James Brown/GwE/Christ the Word staff & Governing Body	September 2023 <i>(rescheduled June & November 2024)</i> <i>(RhE)</i>
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2. Medium Term Financial Strategy & Plan Update	To examine the Council's progress in delivering its Medium Term Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan.	Early identification of any slippages in delivering the Strategy and/or pressures experienced with the Plan gives Scrutiny an opportunity to make suggestions or recommendations to Cabinet	Liz Thomas	By SCVCG May 2024 <i>(RhE)</i>

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
				with a view to strengthening the Council's financial resilience		
	Leader	3. Economic & Business Development Strategy (TBC)	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 outline the work being undertaken to mitigate against the potential outcomes identified in Risk 36 of the Council's Corporate Risk Register	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/ James Evans	By SCVCG November 2022 (rescheduled November 2023, Jan & June 2024) (RhE)
	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	4. 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 & growing; healthier, happy	Liz Grieve/ Debbie Owen	January 2024 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
				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.		
13 March	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	1. Internet and Telephony Connectivity in Denbighshire Invitation to be extended to a representative from Openreach	To consider the progress made to date, and future plans for: (i) increasing and improving/upgrading internet connectivity for all areas of the county (including the latest position in relation to Fibre Community Partnerships and the UK Government’s Project Gigabit roll out along with any other potential support/voucher packages that may be available for businesses and residents to access); and (ii) the provision of support to communities and residents by the Council to help them access fibre/broadband and other digital communication channels with a view to making sure that vulnerable residents and rural communities aren’t adversely disadvantaged	Support accessibility for all businesses and residents in the county to fibre broadband/telephony speeds that meet their individual needs, that will in turn support the delivery of the Council’s corporate themes of ‘a prosperous’ county that is ‘fairer, safe and more equal’ as well as a learning and growing county.	Liz Grieve/ /Cath Taylor/Fran Williams/Philip Burrows	April 2024 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	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 (iii) identification of any hard to recruit services/positions across the authority and interim measures taken to alleviate the pressures caused within those services (Heads of Service for those services to be invited to attend to discuss the impact of staffing pressures on operational service delivery)	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/C atrin Roberts/Lo uise Dougal	<i>July 2023 (rescheduled May, June & November 2024) (RhE)</i>
	Leader & Cllr. Julie Matthews	3. Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding (in the post-Brexit era)	To examine current Council processes and procedures for applying for high value grant funding and maximising the benefits of all funding opportunities on offer (incl. any lessons learnt from recent Levelling Up & Shared Prosperity Fund applications with a view to improving our processes for any future funding that becomes available)	Establishment of a simple, effective and easily adaptable funding application process which can be initiated immediately funding streams are announced to enable well-evidenced applications to be submitted within tight timescales, with a view to realising maximum benefit and impact for residents from each application submitted, and wherever possible mitigate	Tony Ward/Gary Williams/E mlyn Jones/Hele n Vaughan-Evans (with input from Liz Grieve on learning from SPF funding)	By SCVCG November 2023 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
				the effects of budget pressures		
1 May	Cllr. Julie Matthews	1. Corporate Risk Register: February 2025 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/ Heidi Barton-Price</i>	<i>May 2024 (RhE)</i>
12 June	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	1 Council Performance Self-Assessment 2024 to 2025 (year-end)	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	Rescheduled 03/10/24 (KE)
	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	2. <i>Library Service/One Stop Shop Provision (TBC)</i>	<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 (reschedule June & November 2024) (RhE)</i>
17 July	Cllrs. Diane King & Elen Heaton	1. Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2024/25	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/Rhain	May 2024 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
					Morelle/David Soley	
	Cllr. Elen Heaton	2 Cefndy Performance Report 2024/25	To consider Cefndy's annual performance report for the 2024/25 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	July 2024 (RhE)
18 Sept	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	1. Medium Term Financial Strategy & Plan Update	To examine the Council's progress in delivering its Medium Term Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan.	Early identification of any slippages in delivering the Strategy and/or pressures experienced with the Plan gives Scrutiny an opportunity to make suggestions or recommendations to Cabinet with a view to strengthening the Council's financial resilience	Liz Thomas	By SCVCG May 2024 (RhE)
	Cllr. Barry Mellor	2. Climate & Nature Strategy	To monitor the progress made with the Strategy's delivery	An assessment of whether the Council will realise its ambition of becoming a Net Carbon Zero authority by 2030, identification of any slippages with the Strategy's delivery and the formulation of recommendations in order to address performance with a view to delivering the Strategy on time.	Helen Vaughan-Evans/Jane Hodgson	June 2024 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
	Cllr. Diane King	3. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation (School staff to be invited to attend) [Education]	To analyse the Local Education Authority and the county's schools progress in fully complying with the statutory requirements placed upon them under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.	Assurances that the Authority and its schools are complying with all of Act's duties ensuring that every pupil and student in the County is provided with 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	September 2024 (RhE)
	Cllr. Diane King	4. Promoting School Attendance and Engagement in Education (School staff to be invited to attend) [Education]	To detail the progress made in improving school attendance rates and educational engagement across the county's schools during the 2024/25 academic year following the introduction of the new template attendance policy and in line with WG Guidance (report to include illustrative data)	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 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	Geraint Davies/Wayne Wheatley	September 2024 (RhE)
6 November	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	1. Medium Term Financial Strategy & Plan Update	To examine the Council's progress in delivering its Medium	Early identification of any slippages in delivering the Strategy and/or pressures	Liz Thomas	By SCVCG May 2024 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
			Term Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan.	experienced with the Plan gives Scrutiny an opportunity to make suggestions or recommendations to Cabinet with a view to strengthening the Council's financial resilience		
	Cllr. Julie Matthews	2. Corporate Risk Register: September 2025 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/ /Heidi Barton-Price</i>	<i>May 2024 (RhE)</i>
2026						
January 2026	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	1. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (Q1 & Q2)	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>	May 2024, rescheduled 07/10/2024 (RhE)
Sept 2026	Cllr. Diane King	1. Curriculum for Wales [Education] (School staff to be invited to attend)	To detail the progress made in relation to implementing and embedding the new Curriculum for Wales and provide an evaluation of the implementation process across all key stages, the Curriculum's impact on staff recruitment and retention, along with feedback from headteachers, teachers and school-based staff on their experiences of the implementation process and the advantages and/or disadvantages	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	Geraint Davies/James Brown/Ruth Thackray	September 2024 (RhE)

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered/ Updated by
			of the new Curriculum for learners.	line with the Council's Corporate Plan		

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<p><i>Learner Travel Measure (Wales)</i></p> <p>[Education]</p> <p><i>TBC – once outcome of WG Review available (possibly not until after Senedd elections in 2026)</i></p>	<p><i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i></p>	<p><i>Identification of potential changes to the Council’s learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications</i></p>	<p><i>Geraint Davies/Ian Land</i></p>	<p><i>January 2021 (rescheduled Sept 2022 & Jan & May 2023) (RhE)</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) (RhE)</i></p>

Information/Consultation Reports

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
October/November 2024	Car Parking Fees	To provide information on the progress to date in achieving the estimated £700K increase from car parking fees	Mike Jones/Liz Thomas	July 2024 (RhE)
January/July	Corporate Risk Register Review – Risk Review Summary	To share with the Committee a summary of the conclusions of the 'light-touch' review of the Register	Helen Vaughan-Evans/Heidi Barton-Price	April 2024 (RhE)
Feb/May/Sept/November each year [Information]	Quarterly 'Your Voice' complaints performance to include social services complaints	<p>To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints and identify areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address weaknesses. The report to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a comprehensive explanation on why targets have not been met when dealing with specific complaints, reasons for non-compliance, and measures taken to rectify the failures and to ensure that future complaints will be dealt with within the specified timeframe; (ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services; and (iii) details of complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and the lessons learnt from them. <p>Report to include example(s) of complaints and compliment(s) received.</p> <p>Consideration of the information provided will assist the Committee to determine whether any issues merit detailed scrutiny</p>	Kevin Roberts/Ann Lloyd	September 2023 (RhE)
March 2025 [Education]	Elective Home Education	To provide data on the number of home educated pupils in Denbighshire along with information on current trends with respect of the number of families choosing to educate	Geraint Davies/Ruth Thackray/Jayne Williams	March 2024 (RhE)

		<i>their children at home and the measures in place to support those families and those wishing to return to mainstream education.</i>		
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Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

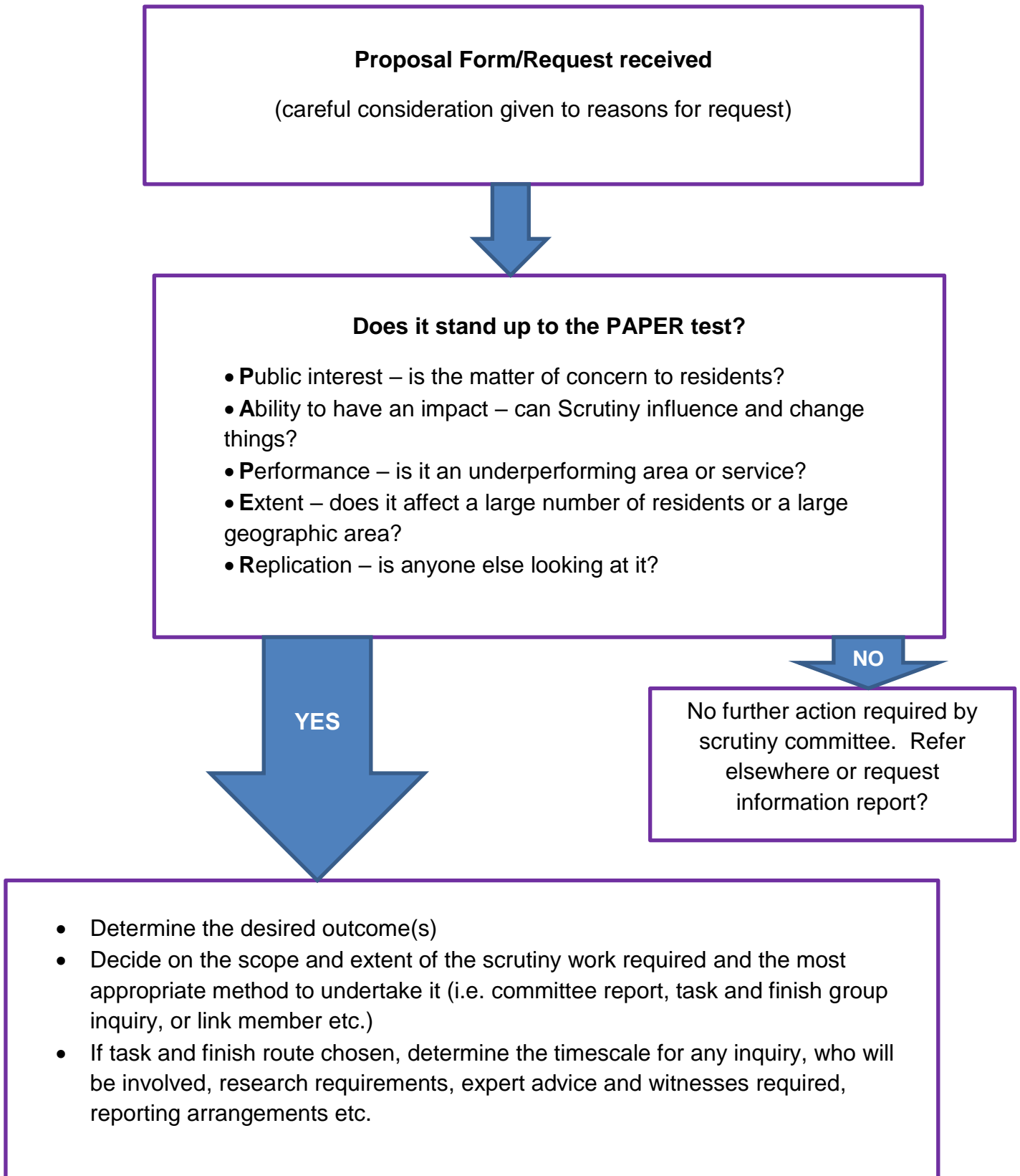
Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
30 January 2025	16 January 2025	13 March	27 February	1 May	15 April (due to Easter B/Hs)

Performance Scrutiny Work Programme.doc

Updated 20/11/2024 RhE

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

Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny



Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
17 Dec	1	Housing Rent Setting & Housing Revenue and Capital Budgets 2025/26	To seek approval for the proposed annual rent increase for council housing and to approve the Housing Revenue Account Capital & Revenue Budgets for 2025/26 and Housing Stock Business Plan	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Geoff Davies	28.06.24 KEJ
	2	Denbighshire County Council Draft Local Toilet Strategy	To approve the draft Strategy for Public Consultation	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Paul Jackson/Hayley Jones	14.10.24 KEJ
	3	Housing Support Grant – Domestic Abuse Safety Unit	To seek Cabinet approval to award the contract for the new service	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Ann Lloyd / Nigel Jones / Alison Hay	03.09.24 KEJ, rescheduled 22.10.24
	4	Voids Framework Contractor Appointment	To inform Cabinet of the outcome of the recent Voids Framework, advise of winning bidders and then seek approval from Cabinet to award the contracts	Yes	Cllr Rhys Thomas Lead Officer/Report Author – Mark Cassidy	25.10.24 KEJ
	5	Queen’s Market Rhyl – operator/management	To seek approval from Cabinet to appoint a management company for the Queen’s Market in Rhyl	Yes	Cllrs Jason McLellan and Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Emlyn	25.10.24 KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
					Jones / Gareth Roberts / Russell Vaughan	
	6	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	7	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
21 Jan	1	North Wales Domiciliary Care Agreement	Contract Award Agreement of the formal tender	Yes	Cllrs Elen Heaton & Diane King Lead Officer/Report Author – Nicola Stubbins / Ann Lloyd / Llinos Howatson	17.09.24 KEJ
	2	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter	To provide an overview of Denbighshire's summary of performance from the PSOW and actions required	Yes	Cllr Julie Matthews Lead Officer/Report Author – Ann Lloyd / Kevin Roberts	10.09.24, rescheduled 02.10.24, rescheduled 22.10.24 KEJ
	3	Corporate Joint Committee Governance Arrangements	To agree the governance arrangements for the transfer of the NWEAB into the CJC	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Gary Williams	26.04.24, rescheduled 11.06.24, 10.09.24, 25.10.24 KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
	4	Updated Contract Procedure Rules	To seek approval of the updated Contract Procedure Rules	Yes	Cllr Julie Matthews Lead Officer/Report Author – Karen Bellis	12.11.24 KEJ
	5	Revenue Budget Setting 2025/26	To review and approve the budget proposals for forthcoming financial year 2025/26	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	15.05.24 KEJ
	6	Capital Plan 2025/26 – 2027/28	To review and approve proposals for inclusion in the Capital Plan	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	15.05.24 KEJ
	7	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	8	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
18 Feb	1	Economic Strategy	Outline of Denbighshire's new Economic Strategy & Action Plan and request for Cabinet to approve the final documents.	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer/Report Author – Emlyn Jones / James Evans	27.09.24 KEJ
	2	Panel Performance Assessment Response	To approve the Council's management response to the Panel Performance Assessment Report	Yes	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Heidi Barton Price	12.04.24 KEJ, rescheduled 25.10.24 KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
	3	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting 2025/26	To review and approve the budget and Council Tax setting proposals for the forthcoming financial year 2025/26	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	15.05.24 KEJ
	4	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	5	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
25 March	1	Residential Care Fees 2025/2026	To seek Cabinet approval for the setting of care home fees for the financial year 2025/26.	Yes	Cllr Elen Heaton Lead Officer/Report Author – Nicola Stubbins / Ann Lloyd	25.09.24 KEJ
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council's current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item
29 April	1	Denbighshire County Council Local Toilet Strategy	To approve the Local Toilet Strategy	Yes	Cllr Barry Mellor Lead Officer/Report Author – Paul	14.10.24 KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of Report	Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer	Date Entered / Updated By
					Jackson/Hayley Jones	
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the Council’s current financial position for 2024/25	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Liz Thomas	Standing Item
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet’s attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinators	Standing Item

FUTURE ITEMS 2025

24 June 2025	Council Performance Self-Assessment 2024 to 2025 (year-end)	To consider a report on the Performance Self-Assessment	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Emma Horan	03.10.24 KEJ
18 November 2025	Council Performance Self-Assessment Update - April to September (QPR1&2) 2025	To consider an update report on the Performance Self-Assessment April to September	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author – Helen Vaughan-Evans / Emma Horan	03.10.24 KEJ

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	Deadline	<i>Meeting</i>	Deadline	<i>Meeting</i>	Deadline
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Cabinet Forward Work Plan

<i>17 December</i>	<i>3 December</i>	<i>21 January</i>	<i>7 January</i>	<i>18 February</i>	<i>4 February</i>

Updated 19/11/2024 – KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
26 September 2024	5. Additional Learning Needs Transformation Update	<p><u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above observations and acknowledging both the local and national challenges faced in meeting the statutory requirements of the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, to –</i></p> <p><i>(i) congratulate all stakeholders and endorse the work undertaken to date to deliver the transformation work required to comply with the duties placed upon them under the Act; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) request that a further progress report be presented to the Committee in twelve months' time when all schools and the Local Education Authority (LEA) are expected to be fully compliant with the duties placed upon them under the Act.</i></p>	Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations and a progress report has been listed on the Committee's forward work programme for presentation to members in September 2025 (see Appendix 1 attached).
	6. Promote School Attendance and Engagement in Education	<p><u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above observations –</i></p> <p><i>(i) to endorse the schools and the Local Education Authority's efforts and approach to date to promote the importance of school attendance and engagement in education with both pupils and parents/guardians; and</i></p> <p><i>(ii) with a view to monitoring the effectiveness of the new template attendance policy for 2024/25 along with any other initiatives deployed on pupils' school attendance and their engagement with</i></p>	Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's recommendations. A further monitoring report has been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for presentation to the Committee at its September 2025 meeting (see Appendix 1 attached).

		<i>education, to request that a further progress report be presented to members in twelve months' time.</i>	
	7. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Transformation	<u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above comments – (i) to endorse the progress achieved to date in delivering the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in all of the county's schools in line with the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh language provision; and (ii) that future monitoring of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan's delivery be undertaken by the Welsh in Education Strategic Group on the proviso that if significant issues or obstacles to the Plan's delivery are encountered, they are referred to Scrutiny for detailed examination.</i>	Lead Members and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations.
	8. Curriculum for Wales	<u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above observations to – (i) acknowledge the work undertaken to date in implementing and embedding the Curriculum for Wales in the county's primary schools, and in years 7 and 8 in secondary schools, including identified best practices, lessons learnt and areas for improvement for the continuing staggered roll-out of the Curriculum in the secondary education sector; and (ii) request that a further progress and evaluation report on the Curriculum's implementation be submitted to the Committee in September 2026 following the introduction of Wave 1 of the new GCSE qualifications.</i>	Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's decision. A progress and evaluation report has been scheduled for presentation to the Committee in September 2026 (see Appendix 1 attached).