

# Corporate Plan Performance October to December 2020

This document presents the council's performance against its priorities during October to December 2020, including our application of the Sustainable Development principle, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Socio-Economic Duty.

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## Continuing our Response to Covid-19

Delivery of our services has been affected by both the all Wales 'firebreak' lockdown of 17 days from October 23 to November 9, and the more recent move into level 4 from December 20. Once again this has seen some of our public buildings and sites close their doors. However, the council has continued to deliver essential services to its residents, and during this time we revisited our innovative work from the first lockdown to place calls to the most vulnerable in our communities to ensure that their needs are being met. We are grateful for the continuing understanding and patience of residents and staff during these difficult times, and thank residents for everything that they have done this year to keep people safe.

Great efforts are continuing to try to reduce the number of coronavirus cases in the County. There are teams working on the Test, Trace and Protect service right across Denbighshire, tracing the contacts of positive cases and providing advice for people to self-isolate. It's an extremely demanding job but completely essential in our efforts to try and reduce the spread of coronavirus in our communities. In November two testing centres were opened to the public in the County. One opened at County Hall car park in Ruthin on November 18, and remained open for two weeks providing a no appointment necessary for a walk-on and drive-in service. A further walk-in testing centre also opened (by appointment only) in Rhyl, the testing centre being located on Quay Street car park, near the blue bridge. The council administers self-isolation / discretionary £500 payments to individuals that have lost income as a result of being told to isolate. Details are available on [our website](#), in addition to a great deal of helpful information to support residents through the pandemic.

Staff have continued to work hard to ensure the continued safety of our care home residents, and once again volunteers from our wider staff and the community stepped up to support provision during the difficult Christmas and winter period. We have also been delighted with the news that all residents in both Cysgod Y Gaer and Dolwen were vaccinated in January. It is a positive and very much welcome step forward.

The Autumn Term was not an easy one for our schools, which fought hard to keep provision open and safe for pupils. However, despite best efforts, a number of cohorts did have to isolate, and some schools did close temporarily. The pressure that the virus has

placed and continues to place on our teachers, support staff, pupils and parents is considerable, and the council is doing all it can to support their well-being. Unfortunately, face-to-face learning was once more suspended in December, apart for the children of critical workers and vulnerable learners, for which provision has been made available. Remote learning has been put in place for all pupils to access.

The council has continued efforts to support businesses during this difficult time. In December the Restrictions Discretionary Grant for businesses was made available for hospitality businesses and supply chain businesses linked to the sector. The scheme, which the council administers on behalf of the Welsh Government, has now been extended to any business that meets the eligibility criteria set out in the latest guidance. Details of available support grants can be found on [our website](#).

Following nearly a year of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, which has put an additional strain on resources, the council welcomed the draft budget settlement announced on December 22 by the Welsh Government, which builds on a similar settlement last year. The announcement suggests Denbighshire's budget will increase by £5.5 million in cash terms on a like for like basis, an increase of 3.6% for the 2021 to 2022 financial year. However, as we have pressures that amount to £10.6 million, we must still find savings in order to achieve a balanced budget. These pressures include, for example, continued pressure on social services, schools, children's services and waste services. The Council is currently reviewing its budget for the next financial year and proposals to identify efficiencies across the authority are currently being considered. Although this year's settlement is welcome, there has been no indicative settlements for future years announced, and with the current economic uncertainty the medium-term outlook remains a concern for local government finances.

## **Summary position for our Corporate Plan October to December 2020.**

The measures evaluation for each priority 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.

**Housing:** Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs

Measures: Good

Projects: Good

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

Measures: Priority for improvement

Projects: Good

**Resilient Communities:** The council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Good

**Environment:** Attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity

Measures: Good

Projects: Excellent

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

Measures: Priority for improvement

Projects: Good

## **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'. This should represent our ambition.

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

## **Housing: Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs**

Measures: Good

Projects: Good

### **Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update**

As at the end of December 2020 there were 1,937 people registered on the SARTH waiting list, continuing a steadily increasing trend that we have seen since the same period last year. The reasons for an increase is currently being reviewed and more clarity can be provided in the next period. It can be assumed at this point that Covid-19 will have had an impact due to issues such as poor property conditions, and an increase in domestic violence.

The full survey of current housing register applicants was planned for early 2020, but due to Covid-19 this was postponed until late 2020. A total of 3,277 surveys were then sent out and we have received 381 responses. These are currently being analysed and the results will be shared in our next report.

All other measures in this priority are collected annually and have been reported previously, so there are no further updates for the meantime.

### **Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update**

#### **Extra Care Housing**

Development of Ruthin's extra care housing has been delayed substantially, however, things are starting to move forward once again. A short term lease has been drawn up and we are presently agreeing this with Grwp Cynefin in order for responsibilities for the Awelon building to be passed through to them for pre-demolition works to start.

Meanwhile, building works on the Denbigh extra care housing project remain on track to be completed by April 2021, and following a 3-month handover period is scheduled to open late July 2021.

## **Additional Council Homes**

It is anticipated that work will commence in January 2021 on four energy efficient apartments in Prestatyn with an expected completion by the end of September 2021. Denbighshire Housing will be starting construction on four, one-bedroom apartments on the site of the former Bodnant School canteen on Caradoc Road. The low carbon apartments, which will be built and certified to the energy-efficient Passivhaus standard, are part of the Council's target to provide 170 more council homes by 2022, and their construction is being part funded by the Welsh Government through its Innovative Housing Programme.

## **Housing and Homelessness Strategy**

The Housing Strategy has been reviewed and revised to form a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy for the County. This was formally adopted by Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and will provide the framework for all relevant council functions to successfully address this priority. The Strategy provides a clear statement of the Council's vision and aims for housing in the county for the next 5 years.

## **Affordable Housing**

We are continuing to work with RSLs and private developers to ensure there is suitable affordable housing in the county, as well as progressing with our own programme of building council homes. Cartrefi Conwy have purchased 4 new build homes at Parc Aberkinsey, Rhyl, and 6 houses under empty homes criteria, all to be provided as affordable homes. 2 Home-buys have been facilitated by Grwp Cynefin, 2 Planning Obligation S106 properties have been sold and Clwyd Alyn have developed a small site in Rhyl providing a small new build bungalow. This puts the affordable housing outturn to 15 units for 2020-21, with Rent to Own Schemes and the remaining 13 units on the Llanbedr DC site due to be brought forward by the end of January 2021. The development in Trefnant by Adra was completed on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020, but Welsh Water and SPP Networks are only dealing with emergencies and urgent work at the moment, so are unable to connect the properties until February 2021. When these final steps are taken, the development will provide another 13 units towards the affordable housing target. As a result, the Corporate Plan target of 260 additional properties is expected to be achieved by March 2021.

The impact of Brexit and Covid-19 is still affecting the mortgage market, with one S106 Shared Equity sale failing in November 2020, due to the smaller than usual pool of S106 lenders who are currently more risk averse. The Rent to Own scheme may assist this type of potential home owner as the actual purchase of the property is deferred and the short-term issues in the mortgage market should be resolved before sales on these properties are progressed.

### Empty Homes Back into Use

The Empty Homes matching service has now gone live and a new webpage has been created. The project group is currently working closely with the homelessness team to explore how they can work together to make the most of the new Welsh Government Rapid Rehousing Grant Scheme. The project remains on target to bring 500 empty homes back into use by the end of the Corporate Plan.

### Annual or Biennial Measures

Measure	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	Status
The percentage of residents reporting they felt satisfied with the availability of housing in their area – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	42	Does not apply No Survey	Priority for improvement
The percentage of residents reporting they are satisfied with the standard of housing in their area – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	52	Does not apply No Survey	Acceptable
The number of people who were on the Complex Disabilities Specialist Housing Needs Register for whom supported housing has been secured – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	10	9	Good
The additional supply of council houses provided – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	4	10	Does not apply Count only
Number of additional homes provided in Denbighshire – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	124	242	Excellent

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2018 to 2019</b>	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Status</b>
Number of empty properties brought back into use (old definition) – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	181	179	Excellent
The number of private sector homes improved in standard and quality due to intervention from the council – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	819	810	Good
The additional supply of affordable housing, including social housing, provided during the year – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	23	139	Excellent
Percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (Section 66 duty) – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	58	57	Priority for Improvement
Percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (Section 73 duty) – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	38	30	Priority for Improvement

Our measure concerning additional Extra Care Homes supported by the council will not be reported until those schemes are completed.

### Quarterly or Biannual Measures

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Quarter 3 2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Quarter 4 2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Quarter 1 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Quarter 2 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Quarter 3 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Status</b>
Number of people on SARTH waiting list – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	1,000	1,152	1,508	1,791	1,937	Priority for improvement

### Project Progress

The following projects are on target:

- Additional affordable homes
- 500 empty properties back into use

- Denbigh extra care housing
- Ruthin extra care housing

The following projects are experiencing obstacles:

- Additional council housing

## **Well-being and Equality**

### **Housing and Homelessness Strategy**

An immediate priority for the council has been to develop a corporate approach to tackling homelessness as the Covid-19 pandemic has caused far greater pressures on the service, recognising a lack of suitable emergency and temporary accommodation, plus an over reliance on Bed & Breakfast / Hotel accommodation, and extended stays in emergency accommodation. The approach is refocusing on providing more accommodation solutions to assist homeless people. The Strategy will be the vehicle for agreeing homelessness priorities and monitoring progress against them.

The needs of those with protected characteristics, such as **age**, **disability** and those who are **socio-economically disadvantaged** are addressed in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and action plan. People with protected characteristics are more likely to suffer homelessness and be denied access to private housing. Our strategy seeks to prioritise these groups and ensure that they have access to secure, quality housing at an affordable price. This will enable improved **integration** and corporate ownership of work on homelessness. Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategies have been developed around the **long-term** visions of everyone being supported with pride to live in homes that meet their needs, within vibrant and sustainable communities. The council aspires to end homelessness in Denbighshire. To deliver these ambitious visions the overarching strategy has been devised into six themes which are all linked, including: **preventing** and ending homelessness in Denbighshire, and creating a supply of affordable homes. To achieve these themes, we will **collaborate** with a range of development partners, both social landlords and the private sector to create a supply of affordable homes.

## Rent to Own

The council administers the Rent to Own grant for Welsh Government, a scheme that supports applicants who do not have the minimum five per cent deposit to buy a home, but are otherwise able to access a mortgage. The scheme in Denbighshire, which is operated through Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), was initially allocated £1.8m over a three-year period between 2018 to 2021; however, due to the success of the scheme in the County, in December 2020 an additional £5.8m was secured from Welsh Government. The funding is used by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to build new homes specifically for the Rent to Own Scheme and currently includes new build sites in Rhyl, Rhuddlan, Meliden, St Asaph, Denbigh and Llanfair DC. Applicants rent one of the new build properties and after a period of up to five years they buy the property, with 25 per cent of the rent paid being returned to the applicant as a deposit for the home.

This great initiative will potentially help those who are struggling to get onto the property ladder or at a **socio-economic disadvantage**. It is a good example of the council working **collaboratively** with housing providers and **integrating** with the Welsh Government's goal to support individuals into modern, **long-term**, sustainable housing, **preventing** homelessness, unaffordable debt, and poor, detrimental living conditions.

## Efficient Housing

Creating the lowest possible energy profile to deal with climate change is at the heart of the sustainability approach. The Ruthin extra care housing project is taking a 'fabric first' approach with high levels of insulation and natural ventilation, and will be aspiring for a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating. To achieve a BREEAM rating the building owner will have to prove to the Assessor (Building Research Establishment) that they have taken a sustainable approach to procurement, will be monitoring the energy and water consumption pre and post construction, have resourced the materials responsibly, and mitigated any ecological development by advocating a robust approach. Materials, wherever possible, will be chosen carefully for their green sustainability credentials, long-life and positive appearance.

Our commitment to this sustainable approach of delivering a modern standard of home will help to tackle inequality issues by supporting those at a **socio-economic disadvantage**, and those with certain protected characteristics such as **age** and **disability**. This approach

contributes to three of the sustainable development principles by taking a **long-term** approach in **preventing** the negative effects of climate change and poor quality housing, being delivered in **collaboration** with housing associations.

### **Private tenant's survey**

Councils in North Wales have set out to find out how the Coronavirus pandemic might be affecting people who rent their homes from private landlords, by asking tenants to complete a short questionnaire to share their experience. The survey, which launched in December, will allow Denbighshire to better shape our services to meet the needs of those residents who rent privately. With partners, we offer a range of services for private tenant such as advice and assistance to private tenants to prevent the loss of tenancies; help with budgeting and maximising income; signposting for support for domestic abuse; tenancy rights and, if it is not possible to save a tenancy, help to find alternative accommodation.

**Involving** private tenants to have their say will ensure that diversity is reflected when shaping services, and possible outcomes of the survey will focus on **long-term** aspects of change, as well as the **prevention** of any further problems occurring, or perhaps getting worse. All views will be heard by Local Authorities, the Welsh Government and Landlord Organisations when the results are published, and we will seek **collaborative** solutions where possible.

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

Measures: Priority for improvement

Projects: Good

### **Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update**

As at December 2020, the coverage of superfast broadband (>30mbps) in Denbighshire was at 91.87%; a small increase of 0.4% since the previous period. It remains a priority for improvement.

As at December 2020, 4.71% of premises had broadband of 10mbps or below. This is a 0.5% improvement on the previous period; however, we have not seen significant improvements in performance in this area since January 2020 and it remains a priority for improvement for us. The Wales figure is at 3%.

Performance is also a priority for improvement for 4G signal from all operators being available (49.8%) on Denbighshire's A and B roads. Our ambition at this stage was to have 60% availability as a minimum.

New data on the use of the internet by adults in Denbighshire and Conwy was anticipated in May 2020, but has still not been published. For the time being the only available data remains that which was published in May 2019. It will be particularly interesting in the months ahead as data becomes available to review internet use for the months of March to December 2020, and hopefully identify those at risk of becoming digitally excluded in our communities.

50% of transactions were undertaken via the web during October to December 2020, compared to the total number of transactions undertaken using all access channels. This is a 3% increase from the same period in 2019 (up from 47%).

Due to Covid-19 we are unable to provide any new data for category 1 defects or the 6 monthly road condition score.

## **Corporate Plan Programme Board: Project Update**

### **Superfast Broadband and Mobile Networks**

Work on our community pilot is continuing, which is one of the worst areas for digital exclusion in the County – Nantglyn and the surrounding villages. A quote has been requested from Openreach based on 400+ properties and the team continue to push for the final quote to be received to progress the project and make use of the Gigabit Vouchers.

The Digital Officer has to date seen and advised 91 individuals (33 of which described themselves as a business), 32 of which have now found permanent solutions to their needs, either through the advice received or by purchasing new equipment / services. The Digital Officer is also assisting 15 active groups through Openreach's Community Fibre Partnership Scheme.

### **Digital Exclusion**

Despite Covid-19 some positive outcomes were achieved during 2020 including: training 32 staff in digital skills to aid residents with simple digital problems (more training will take place in 2021); some digital volunteers were used at libraries; IT kit and resources were acquired or reviewed by libraries, housing and residential care; and we began scoping projects to help the economically vulnerable.

### **Infrastructure for Events**

The project recommenced towards the end of last year following a period of uncertainty during the Covid-19 pandemic. Workstreams 2 (targeted support packages) and 4 (promoter engagement) have been put on hold with a decision being made at the January Board on how best to progress them. Workstream 1 (mobile equipment inventory) has restarted with approval being given last month to the purchase of the mobile equipment.

### **Travel to Work, Education and Services**

Our approach in regard to this project has been agreed to shift its focus fully towards green modes of transport. Whilst there will continue to be a role for initiatives like community car schemes and demand responsive transport in rural areas, it is recommended that the focus of this project should align with the corporate work being

undertaken on carbon reduction. The project will therefore aim to produce a Sustainable Transport Plan for Denbighshire.

### **Access to Information and Services**

The council's new website went live on September 16, 2020. A closure report for this project has been approved by the Corporate Plan Programme Board. What went well included engagement with internal and external digital and digital accessibility experts, to ensure the new platform would be fully accessible; a 'multi-disciplinary team' approach to procurement was particularly effective; teams supporting people with learning difficulties and also the visual impairment teams were involved in the procurement process for the screen reader software. Lessons learned included commencing procurement of a replacement website well before the expiry of the current contract; the value of adequate project management being in place as early as possible; the importance of clarity around project roles and expectations, and working with those affected by the changes early on in the process. The project report concluded by saying it is important when making operational decisions about a project to consider the long-term resource implications attached to those actions beyond the lifetime of the project. This project clearly demonstrates the sustainable development principles at work.

### **Roads and Bridges**

During 2020 to 2021 the council continued to deliver the fourth year of a 10-year maintenance programme for bridges and other highway structures. The aim of this programme is to minimise the need to implement weight restrictions on our bridges. The floods of February 2020 and the following Covid-19 pandemic have continued to dominate the year so far and as a result many projects were deferred or interim developments arranged for many delayed projects. This is primarily because the delivery window for most bridge related projects is narrow (due to the risk of high river levels), and hence most work is usually done in the summer months to reduce the access risk.

January 2021 brought with it further considerable damage, not least the destruction of the Llanerch Bridge. The full extent of the damage to our road and bridge network will need to be assessed when it is safe to do so.

## Annual or Biennial Measures

Measure	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	Status
The percentage of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	3.4	3.6	Acceptable
The percentage of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	4.7	5.3	Priority for improvement
The percentage of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	8.2	8.2	Good
The percentage of adults (aged 16 or over) who have used the internet within the last 3 months (Conwy and Denbighshire) – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	87.7	Data pending	Acceptable

Measure	2014	2019	Status
Percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Access to Services (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD)	14	14	Does not apply Count only

## Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Measure	Quarter 3 2019 to 2020	Quarter 4 2019 to 2020	Quarter 1 2020 to 2021	Quarter 2 2020 to 2021	Quarter 3 2020 to 2021	Status
The percentage of Superfast Coverage in Denbighshire (>30 Mbps) – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	91.3	91.29	92	91.83	91.87	Priority for improvement
The percentage of premises with Broadband of 10	6.54	4.93	4.63	4.76	4.71	Priority for improvement

<b>Measure</b>	<b>Quarter 3 2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Quarter 4 2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Quarter 1 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Quarter 2 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Quarter 3 2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Status</b>
Mbps or below – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>						
The percentage of transactions undertaken via the web, compared to the total number of transactions undertaken using all access channels	47	46	52	48	50	Does not apply Count only
The percentage of mobile 4G road signal (all operators) – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	45.68	45.31	45.48	Data pending	49.8	Priority for improvement
Percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	92.8	89.7	No data due to Covid-19	No data due to Covid-19	No data due to Covid-19	Priority for improvement
6 monthly Road Condition Score for around 75% of the remaining network (some C roads and almost all unclassified roads)	No data	Does not apply 6 monthly	No data due to Covid-19	Does not apply 6 monthly	No data due to Covid-19	Does not apply Baseline year

## **Project Progress**

The following projects are on target:

- Superfast broadband and mobile network
- Digital exclusion
- Infrastructure for events

The following project is at the business case stage (revised):

- Travel to work, education and services

The following project is closed:

- Access to information and services

## Well-being and Equality

### Digital exclusion

Good digital connectivity has been always been important, but never more so since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. For many residents (those with the skills, equipment and infrastructure like decent broadband for instance), good digital connectivity has made working from home, home schooling, and keeping in touch with friends, family and services possible. Life for those without digital access can be incredibly difficult and isolating. Our project, to ‘target those most likely to be digitally excluded so they have the skills and means to use digital services’, was always an important part of our approach to ensuring Denbighshire’s communities are connected; but it has become increasingly important as a consequence of the ‘stay at home’ order and the introduction of social distancing measures.

The pivot from face-to-face services to digital services was rapid. Common to all partners is the desire to ensure people can continue to access the services and information they need online (**integration**). The gaps between digitally excluded and digitally included people may have grown. We want to **prevent** problems of digital exclusion from worsening. Our project team has been working **collaboratively** with partners to ensure that those likely to be experiencing digital exclusion could be supported to get online. For example, through the provision of iPads to older people (**age**) or people needing specialist

care in care homes; or through the availability of digital volunteers in libraries. We have been training front line staff in digital skills to help residents with simple digital problems, and we will be looking into the different ways we can support people who are **socio-economically disadvantaged**.

The pandemic has also tested those that previously had no internet access issues. With an increasing number of devices being in use at the same time, sometimes even decent broadband has struggled to cope with the demands placed upon it. Our Digital Connectivity Officer has been providing advice to residents and businesses, and is working with community groups (**collaboration**) to apply for Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) through the Openreach Community Fibre Partnership Scheme. The groups range from small clusters of houses (4 to 10 premises) to very large clusters of more than 400.

### **Active travel**

In November 2020, work started on an 18-month trial of town centre improvements after a successful bid for Welsh Government funding. The funding, part of the Local Sustainable Transport Covid-19 Response Fund 2020 to 2021, will be used to introduce improvements that facilitate social distancing and make it easier for people to travel actively within town centres. For example, more than 400,000 trips are already made on foot and by bike along Rhyl promenade every year. This trial will encourage more people to travel actively and to cross from the promenade into the town centre, providing opportunities for journeys using different modes of transport.

Encouraging active travel helps reduce car journeys, improves air quality and offers safe, accessible (**disability**) routes for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as providing important health and well-being benefits. Active travel is good for our climate and our health. It also complements the Rhyl Vision (**integration**); with the aim of regenerating the town centre and promenade areas. The aim is to make **long-term** improvements to the town centre's economy and vibrancy, to people's health and well-being, and to our air quality. The project will be under constant review and members of the public will be able to give feedback throughout the trial period using our online public engagement portal (**involvement**), while officers will continue to engage with businesses and Rhyl Town Council.

## **Resilient Communities: The council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience**

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Good

### **Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update**

Disruption to reporting caused by Covid-19 means that there is no new data for a number of this priority's measures. These have been highlighted in the tables below with our last known position.

Domestic Crime in Denbighshire has increased at the end of the reporting period; in terms of the overall trends, the levels in the county fluctuates on a weekly basis. As a whole, North Wales saw an 8.1% increase in domestic crime from October to December. Covid-19 restrictions are likely to have had an effect on domestic crime, with intra-familial tensions being raised due to lockdowns and travel restrictions.

Despite the increases in the overall level of domestic crime in Denbighshire, there has been a decrease in the *cumulative* number of repeat victims of domestic violence being identified for this period; repeat victims are people who have been a victim of crime three or more occasions in 12 months; therefore, the value for each month is a snapshot of the previous 12 months. Figures have decreased from a cumulative 380 in the same period 2019 to 2020, to 371 (a decrease of -2.4%) during this reporting period. As a whole, North Wales saw a -4.7% decrease in repeat victims of domestic violence at the end of December 2020.

Repeat offenders are people who have committed a domestic abuse offence on three or more occasions in 12 months; therefore, the value for each month is a snapshot of the previous 12 months. The cumulative number of repeat offenders of domestic abuse has decreased in Denbighshire up to the end of December 2020, from 72 in the same period last year. This equates to a decrease of -2.8% (now 70 offenders). The overall picture for North Wales at the end of the October to December period shows repeat offenders of domestic abuse has decreased by -12.7%.

Within the Dewis Cymru Platform for Denbighshire we can see that the number of resources has increased in this period from 543 to 562. The Council encourages all services and service users to look to this platform for community information. As at end of December 2020 there were 2,610 resources for North Wales (increased from 2,517 during the last quarter) and 10,181 in total for Wales (increased from 9,934 last quarter).

The number of carer assessments for the report period is 537. Figures recorded for July to September were 320 cumulatively, which offers an increase of 217 assessments (67.81%) on the previous period. However, for the same reporting period last year, the number of assessments was higher at 876. We are not absolutely clear yet about the impact of Covid-19 on carers, and although figures appear less we are not exactly sure of the reasons for this when more people are known to have taken on caring responsibilities during the pandemic. Support for carers has continued and community support has been available regardless of whether carers have received an assessment. Third Sector / Community Support during the crisis has been reaching carers and helping them to continue their caring responsibilities, and it is possible that this has made a difference. Working patterns have also changed and more people are working from home or furloughed, and some people have declined or cancelled formal support because they didn't want home visits to protect the vulnerable people that they care caring for. Carers themselves continue to show amazing resilience and maybe have been managing through their own creativity instead of seeking formal assistance. Carer Assessors have continued to find remote telephone and online support, and last summer were able to offer garden visits. However, activities may have moved online but digital exclusion is an issue that has become more pronounced.

Data for the average length of time adults (aged 65 or over) are supported in residential care homes has increased to 1,046 for the reporting period. This is an increase of 1.75% on the previous figure of 1,028, and also higher than the same time last year (where 977 adults were recorded). It is likely that the increased figure is due to the Covid-19 pandemic guidelines around isolating and shielding of vulnerable residents. Although we remain high in relation to the Wales average (800), it is understood that Denbighshire has a high average age population. We are still on target to remain below 1,200.

## **Corporate Plan Programme Board: Project Update**

### **Involvement in shaping and improving services**

Little work was possible during November, however, Engagement Champions met in December to discuss year 1 findings by ONEDAY Ltd, a research consortium commissioned to carry out our street survey work. The sustainability of new ways of working as a result of Covid-19 were also discussed and are anticipated to have a longer-term impact on the draft engagement policy and supporting framework for the Council. Throughout December meetings were held to begin planning for year two research work, which will take place in February and March 2021, devising a draft plan offering various options moving forward, dependent upon Covid-19 restrictions.

### **Supporting Carers**

The last Supporting Carers Project Team meeting was held on 26 November, 2020. The meeting offered discussion and updates on Covid-19 impact on support for carers, including an overview of what has been happening and priorities for individual services. This information is used to inform Adult and Young Carers action plans and update the risk register. Face-to-face and group activities are still curtailed due to the Pandemic but online activities are continuing to be successful; for example, STAND North Wales Parenting Forum and Denbighshire Connects Family Members Forum for parent / carers of children with disabilities.

There are ongoing concerns about the impact of Covid-19 and winter pressures on carers. Support with contingency planning is available and discussed with carers as part of the What Matters / Assessment process. Third sector partners are coordinating the Carers Support Grant, recently launched by Welsh Government to support carers who are experiencing hardship this winter. Application forms are available from Carers Trust Crossroads and NEWCIS for additional financial support and / or equipment to help carers in their caring role.

### **Community Resource Teams (CRT)**

In December 2020 the Regional Transformation Board closed the CRT project and moved it to 'business as usual' under the Community Support Services monthly Integrated Health

and Social Care Localities Meeting. The closure report for the project will, however, be shared with the Corporate Plan Programme Board.

### **Community Planning, Windfarms**

All milestones are now on track and the project is delivering the benefits anticipated. The reach of the project continues to broaden as more groups engage for support with community project development and funding advice. For example, the community development team supported the launch of the first Clocaenog Windfarm Funding Round. Eight applications were received in total, two of which were cross county applications and four were Denbighshire based projects. Three of the Denbighshire projects were awarded funding and one has been deferred with intention to fund.

### **Reduce Domestic Abuse**

We continue to develop a county-wide approach to reducing domestic abuse against women and men as part of this Corporate Plan, as well as supporting the North Wales strategy to tackle all aspects of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. A project expected to span the next two years aims to contribute to the reduction of domestic abuse across the county by raising awareness of domestic abuse with staff and service users; providing training and development for staff to recognise the signs of domestic abuse, and support for children affected by domestic abuse. As part of this work we supported White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2020 by lighting up two of our landmarks, the Rhyl Pavilion and Rhyl Sky Tower in white. White Ribbon Day works to raise awareness of violence against women, encourage men to support women's groups and raise awareness in schools and workplaces, of violence against women.

Project summaries include the following:

- Early intervention for children: DART and STAR programmes will run in collaboration with the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit. Delivery after training is due in April 2021.
- Spectrum training in schools: Hafan Cymru will work with the Council on a two-year training programme delivering healthy relationships in schools. Schools that have not engaged previously will be targeted initially. Start date is April 2021.

- Ask and Act training: Dates for level 2 and 3 training have been supplied by Welsh Women's Aid for March and April 2021. A plan for which staff are trained first requires development.
- Make a stand housing: A domestic abuse policy for housing residents is being written and a draft plan should be ready by the end of January 2021.
- Council Safeguarding process: Further meetings are required to determine any changes required to the Council adult safeguarding process to incorporate domestic abuse concerns and incidents.
- Council domestic abuse policy: A draft policy was presented at the December domestic abuse board meeting, and small changes are still required.
- Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) staff now have support from the council, with access to the Employee Assistance Programme.

### **Dementia Friendly Council**

The project team has recently developed a page on the council's intranet to share with staff useful information relating to dementia, including what is available to assist people, and their families, living with dementia. Staff were asked to share the information among colleagues and to contribute anything that they were aware of locally that could help improve its usefulness, such as dementia friendly locations and groups.

Dementia awareness / Friends training has been provided for staff and councillors and the Team is currently seeking ways to continue this through on-line sessions. Currently Dementia Champion training from the Alzheimer's Society is unavailable but the project team will seek to offer this in the future.

### **Rhyl Community Development**

The Council has been successful in gaining 10 West Rhyl residents to become involved with the Safer Streets Project as 'Community Champions'. The residents have met with officers of the Council, North Wales Police and Clwyd Alyn Housing to discuss potential

projects they would like to create and deliver in their communities. A number of the project ideas have been chosen to utilise the Safer Streets Project fund and be implemented and complete by the end of March 2021. Project ideas being explored include the creation of a community food garden at the Marine Lake; living rooves on the concrete promenade shelters; and addressing parking issues around the Gerddi Heulwen Park. Meetings are underway and quotations for works are being sought so that final decisions can be made and funding allocated appropriately.

### County wide Community Development

Guidance was provided to 60 different groups / projects during quarter three, and two webinar sessions were delivered; one themed around developing community play areas, and the other about Open Space Commuted Sums funding. Work was also undertaken to organise and promote the annual round of Open Space Commuted Sums funding and a number of groups from across the county have been supported to develop project ideas and applications.

The Community Development team and Rhyl Lead have supported work to strengthen the Council's working relationship with foodbanks (and similar provision) across the county, better enabling us understand and help address any challenges faced.

### Annual or Biennial Measures

Measure	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	Status
The percentage of people reporting they have received the right information or advice when they needed it – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	88	No data due to Covid-19	Acceptable
The percentage of carers reporting they feel supported to continue in their caring role – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	55	No data due to Covid-19	Priority for improvement
The percentage of people reporting that they know who to contact about their care and support – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	84	No data due to Covid-19	Acceptable

Measure	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	Status
The percentage of people who agree "my local area is a place where people will pull together to improve the local area" – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	59	Does not apply No Survey	Acceptable
The percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	27	Does not apply No Survey	Priority for improvement

### Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Measure	Quarter 3 2019 to 2020	Quarter 4 2019 to 2020	Quarter 1 2020 to 2021	Quarter 2 2020 to 2021	Quarter 3 2020 to 2021	Status
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse including non-crime occurrences (3 or more in 12 months, measured as year to date)	380	475	126	247	371	Does not apply Count only
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat offenders of Domestic Abuse (3 or more in 12 months)	72	98	23	43	70	Does not apply Count only
The number of live resources on the Dewis Cymru Platform – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	531	536	470	543	562	Excellent

The number of assessments of need for support for carers undertaken during the year	876	1224	111	320	537	Does not apply Count only
The average length of time adults (aged 65 or over) are supported in residential care homes – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	977	970	984	1,028	1,046	Priority for improvement

## Project Progress

The following projects are all on target for completion:

- Community planning, windfarms
- Dementia Friendly Council
- Act to reduce domestic abuse

The following projects are experiencing obstacles:

- People are involved in shaping and improving services
- Supporting carers

The following project is now closed:

- Community Resource Teams

## Well-being and Equality

### Supporting Carers

Across Wales 370,000 people are carers, supporting a loved one who is older, disabled or seriously ill, with 11,600 of those in Denbighshire. The theme for Carers Rights Day 2020 was 'Know Your Rights'. Each year, Carers Rights Day helps us: ensure carers are aware of their rights; let carers know where to get help and support; raise awareness of the needs of carers. For National We Care Week (16 to 22 November) shared articles and messages in a bid to support the sector. One of the main aims of the week, along with promoting the campaign, aims to raise awareness and understanding of social care, early years and childcare, and to attract more people with the right skills and values to work in caring roles with children and adults.

On 26 November 2020, Carers Rights Day, we launched our Carers' Charter. The charter, produced in consultation with local adult and young carers and Denbighshire Carer's Strategy Group, sets out our commitment to carers. This charter is our public statement of commitment to carers and we hope local businesses, third sector and community organisations will sign up and make copies available in their workspaces and offices to ensure the role of informal unpaid, carers are recognised and respected. The Charter, and the campaign, enabled us to show the importance of involving people who offer care to loved ones and meeting long term needs for the future. It sets out the Council's pledge for carers to have the right to be treated with courtesy, respect and dignity, as well as the right to an individual assessment separate from the person for whom they are caring so that their voice is also heard.

Our work on the Charter and support for National Carers Week is a great example of our commitment to tackle key equality concerns, in this case particularly relating to **age**, **disability**, and **gender**. Those in care are also often suffering the greatest **socio-economic disadvantage** too, and it is important that they are supported to have equal opportunity and access to services and information. As a council we strive to work **collaboratively** with community groups and organisations that can help, and at all times **involve** and support people through the caring decisions that will impact them.

## Community Champions

Within Rhyl, residents have been invited to join a police community scheme that aims to prevent crime. These Community Champions form part of the West Rhyl Safer Streets project, led by North Wales Police and the Council, and volunteer to assist officers to set up crime watch groups, offer practical advice to other residents, carry out crime prevention surveys, and distribute crime prevention packs.

This work contributes well to at least four of the ways of working within the Sustainable Development principle – **collaboration, integration, involvement** and **prevention** - and also helps to protect some of our most vulnerable community members in an area of **socio-economic disadvantage**.

## Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse

During November the council supported two important national campaigns around Safeguarding, and Domestic Abuse. In collaboration with local Safeguarding Boards, the Welsh Government, and the National Independent Safeguarding Board, National Safeguarding Week sought to promote key messages and a single set of guidelines to help protect children and adults at risk, also launching the Wales Safeguarding procedures mobile app. Similarly, the 'White Ribbon' campaign sought to raise awareness of domestic abuse and to signpost where help is available.

Supporting such campaigns is a small contribution to make to such big problems, but we are committed to defending the rights of vulnerable residents, no matter their **age, gender, disability** or background. We gladly **collaborate** and **integrate** our common goal with partners to **prevent** any harm coming to anyone.

## **Environment: Attractive and protected, supporting well-being and economic prosperity**

Measures: Good

Projects: Excellent

### **Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update**

Our measures framework for this priority is at the moment entirely concerned with annual data. Three measures are derived from our Residents' Survey, which was not planned to take place this year; and two further measures, highlighted in the table below, are not yet ready to report on.

The Strategic Planning and Performance Team has been working with the Climate and Ecological Change Programme to understand what key measures exist around that area of work. Pending the approval of the strategy in February, our existing Carbon Emissions measure within this priority will be replaced from the next report by four measures important to the success of the programme. Service Plans are also prepared to receive three key measures to capture the contribution needed by individual services for the council to achieve Net Carbon Zero by 2030.

### **Corporate Plan Programme Board: Project Update**

#### **Tree Planting**

The tree planting areas in Rhyl were prepared and fenced off ahead of the planting that commenced in late November 2020. To date 2,000 trees and 500 hedging species have been planted and the remainder will be completed by end of February 2021.

Additional funding has also been secured via the Denbighshire and Conwy PSB that will see the boundaries to Glan Morfa being secured against illegal off-road motorbikes, which has been an ongoing risk to the project. This funding will also improve the access points to the site and encourage increased usage by residents who live in Rhyl West.

A community orchard has been planted in Upper Denbigh, where the Vale of Clwyd and Denbigh Plum feature strongly. The intention is to extend the size of the orchard going forward.

## **East Rhyl Coastal Defence**

The East Rhyl flood defence construction remains on target with a third of the rock armour now in place, improving the standard of flood protection to residencies at this point.

Besides continued rock placement on the shore, other work to create beach access steps is also continuing. The financial spend remains on target with 47% of the project budget now spent.

## **Improving Biodiversity and Nature Corridor**

By helping community councils, schools and local groups plant up wildflower habitats, we are working towards protecting key pollinator species such as bees and increasing biodiversity. As part of our Bee Friendly project, 1,500 wildflowers were delivered to the Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd, Llanferres and Maeshafn community councils to develop their own wildflower habitats. The wildflowers were grown at Bodfari Woodland Skills Centre and were sourced from seed gathered from our network of roadside nature reserves. Each of the new sites will become a seed bank of local provenance seeds to be gathered, grown or sown on new sites across the county as the project grows.

We also continued our work with partners in Flintshire and Conwy to deliver year 2 of our nature corridor delivery plan, nurturing healthy and resilient ecosystems along a large habitat corridor that links some of the most deprived populations in Wales to the wider countryside.

## **Carbon and Ecological Change Programme**

Work has been carried out to draw together actions and performance measures that the council can take forward in the next ten years and a Climate and Ecological Change Strategy has been drafted. The strategy went out to public consultation between 13th November and 7th December 2020. The final strategy will now be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in February 2021 for approval.

## **Reducing Plastics**

Phase 1 of the project to avoid and reduce the use of single use plastics in our civic offices has been completed. Phase 2 around School Catering and wider procurement has been

on hold during the pandemic, but County Council is due to consider recommendations from Performance Scrutiny on a way forward for this work in February's meeting.

### **Moorland Management**

Restrictions allowing, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service are due to hold Wildfire Training sessions with Denbighshire Countryside Service's staff and Natural Resources Wales staff in February / March 2021. The restoration works are scheduled to take place on Llantysilio Mountain in March 2021 with aerial seeding and transportation of heather brash.

### **Living Assets**

The two Tree Inspectors continue to survey and inspect trees on a daily basis, with over 600 being recorded in parks, suburban streets and highway corridors. Their current activity is concentrated on the gritting routes in the North of the county. Areas of Denbighshire land is being explored for potential tree planting or natural regeneration of woodland habitat. This work strongly links with our ambition of Denbighshire becoming carbon neutral and ecologically positive.

### **Energy Efficient Council Homes**

In October 2020 work started on 22 new council homes which will be built to the energy efficient Passivhaus standard using a modular construction method, and they will incorporate additional features to minimize carbon emission such as ground source heat pumps and photovoltaic arrays. In January 2021 work is planned to start on the construction of four apartments in Prestatyn, which will also be built to the Passivhaus standard, but using a more traditional masonry method. All 26 new homes are expected to be ready for occupation in the autumn, 2021.

### **Annual or Biennial Measures**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2018 to 2019</b>	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Status</b>
Percentage reduction - from a 31/03/17 baseline – in carbon emissions (tonnes) from council assets – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	13.69	15.69	Excellent

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2018 to 2019</b>	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Status</b>
STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	509.01	Data pending	Excellent
The percentage of existing and acquired council housing stock (1st April 2017 baseline) achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	33	Data pending	Priority for improvement
The annual cumulative number of trees planted to increase canopy cover in Rhyl and Denbigh – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	5800	4300	Excellent
How satisfied are people with their local open spaces? – Countryside – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	87	Does not apply No Survey	Excellent
How satisfied are people with their local open spaces? – Beaches – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	70	Does not apply No Survey	Good
How satisfied are people with their local open spaces? – Parks – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	64	Does not apply No Survey	Good

Our measure around the number of properties with a reduced risk of flooding (1,000s) will not be reported until the completion of identified flood schemes, starting in 2020.

### **Quarterly or Biannual Measures**

Our measure on the percentage of all new build council housing achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of A will not be reported until the completion of new builds in 2021.

### **Progress on projects**

The following projects are on target:

- Climate and ecological change programme
- East Rhyl coastal defence
- Urban tree planting
- Protect and enhance Denbighshire's 'living assets'
- Moorland management and wildfire prevention

The following projects are experiencing obstacles:

- ENRaW Nature Corridor
- Improving biodiversity
- Reduce the council's use of plastics (phase 2)

The following project is at risk:

- Improving energy efficiency in council houses

## **Well-being and Equality**

### **Protecting the Environment**

Supporting our commitment to protecting the environment, an accessible viewing platform was installed in December 2020 as part of our wetland restoration project in Prestatyn. The 35-acre wetland site was purchased after securing Welsh Government funding. As well as the wooden viewing platform to allow enhanced access to the site, further work is planned, including the excavation of ponds that will attract a host of wading birds and insects, while grazing will be extended to other parts of the site to bring down the vegetation levels as part of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Solutions project. This work will help the site mature and return to its natural state as a wetland, which will further

enhance this fantastic resource for Prestatyn and Denbighshire as a whole. The protection and enhancement of the wetland is also essential in mitigating against climate change.

Our commitment to protect, preserve and enhance the environment supports well-being and economic prosperity for those in **socio-economic disadvantage**, whilst also targeting the protected characteristic of **age** by providing more volunteer work opportunities for young and old alike. Building accessible platforms also increases access to our natural assets for those with **disabilities** or infirmities. We carry out all our work in **collaboration** with regional partners, **integrating** with their ambitions for the area, and securing our ability to meet our needs in the **long-term** and for future generations.

### **Reducing Supply Chain Emissions**

Ensuring pupils at Denbighshire schools get healthy, varied and nutritious meals to improve learning and development is a priority for the council. Pupils in Denbighshire eat 7,500 meals a day and each week the head cooks in each of the 55 schools (7 secondary and 48 primary) in Denbighshire place their orders for some 35,000 meals. November 2020 saw our school meals contract being awarded to a North Wales firm promising more Welsh produce, including beef sourced from farms in North and Mid Wales. The company, Harlech Foods, believe it is important that they supply schools in North Wales with food from North Wales to support the local community and regional economy. They also offer a bilingual service which is important so that orders can be taken in Welsh.

By purchasing local sustainable food in this manner, as well as supporting the **protection** of our environment for the **long-term**, we are also hopefully helping to stimulate and strengthen the regional economy, which in turn will support those in **socio-economic disadvantage**.

### **Well-being Impact Assessment**

We will be launching an updated version of the Well-being Impact Assessment In January 2021. The changes are slight but they will ensure we pay due regard to some really important issues following the Council's declaration of a climate and ecological emergency; and the introduction of the new Socio-Economic Duty, which comes into effect from 31 March 2021 to reduce inequalities derived from socio-economic disadvantage. Sessions on the new Duty will be held throughout February for staff and Members.

It is important that the council assesses all of its decisions in the context of protected characteristics, the socio-economic duty, and the sustainable development principles. This ensures that we maximise our resources as a council by at all times seeking **collaborative** opportunities that allow us to **integrate** goals with our partners. It also ensures that **everyone** is treated fairly, is **involved** in the decisions that affect them, and that we work together to **prevent** harm coming to what is important to us in the **long-term**.

## **Young People: A place where younger people will want to live and work and have the skills to do so**

Measures: Priority for improvement

Projects: Good

### **Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update**

The pandemic's impact on the delivery of services naturally has implications on a wide variety of measures that we collect. This is especially true within education where there have of course been significant ongoing challenges during this period. Attendance has been adversely affected as class cohorts self-isolate or schools were made to close; and attainment data of course is no longer comparable, being based on teacher assessment and not examination results. There will be a temporary suspension therefore of our measures for attendance and attainment, but we will seek to report any relevant data that may be published in the meantime, and resume all measures when it is appropriate to do so. Naturally this poses a real challenge to the council in understanding how our schools are performing, but we will continue to work with our School Improvement partners in GwE to ensure that the very best outcomes are being achieved by our pupils.

There are two measures with new data in this update. Firstly, 2020 to 2021 data for the number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D shows a decrease from 30 to 27. Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme of course will reduce this figure further.

Secondly, the 18 to 24 work related claimant count remains a significant area of concern for us. As at December 2020, Denbighshire's claimant count increased slightly from 13.2% to 13.4%. We remain well behind the Wales average, which is now at 8.7%. Prior to the pandemic, Denbighshire was 2% behind the Wales average. However, for the first time, the UK claimant count average has risen beyond Wales, now at 8.9%. It is a situation that we will continue to monitor, but it underlines the importance of all our recovery efforts and support for businesses.

## **Corporate Plan Programme Board: Project Update**

### **Modernising Education**

Following Cabinet approval in September 2020 for the revisions to Band B of our Modernising Education Programme, confirmation of approval was received from Welsh Government in November. This will allow feasibility and design works to be commenced during 2021 to 2022. This is excellent news for our continued work delivering modern education facilities for our Young People. In the meantime, work continues to deliver improved facilities for both childcare and Welsh Language provision in the County.

### **Childcare Settings**

Following Planning's approval of the extension of the Oak Tree Centre in July, approval and confirmation was received from the Welsh Government in November for the application to vary its funding. Subsequently the Strategic Investment Group (SIG) has scrutinised and approved the proposal, which will now allow us to proceed to tender.

Similarly, Ysgol Twm o'r Nant's childcare facility may now proceed to planning by the end of January, following the relevant approvals received from Welsh Government and SIG in November.

### **Welsh Language Centre**

The construction phase of the project was completed in September. However, the project continues to be impacted by Covid-19 restrictions, the building only being sparsely used during the autumn term. Until restrictions are eased the full benefits of the project will not be realised.

### **School Nutrition Project**

5 new schools have been recruited to the project in year 2 of its delivery, with some further expressions of interest. Year 1 schools also continue to be engaged and deliver what is appropriate and safe to do so during Covid-19 restrictions. This is excellent given the circumstances. Our partners in the Health Board have been working to re-develop the training for the Level 2 Community Food and Nutrition Skills qualification so that it can now be safely delivered online, and dates for these sessions have now been confirmed. It is anticipated that the move to online learning and meetings will improve our ways of staying

in touch with schools and will save travel time and costs. We have also developed a new online platform for sharing resources with schools.

### **Support for Parents**

Online and telephone support continues to help parents during the pandemic, seeing a strong take up of our offer. In partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) the Solihull course has been made available online for parents until November 2022.

### **Entrepreneur Space**

Work on transforming the former Costigan's pub into a co-working hub for entrepreneurs has been completed. Denbighshire County Council used £312,000 of funding through the European Regional Development Fund and the Welsh Government to create the office accommodation at the semi-derelict Costigan's building on Bodfor Street, Rhyl. Start-up and co-working experts, TownSq has been chosen by Denbighshire County Council to take on the building, which is expected to be used to support businesses, create jobs and grow the local economy. Accommodation for around 20 business start-ups in flexible accommodation has been created with space to host events and a coffee shop on site.

### **TechZone**

This project has been on hold for a significant period of time, waiting for external funding to be identified. It is now proposed, given the financial situation, to move this project towards closure. However, the project may be restarted should funding be identified in future or if the need for the project changes.

### **Young Person Employment Bursary**

The pandemic continues to affect take-up of the bursary project. Few applications have been submitted this financial year, receiving only 8 compared to 53 the previous year. Further restrictions have also made things difficult again, as potential applicants are unable to leave their home to undertake training / assessments, etc. It has also been a year of readjustment for training providers of course, having to re-develop their content to deliver courses through different mediums e.g. online as opposed to face-to-face. Finally, it was found that the Bursary's online presence had not been uploaded to the council's new

website in September; this was corrected in December but will have impacted applications. Two applications have been received subsequently, which is encouraging, and the project will now work with the Communications team to promote the bursary's availability again.

### **Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS)**

We felt that it was important during these difficult times to continue to offer our schools the opportunity to access the Pupil Attitude to Self and School (PASS) Survey so that the well-being of pupils could be monitored and appropriate interventions identified as necessary. Because of the circumstances, schools were given more time during the autumn term to complete the survey, running up until the Christmas period. Results will therefore be slightly delayed this year, but are anticipated by mid-February.

### **Working Start**

There have been a couple of obstacles recently to the delivery of Working Start, one being the secondment of a Placement Officer to the Tract, Trace, Protect Team; and another being a decrease in the number of candidate applications to the scheme. Nonetheless, the new model of delivery for the project is fully operational and providing placements. Two paid placements have been successfully recruited to since its relaunch, and a further 9 paid and 2 unpaid placements have been secured with managers / employers and sent out for advertisement. The Work Start Scheme is able to support council departments during the current Covid-19 pandemic by offering additional capacity within teams. The Scheme is currently recruiting a Admin Assistant placement to support the Council's Community Equipment Service, organising and delivering PPE equipment to our Social Care teams.

Placements have been extended to micro and small businesses in Denbighshire as part of our remodel, and they are all advertised through our denjobs.org platform, as well as shared with the Working Denbighshire service and our wider partnership networks, including both the Denbighshire Employment Network (DEN) and the Denbighshire Employment Engagement Partnership (The DEEP). Next steps will involve further developments to the communications and marketing plan for the scheme to maximise the pool of applicants, and increase the chances of recruitment to the placements identified.

## Working Denbighshire Ready for Work

The project is experiencing obstacles because of ongoing restrictions posed during the pandemic and the lack of ICT availability for students. Schools are hugely supportive of the project and want it to continue; however, they are not at this stage able to engage in any planning for events due to pressures. Nonetheless, the project is working to develop feasible timeframes and delivery models, working, for example, with Jobcentre Plus and Careers Wales to utilise the resources they are developing for their January Jobs Fair, which includes videos of employers etc. These can be used as part of the Careers Fairs in schools going forward. The Ready for Work Project will submit its remodelled plans for delivery to the Corporate Plan Programme Board in April.

## Community Benefits Hub

The Hub has undertaken an outreach drive to increase awareness of its aims with staff. Training sessions have also been provided for teams on community benefits awareness and the application of benefits to projects. As a result, a number of significant projects have engaged support from the Hub at an early stage. The development of the on-line portal is still in lag due to furlough implications with the supplier. New processes have also been put in place around S106 agreements and Certificates of Completion.

## Volunteering

Work has continued on the development of a new volunteering policy, revised documents being shared with Trade Unions and the Senior Leadership Team for input. These will be presented for Cabinet approval in March. The website has also been reviewed and revamped to coincide with the relaunch of the updated policies and handbooks.

## Annual or Biennial Measures

Measure	2018 to 2019	2019 to 2020	Status
Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	94.5	94.9	Acceptable
Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	93.5	93.4	Priority for improvement

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2018 to 2019</b>	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>Status</b>
The percentage of children aged 4-5 years who are a healthy weight or underweight (reported one year in arrears) – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	67.7	Data pending	Priority for improvement
Local Authority Points Score Average - KS4 Welsh Baccalaureate Skills Challenge Certificate Indicator – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	32.4	33.8	Priority for improvement
The percentage of children achieving 5 GSCEs A*-C (Level 2, Key Stage 4), including English or Welsh (1st language), Maths and English Literature, by the end of secondary school, against the percentage that achieved the expected standard at the end of primary school (Level 4, Key Stage 2) – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	48.7	50.9	Priority for improvement
The percentage of residents that are satisfied that there are job opportunities for young people at the start of their career – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	19	Does not apply No survey	Priority for improvement
The percentage of residents that are satisfied that there are opportunities for young people to develop their skills – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	28	Does not apply No survey	Priority for improvement
The percentage of residents that are satisfied that there are leisure opportunities that appeal to young people – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	50	Does not apply No survey	Acceptable

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2019 to 2020</b>	<b>2020 to 2021</b>	<b>Status</b>
The number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	30	27	Priority for improvement

## Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Measure	Quarter 3 2019 to 2020	Quarter 4 2019 to 2020	Quarter 1 2020 to 2021	Quarter 2 2020 to 2021	Quarter 3 2020 to 2021	Status
Percentage of the population aged 18 to 24 claiming Job Seekers Allowance – <b>Benchmarked Nationally</b>	6.7	6.9	13.6	13.2	13.4	Priority for improvement
The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – <b>Benchmarked Locally</b>	86.1	Does not apply Bi-annual	No data due to Covid-19	Does not apply Bi-annual	Data pending (expected in February)	Good

## Project Progress

The following projects are on target:

- Entrepreneur space, Rhyl
- Pupil Attitude to Self and School Survey
- School Nutrition Project
- Community Benefits Hub

The following projects are experiencing obstacles:

- Working Denbighshire Ready for Work
- Modernising Education Programme

- TechZone
- Supporting Parents
- The Denbighshire Working Start Scheme

The following project is at risk:

- Young Person Employment Bursary

## Well-being and Equality

### North Wales Growth Deal

In December, a significant milestone was achieved with Denbighshire signing up to the North Wales Growth Deal, which aims to create up to 4,200 new jobs by 2036, and support an uplift of £2bn-2.4bn for the economy over that same period. UK and Welsh governments have pledged £240m to the Deal with the ambition that this will secure over £1bn in investment through match funding from private investors. The first tranche of money will be released in the spring with hopes that it will help sell the region to investors. The first funds will be released by the end of the financial year with three initial projects from a list of 14 the frontrunners to kick-start the investment in the region.

Strengthening the economy will support those in **socio-economic disadvantage**, also targeting the protected characteristic of **age** by providing more work opportunities for young and old alike. We are doing so through **collaboration** with regional partners, **integrating** with their ambitions for the area, and securing our ability to meet our needs in the **long-term**. This investment may also **prevent** any rise in deprivation in the region.

### Remote Learning

Denbighshire schools, supported by Denbighshire's Education Services, have worked tirelessly and with great collaborative effort to ensure that no pupil is adversely disadvantaged by the impact of Covid-19 on their learning. Our partners in GwE have praised Denbighshire schools for the way that they support and work together in their

clusters, sharing good practice and advice during what has been a terrifically stressful time with tumultuous uncertainty from one day to the next. October to December was a time when schools did all they could to remain open safely, and often times it seemed against all odds. Now in December, once again, in addition to providing face-to-face learning for the children of key workers, all pupils have been supported with the offer of remote learning from home, teachers and parents having to adapt to the most difficult of expectations. Schools and education colleagues have also worked hard to ensure that pupils continue to engage with the learning offer and are being kept safe. We know that there will be educational inequalities, however. This is a sad reality of a pandemic that hits those with the greatest need hardest. As a council we are working hard to do all that we can to help.

Our work in this area of course again supports the protected characteristic of **age**, but it is not limited to that, issues of **socio-economic disadvantage, gender, sexuality or disability** also being also adversely impacted by the pandemic. As an authority we need to make sure that teachers and education staff feel supported to help everyone struggling with their well-being during this period of significant stress. It is especially important that we maintain the strong **collaboration** that exists between schools as a mechanism to support that goal, which ultimately will ensure the short and **long-term** needs of our young people are not neglected. Young people need to be kept **involved** in the evolving delivery of their education throughout; and where issues can be identified early, appropriate interventions put in place to **prevent** their worsening. This **integrates** well with the agendas of both the Police and the local Health Board too as our partners, seeking to address negative or harmful behaviours early.

## **Community Benefits**

Our new Hub has worked with a number of significant projects in recent months to encourage greater benefits for the community. Working together with Working Denbighshire and the developer, trainees have been supported to work on the new Tan y Sgubor Housing Development in Denbigh. The developer has also participated in on-line mentoring sessions and will be producing construction career information, in the form of videos, in both Welsh and English. The Hub is also liaising with Denbigh Town Council and Denbigh in Bloom to secure place based benefits that will add value to the local community in Denbigh. Similarly, the Hub has been supporting the Rhyl East Sea

Defences project to bring about some retrospective benefits such as access to training placements, engagement with schools, support for local food bank, and help with a Countryside Services project by moving and re-siting dredged materials. Support for schools will include outreach on STEM subjects including access to the Balfour Beatty Academy, which contains a range of teaching resources supported by a STEM Ambassador.

Still in its early days of being operational, the Hub has already demonstrated its ability to deliver important, lasting outputs, such as an invaluable step-up to young people seeking to start their training and careers (**age**), as well as helping those with **socio-economic disadvantage** of course. The hub's **collaborative** approach has a focus on community well-being that seeks to preserve and build on what is good for **long-term** benefit and **prevent** what is bad. It **involves** and is sympathetic to the needs of residents, and **integrates** the ambition of partnership groups to achieve the best outcome. The regular Community Benefit themed meetings are creating a best practice model for future Denbighshire projects.