

Report to	County Council
Date of meeting	11 October 2022
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy & Equalities / Nicola Kneale, Joint Interim Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation
Report author	Nicola Kneale, Joint Interim Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation
Title	Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27

1. What is the report about?

1.1. Denbighshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2022-27

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. A decision is required to adopt a set of Well-being, Equality, and Organisational Improvement objectives for the Council, which we have amalgamated into one key strategic document: a Corporate Plan that outlines a vision for Council to work towards over the next five years.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That Council confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix B) as part of its consideration.

3.2. It is recommended that, subject to any agreed changes, Members approve the final draft of the Corporate Plan 2022-2027 to enable the document to be translated and published.

4. Report Details

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement that Local Authorities publish Well-being Objectives, Equality Objectives, and identify areas for Organisational Improvement. Denbighshire's Corporate Plan 2022-27 serves all of these functions, and it's a vital document for a number of additional reasons:
- a. Agreeing and articulating our vision and ambition in this way helps us achieve consensus and communicate with our residents, partners, and regulators;
 - b. The corporate leadership that ensues as a result of having a Corporate Plan enables us to tackle cross-cutting and complex goals, e.g. address deprivation.
- 4.2 The key pledges we've committed to achieve in this plan are organised by themes. They are important because they either:
- a. Require significant capital / revenue funding, e.g. roads and new schools (but not everything requires extra funding);
 - b. Require significant cultural / organisational change, e.g. to become a Denbighshire of Thriving Welsh Language and Culture, and/or
 - c. Will impact across the whole county, e.g. establishment of an electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- 4.3 Our Well-being and Equality Objectives outline where we want to see change and/or improvement for our communities in the next five years. They don't cover everything that we do that is important. Statutory obligations and every day, important business as usual is captured and monitored according to the services that lead on them via service business plans.
- 4.4 The priorities outlined in this Corporate Plan have been arrived at via a thorough and clear process of evidence-gathering and analysis ([Well-being Assessment](#)) and in-depth consultation with our communities (County Conversation).

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

- 5.1. This decision will set the strategic direction of the Council for 2022-2027.

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

- 6.1. Adoption of this Plan will have a broad impact both in terms of enabling governance, oversight of delivery against these goals and also – in practical terms – it will affect goals we've set ourselves in terms of carbon reduction, etc.
- 6.2. In terms of governance, this Plan will influence the forthcoming SLT restructure, as Council ensures it is structured and resourced to deliver against its objectives. This will be communicated and consulted on in due course.
- 6.3. Practical details of any service developments or projects listed under this Plan will be developed, consulted on, and impact assessed as they progress.

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

- We will need to work with businesses, farmers and Trade Unions more closely, and link into regional work via the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.
- There is the potential to maximise skills development around low carbon housing in particular. However, women and people with protected characteristics and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage are less likely to benefit from opportunities from the green sector.
- There may be some pledges that result in increased carbon emissions in the development stages.
- We may need to adjust our thinking around climate risk resilience to include resilience to hotter, drier summers.
- Wildflower meadows remain contentious with some residents regarding them as an eyesore. The new plan could take the opportunity to bring people along with the climate and ecological change programme.
- Topics such as mental well-being should be kept under review as we continue to emerge from the pandemic, but move into a space with increased stresses around cost of living.
- There is some discussion about how experiences of Covid-19 will have exacerbated inequality – although the consequences are not yet fully understood. Perhaps the plan could more explicitly reference these, particularly in relation to the health, learning and growing and fairer, more equal themes.
- The well-being assessment specifically highlighted disabled people as having poorer wellbeing, with critical links between housing and employment.

- Some of the pledges may not be able to partly, let alone, fully alleviate poverty and disadvantage.
- Some interventions will need to be targeted to be effective. There is no specific geographic area of focus at present, although one will likely emerge as specific pledges are developed.
- There is some discussion about how experiences of Covid-19 will have exacerbated inequality, which can cause certain individuals to be more at risk – although the consequences are not yet fully understood.
- To what extent does the plan aim to contribute to the longer term resilience of rural areas together with opportunities to develop and safeguard vital rural assets?
- We may need to pay more attention to the rural economy and the importance of agriculture to culture. The council may need to be 'refocussed' in some way to deliver cultural regeneration in a cohesive way - the review of the new senior leadership team structure could address this.
- We will need to work seamlessly with partners and Welsh Government to support small and medium sized businesses to ensure they are prepared and well-positioned for changes to procurement.

Individual pledges identified within the Corporate Plan, where they warrant new or additional activity, should be individually impact assessed as they are developed.

It is also important to note that our level of influence and control varies across some of the pledges and this will affect our ability to bring about positive impacts in some areas. For example, digital infrastructure.

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

- 8.1. There has been a busy programme of consultation associated with the development of this Plan.
- 8.2. All stakeholders (i.e. the public, staff, partners and Members) have been invited to participate in the County Conversation, which has had 3 phases.
 - The first was in-depth in nature, asking open questions and encouraging long-term thinking to enable the collection of deep insight and the collection of qualitative data feeding into the Well-being Assessment. This was

conducted over summer 2021 via a series of virtual workshops and the provision of electronic and hard copy questionnaires. The approach was sound but has proved challenging in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, in common with the rest of Wales. Over 300 people engaged at this stage.

- Phase 2 of the County Conversation launched in January 2022 after Cabinet and SLT had reviewed the Well-being Assessment and developed a draft Plan. The purpose of this round of consultation was to share the draft Plan and invite feedback. 383 people provided feedback at this stage via an online survey that launched in January 2022; and online workshops for DCC staff focusing on each individual theme. The staff workshops were well attended and held towards the end of April and throughout May 2022.
- Phase 3 is the most recent round of activity, which is an online survey that launched in late July after the new Cabinet presented its updated Plan to Council. Again, the purpose of this round of engagement has been to inform all stakeholders of the Plan's content and invite feedback.

8.3 There has been a full timetable of working with Cabinet, SLT and Council as this has Plan has been developed, as follows:

Date	Forum	Purpose
30 Nov 2021	Cabinet & SLT workshop	To review the statutory Well-being Assessment and draft a Corporate Plan
19 January 2022	Council Briefing on draft Corporate Plan	To inform Council of the draft Plan, provide a rationale, and launch County Conversation Phase 2
27 June 2022	Cabinet workshop on the Corporate Plan	For new Cabinet to review the Well-being

		Assessment, draft its own Plan, and cross-reference content from previous iteration
6 July 2022	Cabinet & SLT workshop on Corporate Plan	For Cabinet to present its draft Plan to SLT
12 July 2022	Full Council & SLT session on the Corporate Plan	To share the draft Plan with Council, explain the rationale behind it, and to invite discussion and comment in small groups
September 2022	Lead Member and Joint Interim Head of BIM sessions with political groups	To engage with political group members on the refined version of the Plan ahead of its going to Council for ratification

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The proposed new Corporate Plan is very ambitious and will need a large amount of financial resources to succeed in full. However, it should be noted that most of activities have already started and have resources identified in order to help them be achieved. Examples of large commitments include the investment in flooding schemes, school buildings, zero carbon target and highways. Since the last Corporate Plan a robust Budget Process has been established which along with a proposed new capital budget process, will ensure that services can put forward requests for further funding as part of the annual budget process. This will help prevent funds being allocated before need and help with prioritisation across the Council. It should also be noted, however, that

the Council is entering a very uncertain financial environment due to inflationary and demand pressures far exceeding the projected level of funding. This may impact the availability of funding and flexibility going forward.

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

10.1. There is a risk that Denbighshire can't deliver all that is in this Plan, due to limited resources and/or issues that emerge and eclipse some of these pledges. This Plan should therefore be seen as a statement of intent (albeit firm intent at present). Performance against it will be managed via strong governance and reported on at quarterly intervals via Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny. Any alterations to the pledges contained here will be documented via those reports and committee discussions, ensuring there is a full audit trail behind any changes.

10.2. There is a risk that with this Plan being Council-owned but Cabinet-led non-Cabinet Members may feel less able to influence the pace and focus of its delivery. The transparency in reporting, and ability for non-Cabinet Members to ask questions at Cabinet enables all Members to have oversight of progress and scope. Members are encouraged to use those performance reports to identify areas for further scrutiny, and request further topic-based analysis as they see fit.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015

11.2. Equality Act 2010

11.3. Local Government & Elections Act (Wales) 2021