



Denbighshire County Council

Corporate Plan 2017-2022

Working together for the future of Denbighshire

This document is available in Welsh, and may be available in other formats on request.

Language Signpost

Os oes angen mwy o wybodaeth arnoch, gofynnwch i rywun yr ydych yn eu hadnabod sydd yn siarad Cymraeg neu Saesneg ffonio 01824 706291

If you need further information, please ask someone you know who speaks English or Welsh to telephone 01824 706291

Jeżeli potrzebuję państwo dalszych informacji, proszę poprosić kogoś, kto mówi po angielsku lub walijsku żeby zadzwonił pod numer 01824 706291

آگر آپ کو مزید معلومات درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی انگریزی یا ویلش زبان جاننے والے اپنے کسی واقف کار سے کہیں کہ وہ آپ کی جانب سے فون نمبر 01824 706146 سے رابطہ کریں۔

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Se você precisar de nova informação, por favor pergunte alguém você sabe quem diz o galês o'r inglês para telefonar 01824 706291

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات ، يرجى الطلب من شخص ما تعرف من يتحدث الإنجليزية أو الويلزية الهاتف 01824706291

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Denbighshire County Council's Priorities for 2017-2022:

1

Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs

2

Communities are connected and have access to goods and services locally, online or through good transport links

3

The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience

4

The environment is attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity

5

Younger people want to live and work here, and have the skills to do so

Welcome to the Council's 2017-2022 Corporate Plan

When we published our last Corporate Plan we had promised that it would make a significant and lasting difference to the people and communities of Denbighshire. Over the lifetime of that Corporate Plan we delivered over £200m of investment in improving our schools, leisure and library facilities, roads and flood defences. We achieved this while maintaining our position as one of the highest performing councils in Wales and protecting front-line services from the cuts to local authority budgets. We are now ready to turn that track record of delivery to our new Corporate Plan: 'Working together for the future of Denbighshire'.

The overall ambition of this Plan is to ensure that Denbighshire is a place where residents and businesses are well connected and resilient; where young people have opportunities for affordable housing and acquire skills and jobs to lead successful and fulfilling lives and where we all enjoy an attractive and protected environment. Like the last plan, this Corporate Plan contains specific actions that will be delivered over five years but, perhaps even more importantly, these actions are designed to have an impact beyond the next five years with future generations in mind.

Fully implementing this plan would require an additional £135 million of investment. At a time of continuing reductions in budgets this is an ambitious amount, but we believe ambition is important. Our ability to attract funding, pool resources with partners and harness the capacity within our communities will give us a good chance of success.

We recognise that the council must work closely with our partners and wider community and that is why the priorities in this Corporate Plan have been directly derived from our County Conversation exercise and consultation with partners. Denbighshire strongly believes in developing a single public service culture, informed by strongly active communities. We will, therefore, actively look at regional and sub-regional solutions and establish a permanent 'Citizens Panel' which will play a key role in both monitoring and helping to steer the implementation of the plan.

Denbighshire, like all local authorities, will continue to face challenges, most notably reducing budgets. We will almost certainly have to take some difficult decisions, including possibly having to cut things that we would rather continue. But that will not stifle our vision of being an excellent council, working with our partners and communities to make a lasting difference for generations to come. This Corporate Plan aims to help achieve that ambition.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hugh H Evans".

Hugh H Evans, OBE
Leader of the Council

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr Mehmet".

Dr Mohammed Mehmet
Chief Executive

The financial strategy to support our Corporate Plan

The financial position faced by local authorities remains very tough. Funding cuts over a sustained period mean that we have a lot less money to invest in services now than we have in the past. So far, we have been able to manage this situation by reducing our spending by being more efficient and limiting the impact on the frontline services valued by our communities.

We don't expect the financial position to get any better over the next five years, and we think that we will need to continue to make savings of at least £5 million each year for the foreseeable future. This is obviously going to limit what the council is able to do, and some very difficult decisions will need to be made about how we are actually going to make those savings. The council will have to carefully prioritise its resources as it will not be able to continue to fund all of the services currently provided to the same level.

Further financial pressures are likely to continue in areas such as social care and schools as well as the ongoing costs associated with staff, buildings and transport.

Our ambition

Despite the difficult situation we are faced with, this council has a very clear ambition to maintain the quality of its services and to address important issues raised by residents. We also want to continue to transform the quality of our school buildings, improve our roads and bridges and increase the stock of affordable housing in the county.

We think it is important to be clear about what delivering these ambitions might cost, how we might pay for them and what the implications for the council will be. The plan therefore sets out how much additional money we hope to invest in our priorities over the next five years in order to achieve our ambitions. It will not be easy to achieve and our Councillors will have some very difficult choices to make to match their ambitions with the additional investment required.

How much might this cost?

This Corporate Plan sets out our ambitious but deliverable priorities for the next five years. Some of these priorities will require significant capital investment, others revenue funding, and some may be delivered at no additional cost. We think we need to invest somewhere in the region of an additional £135 million pounds in our corporate priorities over the next five years, if we are to achieve all that we'd like.

This is a significant amount, and is in addition to any money we have already committed to those priority areas. The £135 million is also aspirational, and it is based on current assumptions about our financial position over the next five years. Should our situation change, we have controls and processes in place to enable us to review our financial strategy during the lifetime of the Corporate Plan.

Our current thoughts about what we might spend the additional money on are set out within the sections on each priority. Not all of our priorities will require significant capital funding, but some – particularly improving education, roads and housing – would not be possible without it. Other priorities, such as a safe and protected environment, may involve us doing things differently, or may require additional revenue funding.

To pay for the capital investment identified, we will need to commit revenue budget and cash to the priorities. In the current financial climate, this will mean there is less money available for areas not identified as priorities.

During 2017/18 we identified £1 million of our revenue budget to support new corporate priorities, but we must estimate that a further £1 million of the budget is required to fund the priorities identified. This will be difficult to achieve as the council's total budget reduces.

The financial strategy to support our Corporate Plan

What are the risks?

Affordability is the greatest risk and will be a key consideration when we assess each individual project contributing to the Plan. There are always risks attached to capital spending, but we understand those risks and have confidence the proposals are achievable. We also understand that there are risks if we do not invest in some of the priority areas.

If we don't invest in our priorities our assets will deteriorate, services may not be able to improve, and we will spend more money to maintain existing standards. For example, without additional investment, we'd have to accept that the condition of our roads and bridges would deteriorate, school buildings will decline and we wouldn't be able to improve the supply of social and other housing to meet the needs of local communities.

If we don't invest in our priorities we will not realise our ambitions. Some of our ambitions require a lot of investment, whereas others may need to be given a greater priority or a different focus. Both approaches should deliver improvement, whether that be in educational provision, housing, a better natural environment, or through the way we connect and communicate with communities. We also believe that our ambition to invest £135 million in Denbighshire over the next five years will have a significant effect on the local economy. We will ensure maximum possible benefit for Denbighshire from this spending, for example, by working with those undertaking construction projects so as many local people as possible deliver the work.

How can we afford this?

Although £135 million is a large sum, the council would not have to provide all of this money itself. We expect that grants from the Welsh Government will be available to help fund the planned work to improve our schools and flood defenses. We also plan to use income from housing rent to help fund new council housing.

In reality, we think that the council may have to contribute around £71 million of the £135 million. Some of this £71 million would be found from reserves and by selling assets. A proportion would be generated through prudential borrowing. The borrowing and any other revenue commitments will have to be met from revenue funding and so decisions will have to be made to commit revenue budgets to funding the priorities, meaning less will be available for other important areas.

We have experience of using prudential borrowing sensibly and carefully and we have used it successfully in the past to invest significant additional funding in our roads, schools and our housing stock. We have measures in place to ensure all individual capital investment decisions we take are based on robust business cases and that the overall debt financing position is carefully monitored and remains affordable and sustainable. Our revenue budget plans and processes are well established and will enable us to manage affordability.

Does everyone in the council support this approach?

The financial strategy outlined above has been developed with our Councillors. Choices will have to be made about how the council spends its money in a difficult funding climate. If circumstances change, and these plans become unaffordable, we have the flexibility to change our levels of spending accordingly.

As we implement these radical changes, the next five years will be an exciting but also a challenging time for the council. With these levels of additional investment, we must deliver drastic improvements. If we are successful - and we believe we will be - Denbighshire will be fit for the future, and continue to be one of the best places in the UK to live, learn, work and visit.

County Conversation

How the plan was developed

During the summer of 2016, Denbighshire County Council asked people about their long-term, future aspirations for their communities, under the County Conversation. This, coupled with statistics, enabled us to draft a list of aspirations that Denbighshire residents thought were important. At the end of 2016 we asked the people of Denbighshire to choose the level of importance for each aspiration, with over 1500 responses received. Following the feedback received over these County Conversation exercises, we were able to identify priorities for Denbighshire going forward.



Discussions then took place over summer 2017 with Denbighshire County Council staff and colleagues from other organisations (including Health, North Wales Fire & Rescue, and Natural Resources Wales) to generate actions under each priority, before presenting the new proposed priorities to the Elected Members of Denbighshire. These priorities and actions were then adopted by the Council forming Denbighshire's 2017-2022 Corporate Plan.

Further Consultation & Monitoring

We will continue the County Conversation throughout the life time of this Corporate Plan through Annual Reporting, explaining what we expect to deliver during each year to support our priorities, and seeking views as to how we should tackle our goals.

In order to contribute to the debate, make comments or suggestions, or to request further information, please feel free to contact the Strategic Planning & Performance Team:



Email: strategicplanningteam@denbighshire.gov.uk



Phone: 01824 706291 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)



Write to us: Strategic Planning & Performance Team, Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, Ruthin, LL15 9AZ



Online: www.denbighshire.gov.uk/corporateplan

Housing:

Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs

It is recognised that there is a need to ensure housing is available to meet the needs of Denbighshire residents and that this is an important factor in retaining or attracting young people to live in the area. During the last Corporate Plan, we made a commitment to develop housing availability and we want to continue to expand on those successes over the course of this new Corporate Plan.

To achieve this we will:

- **Support the development of 1000 more homes in Denbighshire. This will include:**
 - **170 of these will be Council homes**
 - **260 of these will be affordable homes provided by private developers and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).**
 - **Extra Care Housing.**
 - **Additional specialist housing to support people with disabilities and low level support needs.**
- **Support young people to access suitable homes they can afford.**
- **Bring 500 empty properties back into use and perform among the best in Wales.**

If we are successful we expect to see:

- **A wide range of accommodation available to suit different needs.**
- **Fewer people in residential care homes.**
- **More people living in their own homes for longer (including people with support needs).**
- **More young people (up to the age of 35) able to afford housing.**
- **More empty dwellings returned to occupation.**



Connected Communities:

Communities are connected and have access to goods and services locally, online and through good transport links

Denbighshire understands that access to goods and services is key to maintaining people's independence. However, depending on where you live, this is not always easy. During the course of this new Corporate Plan Denbighshire will make it a priority to ensure that communities throughout the county are connected and have access to the goods and services they need.

To achieve this we will:

- Better enable people to travel to work, education and services.
- Invest in roads and bridges to maintain a viable, sustainable infrastructure.
- Make superfast broadband and mobile networks available to everyone.
- Ensure Council information and services will be accessible online where possible. Opportunities to work with partners will also be explored.
- Target those most likely to be digitally excluded so they have the skills and means to use digital services.
- Improve infrastructure to make it easier to stage events.

If we are successful we expect to see:

- Improved travel connectivity across the county
- County-wide superfast broadband and mobile networks, including 4G and 5G.
- An increased proportion of Council transactions taking place online.
- All residents skilled and confident in accessing goods and services online.



Resilient Communities:

The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience

In Denbighshire we aim to promote people's health & well-being and encourage them to remain as independent as possible. In order to do this, we need to work with everyone in the community, to ensure that there are strong support networks in place and ensure people have more involvement in decisions affecting their future well-being. At the same time, we will continue to make sure that people at risk of abuse or exploitation are safeguarded.

To achieve this we will:

- Support people to plan and shape their communities.
- Provide easily accessible information that supports people's independence and resilience.
- Ensure people are involved in shaping and improving services.
- Act to reduce Domestic Abuse
- Ensure all carers in Denbighshire are well supported.
- Ensure adults and older people who need health and social care in Denbighshire will experience a seamless service.

If we are successful we expect to see:

- Thriving community groups.
- People will be more resilient and independent.
- Residents feeling informed and empowered to influence services.
- Everyone feeling safe in their communities.
- People able to live in their own homes for longer.
- Vulnerable people being supported by their community.



Attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and jeans, sits on a stone bench on a grassy hill. She is looking out over a vast, rolling landscape of green fields and hills under a clear sky. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

A stylized tree where the branches and leaves are composed of various icons representing different aspects of sustainable development, such as renewable energy, education, health, and environment.

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A scenic view of a coastal town with a sandy beach and dunes in the foreground, under a blue sky with clouds. The foreground is dominated by tall, golden-brown grasses blowing in the wind. In the middle ground, a wide sandy beach stretches across the frame, with a small building visible on the left. In the background, a row of colorful houses and buildings is nestled along the coast, with a hill rising behind them. The sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white clouds.

- **Improvements in Council housing energy ratings, achieving an ‘Excellent’ energy rating for all new builds.**
- **Double the amount of energy we use in our council buildings that comes from renewable sources.**
- **A reduction in the number of properties at risk of flooding in Denbighshire.**
- **Growing numbers of black grouse, little terns, adders, sand lizards & bees.**
- **18,000 more trees across Rhyl and Denbigh.**
- **An increase in the value of tourism spend in the county.**

Young People:

A place where younger people will want to live and work and have the skills to do so

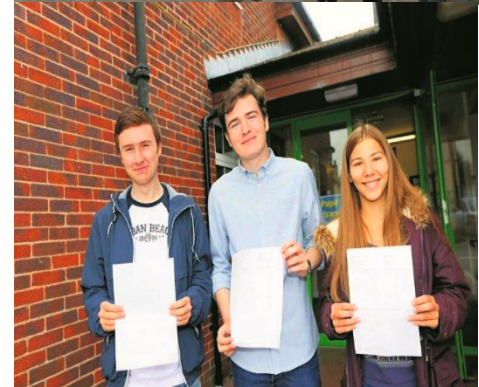
We want Denbighshire to be a place where young people can and want to flourish. To do this there must be excellent education provision working alongside a strong employment offer for all. We will work with our partners, schools and businesses to make this happen.

To achieve this we will:

- See that every child achieving the expected standard at the end of primary school (Level 4, Key Stage 2) will achieve 5 GCSEs A*-C (Level 2 Key Stage 4), including English or Welsh (1st language) and Maths, by the end of secondary school.
- Continue to modernise schools via the 21st Century Schools programme.
- Help young people to develop practical 'life skills' and behaviours that contribute to good health and well-being.
- Deliver support for parents to give their children the best start.
- Provide young people with effective career advice and mentoring.
- Offer young people the opportunity to develop skills for life and work through volunteering opportunities and meaningful work experience.
- Develop greater employment opportunities for younger people.

If we are successful we expect to see:

- All young people being supported to achieve their potential.
- Modern school facilities that further enhance pupils' learning.
- Young people are resilient and have the right skills to thrive.
- Parents can give their children the best start in life, to grow into independent and fulfilled adults.
- Young people make the right choices to prepare them for the work that they want to do, and feel confident and well-supported to enter employment.
- Quality mentoring and work opportunities to help further develop skills.
- Employment that appeals to young people and matches their skills.



Key principles in all that we do

Our Equalities Commitment

Our Corporate Plan adopts an approach that we believe will equip the council to deliver significant progress for all, by reducing current inequalities. The principles of equality are embedded throughout the council's functions and services.


During the lifetime of this plan and beyond, we will ensure that all new projects and areas of work will:

- **Engage, where appropriate, with groups that represent people with protected characteristics.**
- **Consider limitations to physical access, in particular with new builds, but also with regard to access to information and services.**
- **Consider the appropriateness of the facilities that we have available within the council's estate for use by those people with protected characteristics.**
- **Engage, challenge and, where possible, remove barriers to opportunities (including work) for those with protected characteristics.**
- **Condemn hate related bullying and harassment.**



Working to ensure that the Welsh Language thrives in Denbighshire

We have drawn up our vision for the Welsh Language:

- Denbighshire is a predominantly bilingual county with a rich culture and heritage. We are proud of this and want this pride to be reflected in our day to day interaction with communities, residents and with our staff.
 - We are committed to ensuring that the principles of the Welsh Language Standards underpin the way we deliver services to the public; we want people to be able to access services through the language of their choice naturally, at all stages of their lives.
 - We want to enhance the bilingual culture and ethos of the organisation, providing training and social opportunities for our staff to work in Welsh and increase their confidence in using the language in the workplace.
 - We want to work with partners and the wider communities to ensure that Welsh is a thriving language in Denbighshire.
 - We have an ambition to be sector leaders in the development of the Welsh Language in Wales
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