



Council Tax Level for 2023/24: Well-being Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number: 1139

Brief description: Proposal is to increase Council Tax by 3.8%

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Completed by: Steve Gadd

Responsible Service: Finance and Property Services

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? All residents who pay Council Tax

Was this impact assessment completed as a group? Yes

Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Score for the sustainability of the approach

3 out of 4 stars

Actual score : 33 / 36.

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

Proposed increase is to ensure that the Council can continue to improve services and invest in people and infrastructure. The proposals form part of a medium term budget process to manage resources.

Prevention

The proposals include significant investment in zero Carbon and Biodiversity project. There is also significant investment in Social Care and Children's Services and Schools. The Council Tax Reduction Scheme helps ensure that those in most need are protected from the increase to Council Tax.

Integration

The increase form part of a balanced set of budget proposals that includes investment that support Corporate Priorities.

Collaboration

Full consultation of the overall proposals have taken place with Cabinet, Council, Budget Board, Staff Council, Unions, School Budget Forum, Governance and Audit Committee, Corporate Executive Team and the Senior Leadership Team.

Involvement

Full consultation has been undertaken this year with Cabinet, Council, SLT, Staff Council, Trade Unions, Group Leaders (and their Groups) and the School Budget Forum. Press releases have clearly shown the level of Council Tax proposed and highlighting how to access the full report prior to both Cabinet and Council meetings. A Communication plan with the public was agreed with the Communications Team in the Autumn to ensure that full involvement and consultation will take place next year.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Neutral
A more equal Denbighshire	Neutral
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Neutral
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Positive

Main conclusions

The impacts are broadly positive. This is because the Council Tax rise proposed supports a budget that protects existing service levels and increases investment in social care, schools and in investment in key priorities such as highways and the environment. This year the proposed increase of 3.8% is below inflation and below the 4.35% average increase over the last 4 years. Clearly the

Council Tax Level for 2023/24

impact is the increased tax paid by residents. The main mitigation is that around 25% of tax payers receive financial support through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. However, it is recognised that for some taxpayers, the proposed rise will create an additional financial burden, particularly for those with relatively fixed incomes or little disposable income.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The budget process and the setting of Council Tax is an enabling activity which should allow services to develop proposals and services which will help achieve the Wellbeing goals. I believe the proposals for 2023/24 are a balanced package that allow for investment in services alongside ensuring that unavoidable pressures are funded. Hopefully this allows services to deliver on their plans.

Further actions required

Negative impacts on services have been minimised this year. Social Care and School have been protected completely and only efficiencies of 1% requested from other services. A thorough process led by the Budget Board scrutinised all proposals.

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

The budget proposals continue to invest in the Council's Zero Carbon 2030 targets

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

Proposals include large investment in Highways infrastructure and flooding schemes

Economic development

Quality skills for the long term

Quality jobs for the long term

The proposals include significant investment in pay for our staff

Childcare

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

High impact schemes such as highways and flood defences obviously increase Emissions, especially during the construction phase

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

Economic development

Quality skills for the long term

Quality jobs for the long term

Childcare

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The budget process and the setting of Council Tax is an enabling activity which should allow services to develop proposals and services which will help achieve the Wellbeing goals. I believe the proposals for 2023/24 are a balanced package that allow for investment in services alongside ensuring that unavoidable pressures are funded. Hopefully this allows services to deliver on their plans.

Further actions required

Negative impacts on services have been minimised this year. Services were asked for efficiencies of 1%. A thorough process led by the Budget Board scrutinised all proposals. All services have seen a net increase in their budgets, especially in the priority areas of social care, schools, and education.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Proposals continue the investment in Carbon Zero 2030 and Biodiversity target

Biodiversity in the built environment

Proposals continue the investment in Carbon Zero 2030 and Biodiversity target

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Proposals include additional resources for the waste service to help continue the excellent work in this area

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Proposals continue the investment in Carbon Zero 2030 and Biodiversity target

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Proposals continue the investment in Carbon Zero 2030 and Biodiversity target

Flood risk management

The budget continues to support large investment in flood defences

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Biodiversity in the built environment

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

High impact schemes such as Highways and flood defences obviously increase energy consumption, especially during the construction phase

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Flood risk management

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

The Budget supports the key services to help deliver a healthier Denbighshire.

Further actions required

Negative impacts on services have been minimised this year. Services were asked for efficiencies of 1%. A thorough process led by the Budget Board scrutinised all proposals. All services have seen a net increase in their budgets, especially in the priority areas of social care, schools, and education.

Positive impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Proposals include significant investment in social care.

Access to good quality, healthy food

People's emotional and mental well-being

Access to healthcare

Participation in leisure opportunities

Funding for DLL has been maintained at existing levels which will hopefully allow DLL to flourish.

Negative impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Access to good quality, healthy food

People's emotional and mental well-being

Access to healthcare

Participation in leisure opportunities

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

Whilst the Council Tax rise will increase the amount paid, it also allows the Council to increase funding to provision in key areas such as social care, waste services, children's services and schools and maintain service levels broadly. It also allows funding of a number of corporate priorities including carbon neutral targets, flood defence, schools and social care.

Further actions required

There will be an impact on the personal budgets of those who will not qualify for support: residents will pay more Council Tax - however there is support via the Council Tax reduction scheme for those who qualify for such support. The level of increase has been kept as low as practically possible while maintaining service levels to the public. Despite facing huge inflationary pressures the level of CT rise is much lower than inflation.

Positive impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Budget also includes provision to increase spending on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which helps protect vulnerable residents from Council Tax

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

Negative impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Any Council Tax increase will impact on residents budgets, however the most vulnerable are protected

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The proposal to raise Council Tax supports a budget that protects front line services and protects the investment in new priority areas to enhance community resilience.

Further actions required

Residents will pay more Council Tax - however there is support via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for those who qualify for such support. For those who do not qualify for Council Tax Reduction Scheme support, the Council works closely and proactively with Citizens Advice to provide help and support with personal budgeting to those residents who may require it. Flexible payment options are available over ten or twelve months.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

Community participation and resilience

The attractiveness of the area

The funding for biodiversity projects should help with attractiveness of the area.

Connected communities

Continued large investment in Highways infrastructure will help ensure communities feel connected

Rural resilience

Highways investment is particularly aimed to help the quality of the rural network

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

Increase in Council Tax will impact individual's budgets. However there is help available for those who are eligible for Council Tax Reduction and help provided to those that may struggle to pay

Community participation and resilience

The attractiveness of the area

Connected communities

Rural resilience

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

The proposal to raise Council Tax supports a budget that helps to maintain services received by the public, including our Welsh Language services, commitments and ambitions.

Further actions required

No negative impacts identified. Further investment can be considered as part of the annual budget process going forward.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

The Council tax collection service and all correspondence is available through the medium of Welsh.

Promoting the Welsh language

Culture and heritage

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

Promoting the Welsh language

Culture and heritage

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The proposal to raise Council Tax supports a budget that allows service levels to be broadly maintained in 2022/23 and so should not therefore adversely impact supply chains. Significant investment also included for reducing climate change and coping with its impact.

Further actions required

Residents will pay more Council Tax - however there is support via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for those who qualify for such support. For those who do not qualify for Council Tax Reduction Scheme support, the Council works closely and proactively with Citizens Advice to provide help and support with personal budgeting to those residents who may require it. Flexible payment options are available over ten or twelve months.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

The proposal allows for service levels to be broadly maintained during 2023/24.

Human rights

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

It also allows funding of a number of corporate priorities including Carbon Neutral targets, Schools, Social Care and Flood defences

Reducing climate change

The budget continues the significant investment in trying to reduce climate change through the 2030 targets and also ensuring the Council is resilient to change which we already know is happening (eg flood defences)

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

Human rights

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

Reducing climate change

