

Corporate Plan Performance Update: January to March 2023

This document presents the council's performance against its Corporate Plan themes and governance areas between January to March 2023, including our application of the Sustainable Development principle, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Socio-Economic Duty.

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

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Summary position

Strategic Planning and Performance Officers continued to hold discussions with Cabinet members, Corporate Directors, the Senior Leadership team, managers and staff at all levels, to determine the right strategic set of measures and activity to monitor through these performance reports. This exercise also involved service planning for the year ahead, to ensure our services all work coherently as 'one council' and identify their contribution to the nine Corporate Plan themes. We have also incorporated our Strategic Equality Objectives into this work, and identified national indicators to support benchmarking. In our previous report, we considered our application of the [sustainable development principle](#). The basis of the framework was agreed by Cabinet and our Senior Leadership Team in March 2023, and it forms the basis of this report for January to March 2023. The chapters below provide a summary of activity that has taken place during the last period beneath our Corporate Plan themes, with a round-up of contributing news and committee items. There will be aspects still in need of development and some gaps to fill; some of these will be confirmed in time for our next report, others are more complex and will require further scoping. These will be considered as we confirm existing or establish new governance arrangements for the Corporate Plan.

Overall, we can see through this report that our [Housing](#) theme is already established following on from our previous Corporate Plan. We are aware and already responding to address weaknesses in our performance, especially in relation to homelessness where outcomes for our communities are not as positive as we want and aspire them to be. [Economic growth](#) is concerning, and we would like to see incomes and pay increase. Poverty negatively affects well-being and is a driver of inequality (as evidenced in the Conwy and Denbighshire Well-being Assessment). Improving outcomes for our residents in this regard is a significant focus for this new Corporate Plan. Development of an economic strategy for Denbighshire will be an important milestone and will need to be in place early on in this Corporate Plan for us to be able to start to implement and measure change. In terms of a [healthier, happier and caring Denbighshire](#), thresholds will need to be set for as many measures as possible to help us judge our performance in this theme. It is worth noting that of all the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) domains, the highest number of areas in Rhyl in the 10% most deprived areas was in this domain; clearly demonstrating the relationship between socio-economic disadvantage and health and well-being. There are some concerning issues that our [Learning and Growing](#) theme aims to tackle, such as our placement within the Education and Employment domains

within the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation, attendance at school and the number of Year 11 Leavers known Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). However, we have effective and robust arrangements in place to work collaboratively to address these challenges and there is exceptionally good preventative work taking place in support of Early Years development. [Connectivity](#) and access to services continues to be problematic for us and is a theme that continues from our previous Corporate Plan. We will be in a better position to analyse our performance once road condition data becomes available. Ensuring that we meet our [net carbon zero commitment](#) as an organisation by 2030 continues to be a challenge and will not be easily achieved. Becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 is looking more promising. We have robust governance in place to test our progress and the plans we have in place. While we have made a judgement overall about our measures and projects for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#), we will be better placed to judge our performance and identify obstacles or challenges from our next report. Our [vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) theme, together with our final [well-run, high performing council](#), will need to seek out imaginative and qualitative ways to judge the extent to which the culture change we want to see is achieved. In relation to our final theme, we are pleased to have our Corporate Plan so closely aligned to our organisational values and principles. The fact many of our Corporate Plan themes build on the work started in our last Corporate Plan demonstrates our commitment to using evidence and stakeholder aspirations to plan for the long term to prevent problems from deteriorating or developing in the first place. Given most activity has yet to start in earnest, we feel this summary adequately represents our current position and the main areas of challenge we are facing in the early stages in delivering our new Corporate Plan.

Corporate Plan theme summary

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

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: On Target

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: On Target

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

A better connected Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: At Risk

A Note on Measuring Performance

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

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

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

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

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: On Target

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Some measures under this theme are new to 2023 to 2024 and no data is available yet. Looking at the data we do have, we exceeded our targets in some respects, securing housing for 16 people on the Complex Disabilities Housing Register. However, a 'Priority for Improvement' are the rates of housing deprivation, which increased between 2014 and 2019, as shown by the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data. We do not know what the situation is post-pandemic as the most recent WIMD data is for 2019. Addressing the issue of homelessness in Denbighshire has been challenging, and this is reflected in the three indicators categorised as a 'Priority for Improvement'. These are benchmarked nationally and show that Denbighshire has the third lowest rate of prevention of all Wales's local authorities and the lowest rate of positive discharge from homelessness for the year 2021 to 2022. Data for 2022 to 2023 shows that for homelessness prevention and relief, Denbighshire's performance is worse than the previous year and for rates of positive discharge, performance is better. Comparative data with other authorities for this recent year is unavailable at this time. Much work is being done to tackle this issue, however, as part the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. For example, early intervention and prevention work is in progress with performance data for My Home Denbighshire (MHD) starting to be collected in this period, and there are promising signs from the homelessness prevention figure of 89%.

Council housing stock compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) has remained at 100%, though we must recognise the rate of full compliance (without acceptable fails) is much lower at 58%. Despite rising costs impacting the volume of efficiency improvement work that is achievable, we have seen an improvement in the percentage of Council Housing stock achieving an energy rating of C or above from 35% to an 'Acceptable' 42%. Overall tenant satisfaction levels are lower than we would like, however, and we continue to drive forward tenant involvement schemes (see [projects update](#)) and hope to build on this in the coming year.

The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant fell from 106 in the previous year to 66 in 2022 to 2023 and is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

A new focus for 2023 is signposting all residents to opportunities to improve the efficiency of their homes, giving us an opportunity to increase engagement with people through digital as well as more traditional means. As we monitor progress going forward, we will assess the need for support and make links to tackling fuel poverty.

Denbighshire was the highest performing local authority in terms of its supply of affordable housing in 2021 to 2022. The additional supply of Council Houses was at an ‘Acceptable’ The number of 15 for 2022 to 2023. However, there are completion dates in sight for Council Housing developments in the Spring of 2023 (see [projects update](#)). The Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list numbers reduced during this period, and with the assessment system being brought in house in April 2023, an opportunity to review and improve systems has been created with activity to this effect commencing from April. Also from April, we will monitor our engagement with people whose housing security may be ‘At Risk’ through partnership working between Citizen’s Advice Denbighshire (CAD) and the Homelessness Prevention Team (HPT) as well as through the My Home Denbighshire early intervention service.

For further measures and activity related to the support offered to those experiencing homelessness please see our [learning and growing theme](#) and for connections between energy efficiency and fuel poverty, please see our theme for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#).

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Housing (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Better	16% Priority to Improve Worse

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant - Benchmarked Nationally	106 Priority to Improve	66 Priority to Improve

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
	Better	Worse
The number of people who were on the Complex Disabilities Specialist Housing Needs Register for whom supported housing has been secured - Benchmarked Locally	13 Excellent Better	16 Excellent Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is sufficient, good quality housing in Denbighshire, which meets people's needs - Benchmarked Locally	No data	31.19% Priority to Improve
The percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (section 66) - Benchmarked Nationally	41.97% Priority to Improve Worse	38.35% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (section 73) - Benchmarked Nationally	21.55% Priority to Improve Worse	15.96% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households positively discharged from homelessness (section 75) - Benchmarked Nationally	44.75% Priority to Improve Worse	50.22% Priority to Improve Better
The total number of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) within 12 months of leaving care - Benchmarked Locally	9 Good Better	3 Excellent Better
The percentage of council properties compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Benchmarked Nationally	100% Excellent Same	100% Excellent Same
The percentage of Council House tenants that were satisfied with the quality of their home - Benchmarked Locally	84% Priority to Improve Better	Data pending. Expected later in 2023
The percentage of tenants that were satisfied with the way Denbighshire Housing deals with repairs and maintenance - Benchmarked Locally	77% Priority to Improve Worse	Data pending. Expected later in 2023
The percentage of existing and acquired Council housing stock achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above - Benchmarked Locally	35.44% Priority to Improve Better	41.89% Acceptable Better

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The additional supply of affordable housing, including social housing, provided during the year - Benchmarked Locally	222 Excellent Better	Data pending. Available June 2023
The additional supply of Council Houses provided - Benchmarked Locally	13 Acceptable Better	15 Acceptable Better
The percentage of empty private properties brought back into use through direct action by the local authority - Benchmarked Locally	No data	22% Excellent

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time - Benchmarked Locally	93.48% Priority to Improve Better	92.51 Priority to Improve Worse	95.85 Acceptable Better	94.72 Priority to Improve Worse	97.22 Acceptable Better
The number of disabled adaptations carried out for council house tenants – Count Only	51	59	66	64	56
The number of households helped through the ECO4 scheme – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of page views of the energy efficiency page on our website – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The number of people on the SARTH waiting list - Benchmarked Locally	2050 Priority to Improve Better	2075 Priority to Improve Worse	2190 Priority to Improve Worse	2235 Priority to Improve Worse	2,093 Priority to Improve Better
The number of referrals received into Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	80
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that have been prevented from presenting to homelessness prevention service - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	89.36% Excellent
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are for people in employment – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	22.5%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are a) Privately Rented – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	63.75%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are b) Local Authority – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	11.25%

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are c) Housing Association – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	2.5%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are d) Owner occupied – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	5%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are e) Unknown – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	17.5%
The number of people at risk of homelessness supported by the CAD-HPT (Citizens Advice Denbighshire-Homelessness Prevention Team) link officer – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
Of those people at risk of homelessness supported by the CAD-HPT (Citizens Advice Denbighshire-Homelessness Prevention Team) link officer, the % that are in employment – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are 17 projects listed within this theme in the Corporate Plan. Five are running 'On Target', four are 'Experiencing Obstacles', one is at business case stage, and two are complete. Four projects are new for 2023 to 2024, due to begin April. There is one project 'At Risk' (Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses). The expected policy change to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is an area of concern for energy efficiency targets in Council Houses, with cost increases impacting the volume of work that is achievable in order to meet the new targets. However, as outlined in the measures summary, there is a positive trend in the Energy Performance Certificate ratings data. Overall, the most significant project within this theme is to deliver the [Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan](#). This is an overarching project encompassing many if not all aspects of this theme. It is encouraging to see that this is 'Experiencing Obstacles' and is not considered to be 'At Risk', though it is important to recognise that homelessness measures are a 'Priority for Improvement'.

One complete project to 'Develop and implement Best Use of Stock plan to make best use of housing stock to meet changing need' has been incorporated into the usual business activity of the service and there is work now being done to target the issue of under occupation in Council Housing. One other project is complete: 'Implement a programme of Tenancy Visits to support tenants and gather accurate data on households to inform service provision'. This work is now business as usual, though will be combined with work to engage tenants who are most likely to experience social inequality to access services and take an active role in their community.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Deliver and monitor the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Develop and implement Best Use of Stock plan to make best use of housing stock to meet changing need	Complete	This is business as usual as there will be regular ongoing projects to support this. We are currently working on targeting under occupiers to link to new

Title	Status	Exception
		developments in Prestatyn for example.
Project: Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses	At Risk Same	Good progress has been made to increase the number of properties surpassing the council's energy target. However, we await the new WHQS policy which we believe will heavily impact our targets going forward.
Work collaboratively with Flintshire County Council providing contact information and signposting on our website regarding homes' energy efficiency	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Promote Energy Efficiency page on our website through our social media channels	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Signpost to Welsh Government's NEST scheme through the post	On Target	
Project: Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Project: Denbighshire replacement Local Development Plan	Not started	At business case stage
Project: Ruthin Extra Care Housing (Phase 2)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Explore how we can protect housing through new Welsh Government legislation to regulate the impact of second homes	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Project: Edward Henry Street	On Target Same	
Project: Additional Council Housing Developments	On Target Same	
Work with Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to contribute to progressing Rhyl Residential Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	

Title	Status	Exception
Develop performance and reporting systems following the implementation of SARTH and current SPoA triage service to further understand citizens accessing housing information / SARTH	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing	On Target Same	
Implement a programme of Tenancy Visits to support tenants and gather accurate data on households to inform service provision	Complete	This is Business as Usual and will be combined with work to engage tenants who are most likely to experience social inequality to access services and take an active role in their community
Project: SARTH: Bring in-house	On Target	

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In January, Cabinet approved the temporary extension of contracts and the process for retendering of contracts in relation to [Denbighshire Learning Disability Supported Living Schemes](#). Approval was obtained from Cabinet in March, for the provision of [a Dynamic Procurement System for delivery of Disabled Grant Facilities](#), which will be delivered in partnership with Flintshire County Council.

At the same meeting, Cabinet approved the [renewal of the housing maintenance voids contractor framework](#) to undertake refurbishment work to empty domestic properties owned by the council (known as voids).

Cabinet support was also given for the [Replacement Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy](#). Key changes to the Preferred Strategy included making additional references to climate change mitigation, carbon reduction and active travel.

Performance Scrutiny Committee examined the progress made to date in delivering the [Housing and Homelessness Strategy](#). The report outlined key areas of progress such as affordable housing.

Performance Scrutiny Committee, on considering a report outlining feedback to Welsh Government on [mould and condensation in Denbighshire's Council housing stock](#), concluded that it was satisfied with the systems and processes in place to address such issues.

The council awarded The Salvation Army with a contract to run the [Temporary Emergency Accommodation Support Project in Rhyl](#), which aims to support people in Denbighshire currently housed in emergency accommodation. The project will create twenty new jobs.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: On Target

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Within this theme there are a number of nationally benchmarked measures that give an indication of performance compared to other local authorities in Wales. However, there are some gaps as we await the publication of new national data. There are also gaps in the data where new measures will be taken forward by the council from April 2023. A key aspect of this theme is delivering initiatives to stimulate economic growth and the measures below suggest that this is an area for concern. Rates of average annual pay are a 'Priority for Improvement', and though they have increased, they are the worst in Wales. The Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data for income is also a 'Priority for Improvement', as is the claimant percentage for Universal Credit in Denbighshire. However, we have several activities designed to boost the local economy and we will measure the external funding secured by the council for economic development going forward in 2023, from April.

Recognising the local and global economic challenges it faces, the council will be developing an economic strategy from April 2023 to include green, rural, and urban economic growth plans as well as enhancing tourism. We do have STEAM data available for 2021 to 2022, which suggests that the economic impact of tourism figure is improving, though this is still a 'Priority for Improvement', and we await the release (in summer) of more up to date data for 2022 to 2023. The council also recognises its role in supporting business growth, local enterprise, and community benefit. The Working Denbighshire scheme has made good progress by supporting 15 people to gain work experience placements during this period. However, the most recent national data available shows that the rate of businesses closing (business deaths) exceeded the rate of new businesses being created (business births) and the business death rate in Denbighshire during that time was the third highest in Wales and a 'Priority for Improvement'. Good progress was seen in the business birth rate, however, which had a positive trend, and 390 businesses were supported through 23 training and networking events held between 2022 to 2023.

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment please see our [learning and growing theme](#); for community development and benefits, see our theme

for a [better connected Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further themes connected to the local economy, see [A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) and [A well-run, high performing council](#).

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Income (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Same	12% Priority to Improve Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Average gross annual pay for people who live in the area and work full time (£) - Benchmarked Nationally	26780 Priority to Improve Better	27121 Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has a prosperous economy that provides access to the right skills, jobs, and income – Benchmarked Locally	No data	31.89% Priority to Improve
External funding (in pounds) secured for economic development – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of available funding awarded by Economic Business Development (EBD) for commercial property grants - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) - Benchmarked Locally	432 Priority to Improve Better	Data pending. Available in summer
The number of businesses taking part in training events - Benchmarked Locally	No data. Suspended due to the pandemic	390 Excellent Better

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	78 Good Better	Data pending
Deaths of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	89 Priority to Improve Worse	Data pending

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of working age people who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit - Benchmarked Nationally	3.7% Priority to Improve Better	3.5% Priority to Improve Better	3.5% Priority to Improve Same	3.7% Priority to Improve Worse	3.8% Priority to Improve Worse
The number of paid and unpaid work experience placements offered through Working Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data	No data	No data	No data	15 Good
The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	36% Good Worse	39% Good Better	35% Good Worse	35% Good Same	35% Good Same
The cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits – Benchmarked Locally	88% Excellent Worse	100% Excellent Better	64% Excellent Worse	64% Excellent Same	66 % Excellent Better

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are 21 projects listed within this theme in the Corporate Plan. Seven are running 'On Target', four are 'Experiencing Obstacles', one is at business case stage and one is at project brief stage. Six projects are new for the 2023 to 2024 financial year, due to begin in April. There are two projects 'At Risk', and these are the Queen's Buildings Rhyl and the Former North Wales Hospital. The delivery confidence status for the former is 'At Risk' due to the struggle to appoint an operator and the effects of this on the completion date.

Delays are also expected at the Former North Wales Hospital due to the need to meet planning conditions and legal terms. The project has made excellent progress, however, in terms of securing additional Ambition North Wales Growth Deal funding to plug the viability funding gap.

It is worth noting that the success of these projects overall is not reflected in the measures which are, in the main, a 'Priority for Improvement'. A significant activity for the future within this theme will be to develop the council's new Economic Strategy, with work on this commencing from April 2023.

Other developments in the last period

Brief for all councillors on the North Wales Growth Deal

The work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, including the North Wales Growth Deal is listed as an item on the Council Workshops forward work plan reserve list for consideration beyond 2023. Any review of the reserve list should consider the inclusion of this item so that councillors may be updated on this work.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Enabling and supporting NW Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales	On Target	
Coordinating WG Transforming Towns funding programme streams	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Project: Corwen High Street (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target Same	

Title	Status	Exception
Develop funding bids for future rounds Levelling Up and Growth Deal funding	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Project: Queen's Buildings Rhyl	At Risk Same	At risk of not being completed for peak summer season. Intention to appoint operator by June.
Project: Former North Wales Hospital	At Risk Same	Viability funding secured. Development of the site is unlikely to commence for some time. Intention to take planning conditions, listed buildings, and legal agreement reports to Planning Committee by May.
Project: Victorian Post Office (Rhyl)	On Target Same	
Develop the council's new Economic Strategy	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop Town Centre Place Making Plans	On Target Same	
Develop the AONB Sustainable Tourism Plan and integrate into Local Tourism Plans	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Deliver the Denbighshire Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027	On Target Same	
Evaluate the impact of the Tourism Levy	Not started	The Tourism Levy is not actually active. We've had the consultation which ended in December 2022. It's now going through a process that will mean scrutiny at various levels in the Senedd and may then come into law before the current political term ends.
Project: Co-Relocation of Rhyl Tourist Information Centre and Rhyl Museum	Not started	Business case stage

Title	Status	Exception
Project: Seeking to improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Project: Reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach (Rhyl promenade)	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	
Project: Work with Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to contribute to progressing Rhyl Public Realm Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Project: Rhyl Gateway	Not started	Project brief stage
Work with employers to identify hard to recruit jobs and develop sector routeways to fill the gaps	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Co-ordinate a range of training and networking opportunities for businesses, signposting to digital courses and webinar	On Target Same	
Complete feasibility report for move-on accommodation at St Asaph Business Park	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop a Community Benefits Framework to align with the Social Partnership and Procurement (Wales) Bill	On Target	

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In January, Cabinet approved [year 1 applications to the Shared Prosperity Fund](#) and noted the process and timescales for future application rounds. At February's meeting, Cabinet agreed to [commission Cadwyn Clwyd and DVSC to deliver a programme](#) (including a grant regime or 'Key Fund') in the area of Business Support and Community Capacity Building under certain Shared Prosperity Fund interventions.

Mixed successes were reported in January, with the [Levelling Up Fund Announcement](#) that the Vale of Clwyd bid had been unsuccessful but that the bid for Clwyd West projects had been secured.

[Let's show our love for local businesses this Saint Dwynwen's Day](#) was Theme on January 25, as the council reminded residents to support our local towns when thinking of gifts and treats for loved ones.

[Working Denbighshire job fairs were held in Rhyl](#) in January and in [Llangollen Town Hall in March](#). The events aimed to support Denbighshire citizens to gain education, training, and employment.

[March For Business](#), the council's annual campaign for businesses across Denbighshire, returned with free workshops, networking events and advice sessions. [Pop-up events to support businesses with a range of topics](#), including starting a business, finance, and growth were held in Denbigh and Ruthin. The [North Wales March for Business Dinner attracted record attendance](#) enabling over 100 people to network and share insights on coping with the rising cost of doing business. [Denbighshire Tourism Forum](#) provided a great opportunity for delegates to hear about the latest tourism news and meet other like-minded businesses. Run by the council's Tourism Team, the next forum is planned for Autumn 2023.

A drop-in session about the [Four Great Highways drop was held at Llangollen Town Hall](#) in March, and gave residents, businesses and visitors an opportunity to view the concept design options that have been developed, further to the recent consultation that was undertaken.

The [Fifth Wheel Company](#) and [Bio-Check](#) are both St Asaph-based companies set to benefit from research and development collaborations designed to boost digital support and smart technologies. Funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund, all businesses taking part receive expert support on three-month intervention projects from a digital specialist.

Organised by Denbighshire County Council in partnership with Wrexham and Flintshire, over 60 businesses and 170 people participated in [familiarisation trips](#) throughout March, which are designed to share knowledge of North East Wales's attractions as part of the Denbighshire Tourism Ambassador Scheme to promote tourism.

Enhancements to green spaces and play equipment commenced in March at [Llangollen Riverside Park](#), made possible through the Brilliant Basics fund to improve tourism infrastructure across Wales.

The council and the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB advised people to plan ahead when it came to [countryside visits over the Easter](#). The council highlighted new traffic measures and urged visitors to respect the countryside and park responsibly.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

In terms of the measures for this theme, the majority of these are new for the Corporate Plan, and to the 2023 to 2024 financial year. Looking at the data we do have, performance is, in the main, considered to be 'Excellent'; well above the thresholds set for them. It should be noted that many other measures do not currently have thresholds, which means we have not set our level of ambition or intervention point.

However, 17% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire remained in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of health (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) in 2019; this has increased from 10% in 2014 and is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

Our annual stakeholder survey asked stakeholders to say whether they agree that they can live safely, happily and independently in the county and also receive good support when needed. 47.44% agreed and this is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

There is excellent work being undertaken for retaining a high percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse. We can also note the number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided continues to increase, with an excellent response.

For further measures and activity in support of housing and homelessness, please see our [Housing](#) and [Prosperous](#) themes respectively. For information about equality and deprivation, and safe environments, see our theme a [Fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further detail around our work to support education and well-being, see our [Learning and Growing](#) theme.

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Health (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) - Benchmarked Nationally	10% Priority to Improve	17% Priority to Improve Worse

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who have experienced three or more placements during the year - Count Only	19	18
The percentage of child protection conferences held within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of schools that have achieved Trauma Informed School status by 2027 - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of children looked after at 31 March per 10,000 population aged under 18 by local authority and year – Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	96
The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided - Benchmarked Locally	1,037 Excellent	1,159 Excellent Better
The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year - Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	401
The total number of carers needs assessments for young carers undertaken during the year - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
with specialist equipment - Benchmarked Locally		
The percentage of schools in the county embedding the Whole School Approach to mental health and well-being (include regional involvement) - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of young people (per 100 of residents 10 – 18 year olds) who receive counselling in Denbighshire and have a positive outcome – Benchmarked Nationally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	3.3 Acceptable
The average improvement in young people’s core score for children and young people who received counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	8.5 Excellent
The percentage of stakeholders who agreed that they can live safely, happily, and independently, in Denbighshire and also receive good support when needed to promote resilience and well-being - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	47.44% Priority to Improve
The percentage of young people offered the active option of advocacy from Education and Children’s Services - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Data pending
The percentage of adults where independent professional advocacy was provided after assessment of need – Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	72.5%
The number of projects supported by the Community Development Team, and funded, offering a positive impact upon loneliness and isolation - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of young people (aged 11-25) participating in youth activity opportunities delivered and supported by the Youth Service - Benchmarked Locally	No data	26% Good
The number of County Community Groups using in scope facilities Denbighshire Leisure Limited - Benchmarked Locally	137 On Target	134 On Target Worse
The number of alternative (out of scope) facilities/venues used for the delivery of services to DCC residents - Benchmarked Locally	107 On Target	96 On Target Worse

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of sport and recreation related projects / groups supported by the Community Resilience Team - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready for citizen care and support needs – Count Only	No Data	29

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse - Benchmarked Locally	No data	98.7% Excellent	98.85% Excellent Better	98.84% Excellent Worse	98.8% Excellent Worse
The number of overall referrals via SPoA to receive information, advice and assistance – Count Only	No data	No data	No data	No data	5,126
The number of referrals / enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The cumulative number of new micro-provider businesses created for citizen care and support needs - Count Only	No data	No data	No data	No data	20

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with specialist equipment - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of Talking Point contacts for information, advice and assistance (libraries, One Stop Shops and hosted by Community Navigators etc) - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are 26 projects listed within this theme in the Corporate Plan. Eight are running 'On Target', one is 'Experiencing Obstacles', and one is shown as complete; this is 'Design and deliver a sport programme to improve the health and wellbeing of young people'. There will be further work on sports programmes for young people and these will be considered business as usual.

One project is 'At Risk' relating to our work to maintain our status as a Dementia Friendly organisation with the Alzheimer's Society via an annual assessment. The Alzheimer's Society has confirmed they will no longer be offering this status (from the end 2023) and therefore we will no longer be providing annual assessments under this initiative. The Ageing Well in Denbighshire Group and the Dementia Friendly Council Group have merged and work will continue to enhance provision for people living with Dementia and

those caring for them. Furthermore, this group will work towards becoming an age friendly county with the World Health Organisation, using their eight domains of assessment, which includes social participation and respect and social inclusion, both areas covering good health and well-being for people of all backgrounds.

15 projects are new to the 2023 to 2024 financial year, and are due to begin April. One of these is at Project Brief stage, and one project, 'Implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards', will be delayed by the UK Government. Adult Social Care and Homelessness and Education and Children's Services have all safeguarding procedures in place, so there is no definitive gap in service provision. However, they will await further instruction from the UK Government, which is likely to be 2024 onwards.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implement the Liberty Protection Safeguards and ensure effective preparation of all staff across Adults and Children's Services for this implementation.	Not started	It is understood that the UK Government has delayed implementation until the term of the next parliament.
Embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures in to all aspects of Children's and Services	On Target	
Work with partners to deliver the annual joint strategic plan for the North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board	On Target	
Monitor and implement requirements of Foster Wales and monitor effectiveness of national approach.	On Target Same	
Embed the work of the Independent Living Team to support individuals through direct payments or Pre-Paid Cards, to increase efficiency	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Implement Post 16 of ALN work	Not started	This activity will commence from August 2024
Develop an in-county residential short breaks and emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire	On Target	

Title	Status	Exception
County Residential Break Review.	Not started	Once the project has passed the Project Brief and Business Case stages we will start to report upon this project.
Implement and embed the Autism Code of Practice in partnership with the Regional Strategic Group for North Wales across Adults and Children's services.	Experiencing Obstacles	
Implement the Out of Court Disposal Parenting Support Intervention to comply with the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 (by 2025) – move to corporate parenting area.	On Target	
Work with local unpaid carers to identify the respite opportunities they need, and how barriers are overcome to enable this.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Bwthyn y Ddol Phase 2 (Activity) Develop and implement, including staffing, a new Children's Assessment Centre jointly with Conwy County Borough Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	On Target	This activity will continue to run during 2023 to 2024.
Ysgol Tir Morfa - Hydrotherapy pool	On Target	
Enhance the intervention work at Plas Brondyffryn and Tir Morfa in terms of play opportunities from Play Rangers.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Increase the opportunities for unpaid young carers to take part in three year national Short Breaks fun package (via Carers Trust Wales).	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Work to maintain status as a Dementia Friendly organisation with the Alzheimer's Society (annual assessment).	At Risk	The Alzheimer's Society has confirmed they will no longer be offering this status (end 2023) and therefore we will no longer be providing annual assessments under this initiative. The Ageing Well in Denbighshire Group and the Dementia Friendly Council Group have merged and work will

Title	Status	Exception
		continue to enhance provision for people living with Dementia and those caring for them.
Work in partnership regionally to embed the All Wales Dementia Pathway of Standards.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Work to enhance and extend the Access to Play project throughout the County.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Expand the Play Rangers offer Let's Play Out Programme throughout the county	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Work to reduce the Youth Services waiting list for support in Denbighshire.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Enhance the Story Pals Project and Arts programme to deliver intergenerational activities (delivered through the Denbighshire Arts Strategy).	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Undertake a review of independent professional advocacy for all service provision.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire, with World Health Organisation, in partnership with Ageing Well in Denbighshire multi-agency group.	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023
Deliver a programme of activities and events to encourage children and adults to re-engage with their local library, to support engagement and wellbeing and to combat social isolation and loneliness.	On Target	
Design and deliver a sport programme to improve the health and wellbeing of young people.	Complete	This activity is complete, and future work for sports activities will be business as usual.
Enhance the Nature for Health Programme within Denbighshire which offers multiple benefit – reducing isolation, improve health, rural skills, health and nature walks, arts and crafts)	Not started	This activity will commence 1 April 2023

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

The beginning of 2023 saw the council's Trading Standards Team increase their [campaign to take action against shops found to be supplying illegal tobacco](#). Work, supported by North Wales Police, was undertaken for Operation CeCe - a joint initiative between National Trading Standards and HM Revenue and Customs to tackle the illegal tobacco trades - and significant quantity of illegal tobacco was seized in Rhyl, and other towns in North Wales. [Denbighshire Trading Standards](#) also urged businesses to make necessary checks on their stock of disposable e-cigarettes, liquids and vaping devices and ensure that they meet UK legal requirements. An increasing amount of non-compliant disposable vaping products have been found for sale within Denbighshire. The majority of products found are non-compliant due to having over-sized tanks, incorrect labelling and being unregistered - meaning that they are not notified products with the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Denbighshire County Council's Scrutiny Committee considered a review under the Council's Scrutiny 'call-in' procedure of a decision taken by Cabinet, on December 13, 2022, on the '[Recommendation of the Regional Fee Setting Group](#)'. The "call in" is a normal part of the democratic process, and allows the Scrutiny Committee to exercise its statutory powers to review or scrutinise executive decisions.

In February, the [Partnership Scrutiny Committee](#) accepted a report on the North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project. The project was to develop the Royal Alexandra Hospital site in Rhyl; a vital development for Denbighshire and partner Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board related the pressures facing Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.

The [Partnership Scrutiny Committee](#), at that same meeting, undertook discussions with representatives from the Council's Social Services, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and North Wales Police on their partnership working arrangements in relation to mental health.

The council's [Edge of Care team launched a new project](#) in January, seeking volunteers to support a project aiming to improve the mental health and well-being of individuals living in the area. In response to the pandemic and the need to support people in their own homes, Denbighshire Community Support Services has also put in place

arrangements for [a dog, Maisie, to accompany her volunteer, Jackie, on home visits](#). The aim of the project is to put people at ease and help relieve stress. More work within our care homes, saw residents and their families at [Cysgod y Gaer Care Home in Corwen](#) enjoy a chance to meet a The number of animals, including rabbits, guinea pigs, a tortoise, corn snakes, a python, a little Shetland pony and lizards. February 2023 saw the start of a [new music therapy pilot project at Dolwen Care Home in Denbigh](#). Music therapy can support people with all kinds of conditions: from autism to dementia, learning difficulties to brain injuries, life-limiting illnesses to mental health issues, grief, and trauma.

The council confirmed it will continue to offer a [free development programme](#) which supports residents to set up their own micro-provider service in their local communities, following the success of the project over the past year. 'Micro-providers' offer care and support to older and disabled people in their own homes, helping them live their lives their way. So far, there are over 20 micro-providers operating in Denbighshire, who support around 140 residents.

Denbighshire County Council Chairman, Councillor Arwel Roberts, presented the [winners of his schools art competition](#) - which was launched in partnership with one of his nominated charities, NSPCC Cymru/Wales, North Wales Hub, Prestatyn – with certificates, medals and prizes for their outstanding efforts. Children were asked to draw what made them feel happy. The overall winner from Ysgol Y Parc was invited to attend a small presentation at Council in February.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

The performance framework here is broadly divided across three areas of focus for this theme in the Corporate Plan – namely support for Early Years Development; Engagement and Achievement at School; and Employability Support. In this first report there are still some measures in need of development and gaps to fill, largely to do with our quarterly performance measures. Otherwise, the tables below provide a snapshot of key performance as at the end of the year, and areas to focus on improvement going forward.

There are three, what we could consider to be, overarching indicators within the set; two of which are for the Education and Employment domains within Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). For both measures our performance remains unchanged since the previous WIMD report in 2014 (9% and 12% respectively in the top 10% most deprived), though our placement has improved to 'Acceptable' for the Education domain because performance has worsened nationally. Our third 'overarching' measure considers the percentage of stakeholders who agree that good quality learning and training is available in Denbighshire, where 48% agree.

There is exceptionally good work taking place in support of Early Years development. In September 2022, 82% of all children entering nursery had individualised profiles, called 'Me in a Nutshell', created for them to support their effective transition. These are developed with the support of the Family Link Team. Meanwhile, 99% of parents report the positive impact of attending Bookstart / Rhyme-time through our Library Services.

Primary and Secondary school attendance following the wake of the pandemic remains a concern, with secondary attendance dropping significantly to 86% (93% in 2019). The Education Social Work Team continue to monitor and work closely with schools to ensure effective attendance procedures are in place; however, it is unavoidable that Covid-19 has continued to have an impact during 2022 to 2023.

Recently published data for the percentage of Year 11 Leavers known Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) shows Denbighshire's position to have declined from 1.7% to 2.3% during 2022 to 2023. This represents 26 young people. It is

important to note that this year group was probably the most impacted of all year groups by the pandemic; experiencing disruption to their education during years 9, 10 and 11. Our new measure for the percentage of Year 11 pupils with an identified Post-16 pathway also reveals that 4% do not have a plan in place.

The completion of Care Leaver Pathway Plans within statutory timescales also continues to be a 'Priority for Improvement' at 71% during 2022 to 2023, though this is a marked improvement on performance for the previous year (20%).

For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring theme](#); for equity in education, including free school meal support, see our theme for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further detail around our work to support volunteering and employment, see [Connected](#) and [Prosperous](#) themes respectively.

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Education (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	9% Priority to Improve Better	9% Acceptable Same
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Employment (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	12% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Same

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that good quality learning and training is available in Denbighshire, allowing people of all ages to reach their personal and professional potential – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	47.79% Priority to Improve
The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a	81%	82%

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally	Excellent	Excellent Better
The percentage of parents that have reported a positive impact through attending Bookstart / Rhyme-time – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	99% Excellent
The percentage of parents that travel a positive distance by attending structured learning events through Families First and Flying Start – Benchmarked Locally	53% Acceptable	58% Good Better
<i>Attainment measure(s) to be determined</i>	No data	No data
The percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools – Benchmarked Locally	No data. Covid-19	90.8% Priority to Improve Worse (than 2019)
The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools – Benchmarked Locally	No data. Covid-19	86% Priority to Improve Worse (than 2019)
The percentage of pupils engaged through Llwybrau that achieve a positive outcome, including level 1 or 2 qualifications – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	88% Acceptable
The number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D – Benchmarked Locally	27 Excellent Same	27 Excellent Same
The percentage of schools able to host community focussed activities – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Data pending. Available in summer
The percentage of Year 11 Leavers from schools know Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), at the preceding 31 August in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	1.7% Priority to Improve Same	2.3% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of Year 11 pupils that do not have an identified Post-16 pathway in place – Benchmarked Locally	4.14% Priority to Improve	Data pending. Available in November
The percentage of children or young people who are looked after that have a Personal	100% Excellent	96% Good

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Education Plan in place – Benchmarked Locally		Worse
The percentage of initial Care Leaver Pathway Plans completed during the year that were within the statutory timescales, where the young person has care leaver status – Benchmarked Locally	20% Priority to Improve	71% Priority to Improve Better
The total number of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 13 -24 months since leaving care – Count Only	5	7

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The number of children taking part in the childcare offer – Benchmarked Locally	635 Good	732 Excellent Better	477 Acceptable Worse	521 Acceptable Better	570 Excellent Better
The percentage of parents supported through the work of the Family Link Service that report a positive difference – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	95% Excellent
The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures – Benchmarked Locally	1 Good Same	2 Good Worse	2 Good Same	3 Acceptable Worse	3 Acceptable Same

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – Benchmarked Locally	87.2% Good Better	No data. No Survey	No data. No Survey	81.8% Good Worse	No data. No Survey
The number of voluntary / work experience placements offered through Llwybrau – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of volunteering opportunities offered by the council through its corporate website – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of young people in Denbighshire reached by Youth Services – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 3 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 3 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 3 2022 to 2023	23.6% Acceptable	Data pending
The number of people with learning disabilities that have achieved a positive outcome as a result of support provided through the council's Work Opportunities services (Y Bont, Popty, Meifod, Garden Control, and Golden Group) – Count Only	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	34

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The number of people with learning disabilities in paid sustainable employment as a result of the council's Work Opportunities Job Finding Service – Count Only	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	3
The percentage of businesses contracted over £1m that have committed to work with Careers Wales to the benefit of our local schools and colleges (through our Community Benefits Policy) – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	100% Excellent
The number of employment opportunities secured / jobs protected through our Community Benefits Policy on projects over £1m – Count Only	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024
The percentage of people that, through Working Denbighshire, have travelled a positive distance on their journey towards or into employment – Benchmarked Locally	74%	88% Excellent Better	81% Good Worse	82% Good Better	82% Good Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Broadly the council is making good progress with the first year projects and activities identified in support of this theme, ten being noted as 'On Target'. Three projects are 'Experiencing Obstacles', largely due to staff capacity, but this does not represent a

significant risk to the successful completion of these tasks. One area currently reporting as 'At Risk' is our Modernising Education Programme (WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme). All four projects within Band B are currently experiencing delays for a number of reasons (detailed below), and progress with the delivery of new childcare facilities has also stalled.

One remaining activity in this framework, concerning the implementation of the Temporary Emergency Accommodation Support Contract – which will include various life, recreational and employability skills and benefits relevant to this theme – will commence reporting during 2023 to 2024.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Digital Platform	On Target Same	
Flying Start Expansion	Experiencing Obstacles	
Recommissioning of Families First	Experiencing Obstacles	
Support the regional project on Emotional Health, Well-being and Resilience Framework, which will provide resources for parents	Experiencing Obstacles	
Review Early Years provision in the context of WG Early Years Transformation funding and the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) agenda	On Target Same	
Embed new posts in the Flying Start Childcare and Early Language Development Teams from January 2023 to support the Flying Start Childcare Expansion	On Target	
In partnership with GwE, Support schools and non-maintained settings to deliver the new curriculum for Wales to ensure our learners become capable, ambitious, enterprising, ethical, healthy and confident adults.	On Target Same	

Title	Status	Exception
Implement requirements of the of ALN Reform Act within Education and Children's Services to ensure compliance	On Target Same	
Implement School Improvement Guidance: Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability	On Target	
Support schools in developing digital competency through educational leadership of the EdTech project	On Target	
Modernising Education Programme	At Risk Worse	<p>Suitability of Plas Brondyffryn and Pendref sites under consideration (Denbigh High paused due to the former). Proposals for Ysgol Bryn Collen / Gwernant submitted, awaiting Welsh Government (WG) response.</p> <p>Progress slow with works to Oaktree Centre following the contractor going into administration in February. Revised tender for Twm o'r Nant again over the forecast, with virement submitted to WG in November (decision pending).</p> <p>Ysgol Dewi Sant stalled due to drainage issues, but project has been resubmitted for the next funding round.</p>
Community Focussed Schools: Prestatyn High Pilot	On Target	
Engage with the North Wales Ambition Board and the Regional Skills Partnership to ensure that skills and training secured through our Community Benefits Policy is fit for the future and / or transferrable	On Target	
Through our Community Benefits Policy, secure business led strategy workshops	On Target	

Title	Status	Exception
for the benefit of residents seeking to upskill		
Develop performance and monitoring systems for the Temporary Emergency Accommodation support contract as it develops, which will include various life, recreational and employability skills and benefits	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

Supporting early years' child development, in January, Libraries launched a new book, [Baby Talk: Black and White](#), through a Bookstart Rhymetime event in St Asaph, looking to give babies the best start in life by developing physical and cognitive skills.

Work continues on the [Childcare extension of Ysgol Penmorfa](#), funded by the Welsh Government's Flying Start Capital Grant. Work began in September 2022, and the project will increase the capacity of childcare provision in Prestatyn.

The council has invested £600k in [refurbishment works at Prestatyn High School](#) to improve the learning environment for pupils. Work on updated science facilities is near completion, and in the next phase the school will receive roof and further classroom refurbishments.

At its [meeting in February](#), Cabinet reviewed objections to its Statutory Notice to increase the capacity of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn from 116 to 220 pupils under Band B of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Two objections were received, focussing on the location of the build (rather than the capacity), which has not yet been agreed or committed to by Cabinet or Council. Recognising the demand for specialist permission, Cabinet approved the proposal set out in the Statutory Notice, allowing the project to progress to the next stage.

In March, the council collaborated with Conwy County Borough Council to deliver ['Future Booster' events](#) aimed at 18-25 year olds, to help them take control of their future, including finances, housing, jobs, skills and training, well-being, and healthy living.

Following these opening events, more events are also being planned to take place during the summer months.

In March, the council was delighted to officially open its [new Youth Centre in Rhyl](#). Located at the town's former East Parade Café (which had been vacant since 2015), work on the site began in June 2022. Following an investment of £217k by the council and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Centre has been designed in consultation with young people, and will be an invaluable resource to enable the council and its partners to engage and support young people in an area of social deprivation and exclusion.

A better connected Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Within this theme there are several nationally benchmarked measures that give an indication of performance compared to other local authorities in Wales. However, there are some gaps as we await the publication of new national data; namely those that we use to judge our road conditions.

From April 2023, we will commence our annual resurfacing programme on roads across the county where the life has expired. We will also commence our surface dressing programme on high priority roads where surface dressing represents the most cost-effective method of prolonging the lifespan of the road. The project to Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (STP) (to include Active Travel) featured in our last Corporate Plan. It is not without its challenges, and whilst there are measures around reducing carbon emissions and increasing public electric vehicle charging points in support of our [Greener theme](#), we are currently developing measures on the other priority areas in the STP, which will be added to this theme's performance management framework in due course.

14 of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire remained in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Access to Services (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) in 2019, with no change from 2014, a 'Priority for Improvement'.

This theme also includes measures in relation to personal and community well-being. Our Community Development Team has seen the number of projects or groups supported steadily rise from 27 for the same period last year to 61. Work is also ongoing to involve more of our tenants in community projects. "The number of volunteer hours supporting community resilience and development activity" is provided, for the time being, as an estimate whilst we develop a more reliable means for measuring volunteer hours. New measures of our work to support communities to develop their digital skills and confidence will be included from April 2023.

Our stakeholder survey asks stakeholders to say whether they agree with three statements for this theme. 55.7% agreed in 2022 to 2023 that Denbighshire had the social

infrastructure needed to support personal and community well-being, which is considered to be 'Acceptable'. 48.96% agreed that Denbighshire had the digital infrastructure (such as good broadband connectivity, good mobile internet or mobile phone signal) to support thriving, cohesive, and well-connected communities and 29.46% agreed that Denbighshire had the transport and road infrastructure to support thriving, cohesive, and well-connected communities. Both measures are a 'Priority for Improvement'.

For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring theme](#); for community focussed school activity and developing digital competency please see our [Learning and Growing theme](#).

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The 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) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Same	14% Priority to Improve Same

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the transport and road infrastructure to support thriving, cohesive, and well connected communities – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	29.46% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the digital infrastructure (such as good broadband connectivity, good mobile internet or mobile phone signal) to support thriving, cohesive, and well connected communities – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	48.96% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the social infrastructure needed to support personal and community well-being – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	55.70% Acceptable

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
<i>Measures to be developed around the Sustainable Transport Plan</i>	<i>No data</i>	<i>No data</i>
The percentage of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	2.6% Excellent Better	Data pending
The percentage of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	4.03% Excellent Better	Data pending
The percentage of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	7.97% Excellent Better	Data pending
The percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) Benchmarked Locally	No data	Data pending
The percentage of premises that receive less than 30Mbps - Count Only	No data.	4.57%
The percentage of premises that receive less than 10Mbps - Count Only	No data	2.88%
The percentage of library users who say that using the library has had a positive impact on their digital skills and confidence - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of people who borrowed a digital device from a library who said it had made a positive impact on their digital skills and confidence - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
<i>Measure to be developed around digital Telecare</i>	<i>No data</i>	<i>No data</i>
The number of community projects co-produced with the community and third sector - Count Only	No data	7
The number of volunteer hours supporting community resilience and development activity - Count Only	No data	700 (estimate)
The number of contacts provided through the council's Edge of Care volunteer service - Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	795

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The number of projects or groups supported by the Community Development Team - Benchmarked Locally	27	33	55	53	61 Excellent Better
The number of tenants involved in community projects – Count Only	No data	0	6	6	6

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

This theme contains 19 projects and activities. 13 projects are at various stages, those that are live are either ‘Experiencing Obstacles’ or ‘On Target’, and there are no exceptions to report. There are five new activities due to commence from April 2023.

The project to “Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (to include Active Travel)” does not currently have a status, reflecting its status as a business case. This work will need careful management to ensure it is delivered with pace.

Title	Status	Exception
We will work towards achieving a quality road network by implementing an annual resurfacing programme on a The number of roads across the county where the life has expired.	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
We will implement an annual Surface Dressing programme on a The number of high priority roads where this represents the most cost-effective method of prolonging the life-span of the road.	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
We will aim to deliver the most viable option to replace the Llanerch Bridge.	On Target Same	

Title	Status	Exception
Contribute to the development of the new Regional Transport Plan	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Review, develop and modernise rural, urban and inter-urban transport services, where appropriate, working with partners within the Metro project and alongside the emerging bus reform	On Target Same	
Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (to include Active Travel)	Not started	At business case stage
EV Charging Hub Rhyl	On Target Same	
Four Great Highways (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	This will be a live project from April 2023
Wenffrwd (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At business case stage
Corwen to Cynwyd Active Travel Route. Phase 1 (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At project brief stage
2a Moel Famau country park new cycle paths & visitor facilities (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At project brief stage
1a St Peter's Square (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At project brief stage
Green Lane Car Park Corwen (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target Same	
Traffic modelling and design traffic improvement works (Rhyl Programme Board)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Public Charging Points	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Delivery of the replacement LDP, which takes forward local priorities for land use planning within the national policy framework. The replacement LDP will ensure emerging local priorities around climate change and biodiversity are	On Target	

Title	Status	Exception
reflected in local planning policy and decision making.		
Progress towards digitalisation of telecare services before the 2025 deadline for ceasing of analogue telephone services.	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop a community resilience action plan	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Replace our current backup infrastructure to remove the reliance on legacy technologies and improve resilience.	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

On January 13, 2023 we issued a [weather warning](#) as we prepared to undertake winter maintenance gritting action due to the risk of ice, sleet and snow showers. We also placed additional resources on standby to respond to any flooding-related incidents.

Essential [resurfacing work of the took A548 Rhyl Coast Road](#) and [resurfacing works to Bastion Road Prestatyn](#) took place at the end of January 2023. We informed the public that due to essential electrical maintenance work, [Bridge Street, Denbigh](#) would be closed for two weeks at the end of January and bus services would be diverted from their usual route. Essential carriageway patching works to [Bwlch Pen Barras, Moel Famau](#) were carried out at the end of March 2023.

In collaboration with Transport for Wales, we announced the [new hourly TrawsCymru T8 bus service](#) between Corwen, Ruthin, Mold and Chester, which came into service at the end of January. At the end of March we announced the return of the [Dee Valley Picturesque Bus service](#), to start its third season on 1st April 2023. A bus service providing the best access to see key destinations around Llangollen.

Our expansion of Denbighshire's electric vehicle charging infrastructure, the new charging hub in Rhyl, was recognised by the [Electric Vehicle Association for Wales – EVA Cymru](#) as a great resource for both locals and visitors. In March, we publicised the work the council is doing alongside KerbPower Ltd of Ruthin, in their development and

commercialisation of an [innovative solution to boost electric vehicle\(EV\)](#) thanks to a digital collaboration with AMRC Cymru.

During the period we consulted on a The number of new developing projects. In January, Llangollen's residents, businesses and visitors were invited to take part and have their say on a project aimed at promoting and enhancing the [four great 'highways'](#) of Llangollen: the Llangollen Canal and World Heritage Site, the former Ruabon to Barmouth railway line, the River Dee and Thomas Telford's historic route, the A5 Holyhead Road. Residents were invited to have their say on future improvements to the [local walking, wheeling and cycling network in Rhuddlan](#). In February, we launched a consultation on the [H-Bridge, Rhyl](#) and surrounding streets to make it a safer and more inviting area for walking, wheeling and cycling. In March, we launched a The number of consultations that invited residents to share their views and ideas on proposed improvements to the [local walking, wheeling and cycling network across Prestatyn](#), the [local walking, wheeling and cycling network in Denbigh](#) and [walking, wheeling, and cycling in and around Brook Street, Llangollen](#).

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Ensuring that we meet our net carbon zero commitment as an organisation by 2030 continues to be a challenge and will not be easily achieved. Becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 is looking more promising. The overarching Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 to 2030 in year delivery confidence is currently showing as 'Experiencing Obstacles' due to delays in project delivery, which means benefit realisation will be delayed also.

There are a number of key annual performance measures that are being used to judge the performance of the council in achieving its 2030 goals, including: reducing carbon emissions the council emits from various sources; increasing carbon sequestration of land the council owns, leases and manages; and increasing the species richness of the land the council owns, leases and manages. The percentage of council owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness has increased to 42%, which indicates we are making acceptable progress towards becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030. Work is currently being undertaken to provide data for Net Carbon Zero measures for 2022 to 2023 and these will be reported on from June 2023. Available data is provided in the table below.

Our stakeholder survey will now, every year, ask stakeholders to say whether they agree that Denbighshire is resilient against the impacts of climate change and nature's decline. This question was first asked during 2022 to 2023. 43.61% of respondents agreed and this is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

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

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Physical Environment (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	2% Good Better	2% Good Same

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is resilient against the impacts of climate change and nature's decline – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	43.61% Priority to Improve
Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains) – Benchmarked Locally	11,656 Good Worse	Data pending
The percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness – Benchmarked Locally	40.62% Acceptable Better	42.00% Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through fleet – Benchmarked Locally	2,699 Priority to Improve Worse	2,302 Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through business travel– Benchmarked Locally	163 Excellent Better	251 Excellent Worse
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains– Benchmarked Locally	31,409 Priority to Improve Worse	Data pending
Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed in our buildings (owned and operated) - Count Only	1MW	1MW
The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted - Benchmarked Nationally	67.67% Excellent	Data pending

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of properties with a high or medium risk of flooding (DCC wide) - Count Only	1,171	Data pending
Area of moorland (heather, gorse and bracken) managed per annum – Count Only	20 hectares	Data pending

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

This theme is supported by the overarching Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 to 2030 and a further 18 projects and activities.

Two projects currently have an `At Risk` status. The Remodelling Waste Service Operations project's key current issue that needs resolving is a way forward with delivery of Phase 2 of the Waste Transfer Station following [RL Davies and Sons Ltd entering voluntary administration](#) on February 16, 2023.

The Wildflower Meadow project is also `At Risk` due to concerns regarding capacity and project progress overall. A project review meeting has taken place, consensus reached on a way forward and a plan is being established. Once the plan is in place and is being delivered the status of this project will improve. That said, the 2023 to 2024 season has now officially started. This year's wildflower meadow sites have now been finalised and the number of sites has increased by 40%, which is a great achievement.

The two Coastal Defence Improvement Schemes for Rhyl Central and Prestatyn Central remain `On Target` and there is a new activity to develop a new Flood Strategy for the county to commence in April 2023.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 – 2030	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Reducing carbon from buildings	Not started	At business case stage
Corporate Fleet EV Charging & EV Purchase, Phase 3	Not started	At project brief stage

Title	Status	Exception
Carbon sequestration on existing land holdings	On Target Same	
Wildflower Meadow project	At Risk Same	Concerns regarding capacity and project progress overall.
Nature Reserve at Green Gates Farm, St Asaph	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Behaviour change for climate action and nature recovery	Not started	At project brief stage
Carbon reduction through procurement	Not started	At project brief stage
Land acquisition for carbon and ecological purposes 2023 to 2024	Not started	At business case stage
Implement Ash Dieback work as per the Action Plan across the county	On Target Same	
We will enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems in all of our Council service areas	New April 2023	
Rhyl Green Infrastructure	On Target Same	
Remodelling Waste Service Operations	At Risk Same	Key current issue that needs resolving is a way forward with delivery of Phase 2 of the Waste Transfer Station.
We will work towards reducing the use of plastics within Denbighshire County Council, including School Catering and Procurement, along with any future work (including its Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) such as Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Deliver improvement and expansion projects for Denbighshire County Council allotments	On Target Same	
Develop a new Flood Strategy for the county	New	Work to commence from April 2023

Title	Status	Exception
Prestatyn Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	
Rhyl Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	
2b Loggerheads country park new visitor facilities and flood management (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At project brief stage

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In January, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) was presented with the Wales Audit Public Sector Readiness for Net Zero Carbon by 2030 report for information. Members agreed to include the papers and officer response on their next committee meeting agenda for discussion.

In February, [Cabinet](#) received a report about the regional energy planning process and incorporating priorities into strategic actions and intervention. They endorsed the North Wales Energy Strategy and the associated Action Plan, and noted the commencement of Local Area Energy Planning in Denbighshire.

In March, [Communities Scrutiny Committee](#) received a report on the progress of the Denbighshire Moorland Project, which outlined the progress to date in delivering the objectives of the Denbighshire Moorland Project. An update on the Waste Service Remodelling Project was also presented, which sought Members' observations on the progress made to date with the planned implementation of the new waste service model.

At the end of March, [Cabinet](#), received a report about the decision to terminate the contract between Denbighshire County Council and R L Davies and Sons Ltd (RLD) whereby RLD was to be the main contractor for the Waste Depot Phase 2 on the Colomendy Estate, Denbigh. This followed news that RLD would be going into administration. Cabinet expressed its sadness that RLD, a local and longstanding business, had gone into administration and said that its thoughts were with the employees and all affected.

In January, a [major school-wide biodiversity project](#) with pupils at Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch in Llanrhaeadr, got underway with planting the first of thousands of trees that will be distributed across Denbighshire schools to tackle climate change and the nature emergency. As part of the Council's wider Woodland Creation Project nearly 3,000 trees including wildlife hedgerows to help nature recover have been planted around a [historic site in Rhyl](#). To celebrate planting in [Corwen](#) a sessile Oak was planted to mark their support to local nature as part of this wider project.

Supporting our commitment to sustainable development we started a new project in collaboration with Bangor University and the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology to look at public perceptions of changes to [green spaces in Rhyl](#) and how this information can shape future nature recovery work.

We also supported sustainable management regimes by introducing a [flock of sheep to Prestatyn Hillside](#) to support the maintenance of the variety of wildflowers and wildlife that gives the site its special character. The introduction of the animals is part of the 'Unique Opportunities - Landscape Solutions for North East Wales' Project and was supported and funded through the Welsh Government Rural Development Scheme and Natural Resource Wales.

Work began to reopen [Brickfield Pond Nature Reserve](#) to support peoples' health and well-being whilst also supporting local biodiversity. Rhyl students who are on the Pathway to Construction Course also joined Countryside staff to [construct a new wooden fence](#) at the entrance to the redeveloped orchard site. Countryside staff have also worked closely with the community group behind [Rhuddlan Nature Reserve](#) to grow a thriving environment for both biodiversity and visitors to embrace.

[New electric bin lorries came into operation](#) and our Home Library Service, which supports those who cannot make it to a library due to ill health, disability or caring responsibilities, also gained their [first new electric van](#).

[Denbighshire County Council's Postcards from the Future competition winner](#) was announced appealing for help to give animals a future. All winning entries were read out at [Full Council](#) in February. The council also ran an [engagement session with Prestatyn High pupils](#) to showcase how important climate change has become in everyday operational life for the council and its services.

Volunteers helped us restart important biodiversity projects to monitor [otters](#) and [adders](#). We also looked for further volunteers as [Volunteer Rangers](#) for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to help take care of the area it covers and inspire others about the land.

Hedgerows are essential habitats for wildlife and Countryside Service staff and volunteers joined together in February to help Coleg Llandrillo Rhyl students learn the art of [hedgelaying](#) by improving a section of hedge at the Rhyl Cut.

In March, Countryside Services led a session for volunteers to [create new nesting shelters for little tern chicks born at Gronant](#). This vital work was a joint event between North Wales Little Tern Group and Nature for Health. Naturalist Iolo Williams also recently visited the [Gronant Little Terns colony](#) for his new series, 'Iolo's Borderlands'.

We reminded residents of our [`bee' signs throughout the county](#) that signifies Denbighshire County Council's Bee friendly status awarded by the Welsh Government and is the prime signpost for the Council's Wildflower Meadows Project. We also asked visitors to be [mindful when visiting the county's beauty spots](#) and included a message that supported farmers and landowners of people keeping dogs on leads when walking through the countryside with livestock, particularly during lambing season.

Our Ash dieback management work continued with work being carried out at [Loggerheads Country Park](#) in January and in [Corwen](#) in February. As this necessary felling programme progresses, more trees of alternative species will be planted, in suitable locations to reduce the impact on the landscape and biodiversity.

At the beginning of February, we reminded the public of tips and hacks to discover how their [food waste creates power](#) as we teamed up with Wales Recycles to support their Mighty Mission to Wales to get to number one.

Our Property Section Energy Team has continued to tackle reducing the [carbon footprint of Denbighshire schools](#). Ten Denbighshire schools have seen carbon reduction work take place on site including loft insulation, installation of solar PV, LED lighting, [air source heatpumps](#), battery storage, replacement boilers, improved heating controls and the addition of energy efficient water heaters. This work has so far resulted in a reduction in a combined output of carbon by around 64 tonnes.

[A successful forum](#) was held in March, at the Community Hwb Llysfasi for the AONB Champions, Town and Community Councils and Local Members.

Over the last six months we have taken part in the Design Councils, Design Differently program. The work focused on [Bws Benthg](#) and how it can be of benefit to different county communities

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

The majority of the measures below are new to this Corporate Plan, and to the 2023 to 2024 financial year. Performance for the measures we do have are, in the main, considered to be 'Excellent'.

36.23% of stakeholders agreed to the statement that people in Denbighshire are treated fairly and equally and have access to opportunities to promote their well-being and community cohesion, a 'Priority for Improvement'.

The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire reduced from 34.9% in 2021 to 28.1% in 2022. These figures were reported in March 2023, based on the Department of Work and Pensions / HM revenues and Customs statistical report, "Children in low income families: local area statistics" – figures are available one year in arrears. The Wales average is 28% children in poverty for 2022, therefore we, as a Council, are 0.1% higher than the Wales average.

In 2019, 10% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire were in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of community safety. 12% of LSOAs were in the 10% most deprived (overall) in Wales.

Compared to last year, Denbighshire continued to see a decrease in the number of repeat victims of reported domestic crime for January to March 2023, from 690 to 537. This equated to a 22.2% reduction in Denbighshire compared to North Wales which, as a whole, saw a 4.5% reduction for the same period. In terms of repeat offenders of domestic abuse for January to March 2023, there was a decrease from 74 offenders to 56. This equated to a 24.5% reduction while North Wales showed an increase of 0.3%.

Completion of our hate crime, modern day slavery and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e-learning modules (not mandatory) are new indicators and performance is currently a Priority for Improvement or Acceptable.

Some data is pending for this report and will be obtained for our next report. Other information, such as ‘the number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools’, is expected in October 2023.

For further measures and activity to support well-being, see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring](#) theme. There is additional information to support housing and homelessness in our [Housing](#) theme; measures and activities to support employment and deprivation our [Prosperous](#) theme and education and volunteering in our [Learning and Growing](#) and [Connected](#) themes.

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published every four to five years.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Community Safety (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD) - Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Worse	10% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD) - Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of stakeholders who agreed that people in Denbighshire are treated fairly and equally, and have access to opportunities to promote their well-being and community cohesion - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	36.23% Priority to Improve
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have undertaken the hate crime e-learning module (not mandatory) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	7% Priority to Improve
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have undertaken modern day slavery e-learning module (not mandatory) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	25% Priority to Improve

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have completed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e-learning - Benchmarked Locally	No data	82% Acceptable
The number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools - Benchmarked Locally	No data	Data pending. Expected October 2023
The percentage of adults who say their library is an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place - Benchmarked Locally	93 Excellent Same	93 Excellent Same
The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	34.9% Priority to Improve	28.1% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of children living in workless households – Benchmarked Nationally	21.1%	Data pending
Measures of all households and vulnerable households living in fuel poverty in Wales (placeholder) - Benchmarked Nationally	Data pending	Data pending
The percentage of eligible young people leaving care in receipt of the basic income pilot from the Welsh Government - Benchmarked Nationally	No data. Pilot Scheme across Wales to be undertaken	Data pending
The percentage of people living in households in material deprivation – Benchmarked Nationally	9.1%	Data pending
The number of families resettled within Denbighshire – Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	75
The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse reported including non-crime occurrences (3 or more in 12 months, measured as year to date) - Count Only	690	126	266	386	537
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat offenders of Domestic Abuse reported (3 or more in 12 months) - Count Only	74	11	28	42	56
The percentage of eligible primary school pupils taking Free School meals (Denbighshire) – Count Only				68.3%	Data pending
The percentage of eligible secondary school pupils taking Free School meals (Denbighshire) - Count Only				80.52%	Data pending

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are 21 projects within this theme of the Corporate Plan. Five have already started and are 'On Target', and one is seen as 'At Risk'. This is the activity 'Support diversity and engagement by embedding the framework on a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being'. There has been a recent notification of a reduction of Welsh Government grant fund to support this work, which may compromise or curtail this work. The remaining 15 projects are due to commence in the 2023 to 2024 financial year (various dates).

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Undertake preventative work, in partnership with the Police Licensing and Local Authority Licencing, in relation to business premises (including sales to minors, alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes)	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop and deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller awareness raising community events	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Purchase of ANPR cameras - The purchase of six specialist ANPR specification redeployable surveillance cameras which will enable us to monitor and gather information in respect of environmental crime hotspots.	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Work in Partnership to enhance the Community Cohesion Programme offer in Denbighshire	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Commit to the Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan through Service Business Plans	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Deliver upon the pledge to promote zero racism in Denbighshire	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
<i>Promote to schools English as an Additional Language Programme in terms of tackling racism and ensure anti-racism policies at schools are up to date (this includes raising awareness of ARWAP)</i>	<i>Not started</i>	<i>This activity is being scoped</i>
Engage and support tenants most likely to be experiencing social inequality to access services and take an active role in their community	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Bruton Park, Rhyl (working with Bruton Park residents to maximise community well-being).	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the County.	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Support diversity and engagement by embedding the framework on a whole-	At Risk	Recent notification of reduction of WG grant fund to support this work, may

Title	Status	Exception
school approach to emotional and mental well-being		compromise or curtail this work.
Review and revise the Youth Council for Denbighshire.	On Target	
Embed the DCC Anti-Bullying Strategy throughout all schools	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Period Dignity.	On Target Same	
Enhance the Nature for Health Programme within Denbighshire which offers multiple benefit – reducing isolation, improve health, rural skills, health and nature walks, arts and crafts)	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Develop a network to engage people and groups with protected characteristics (through the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group)	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Universal Free School Meals for all Primary School Pupils	On Target	
Develop and deliver the county wide Food Strategy and Food Partnership Network (including social supermarket project – Cogog) around Denbighshire	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023
Enhance the School Holiday Enrichment Programme to support children to eat well	On Target	
Enhance the offer, through Working Denbighshire, for all refugees who have settled in Denbighshire to gain support of an employment mentor (all adults are actively involved in English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes	On Target	
In partnership with Denbighshire Leisure Ltd and the Third Sector, secure funding for creative and cultural activities to work with resettled families in the county	Not started	Work to commence from April 2023

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In collaboration with Hey Girls, and funded through the Welsh Government Period Dignity Fund 2022 to 2023, the Council provided the [subscription service for young people in Denbighshire to help tackle period poverty](#). The subscription is available to residents in Denbighshire and young people on roll at a Denbighshire school and offers free eco-friendly and plastic free reusable or disposable sanitary products. If over 18, participants must reside in Denbighshire and be in receipt of a low income benefit such as universal credit, income support, child tax credit to be eligible.

In February, [Working Denbighshire](#) published information about the support it provides to support and guide individuals, on a pathway that meets their own needs and aspirations, to hopefully lead them back into to employment. One example was a client with an unhealthy relationship with alcohol, leading to a detrimental effect on his mental health, periods of homelessness and spells in jail due to his anti-social behaviour. Support is vital in such cases, and the client's quality of life has improved markedly due to assistance with securing supported accommodation and counselling for his alcohol dependency.

In March, the Council welcomed news that the Welsh Government will continue to make funding available to make [free school meal payments for eligible pupils for the Easter and Whitsun school holidays, in response to the cost of living crisis](#), together with the May Bank Holiday and the Coronation Bank Holiday.

As part of a wider campaign to support our residents during these difficult times, the council raised awareness of Pension Credit. The Council has become aware this is an under claimed entitlement across Wales and wanted to do its best to address that in Denbighshire. We also work very closely with the Department of Work and Pensions and Citizen's Advice Denbighshire, who provide our residents with additional support to check their eligibility and make an application should they need it.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: At Risk

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Our stakeholder survey will now, every year, ask stakeholders to say whether they agree that Denbighshire is a county where the Welsh language is a living, thriving language and that the rich cultural heritage and natural assets of Denbighshire are being used to their full potential. This question was first asked during 2022 to 2023. Just shy of 55% of respondents agreed that the Welsh language is a living, thriving language in Denbighshire, which is considered to be 'Acceptable'. 44% of residents agreed that the rich cultural heritage and natural assets of Denbighshire are being used to their full potential and is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

The number of people who could speak Welsh (aged 3 or older) as at the end of March 2022 stood at 92,300, which was 38.9%. This compared to 91,500 (33.3%) by the end of March 2021. The proportion of the population who report they speak Welsh daily and can speak more than a few words of Welsh tends to be lower, at 12% (all ages) in 2021 to 2022. Once agreed, new measures to monitor the effectiveness of our Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh Language Policy will be developed and reported upon in future reports.

27.4% of year one pupils received their education through the medium of Welsh during the academic year 2021 to 2022, a 0.4% increase on the previous year. Our ambition is to increase this to 32% by 2027 (the end of this new Corporate Plan), working towards 40% by 2032. Our ambition is based on current projections, which includes assumptions regarding growth in demand in existing Welsh medium schools and the transition of existing English medium schools to offer a Welsh medium foundation phase. We will confirm our threshold for intervention, i.e., what will be a 'Priority for Improvement', in our next report.

By the end of March 2023, 73% of staff had completed Welsh language awareness e-learning. Performance is considered a 'Priority for Improvement'.

4,350,000 tourists visited Denbighshire in 2020, which is an increase on the previous year's figures reflecting the disruption due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions. The

figure - whilst improved - remains lower than the 5,990,000 visitors to Denbighshire in 2018. Data is always published in arrears and new data is expected in the summer.

For further measures and activity in support of Welsh language and culture (for example, our pledge to be close to our communities), please see our [well-run, high performing council](#) theme.

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is a county where the Welsh language is a living, thriving language - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	54.74% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the rich cultural heritage and natural assets of Denbighshire are being used to their full potential - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	44.01% Priority to Improve
The number of people who can speak Welsh (aged 3 or older) - Benchmarked Nationally	92,300 Acceptable Better	Data pending
The percentage of year 1 pupils receiving Welsh medium education - Count Only	27%	27.4% Thresholds pending
<i>New measures associated with delivery of the Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh Language Policy (placeholder)</i>	<i>No data. New to 2023 to 2024</i>	<i>No data. New to 2023 to 2024</i>
Heritage income generated over the year (£) - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
STEAM - The number of tourists visiting Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	4,350,000 Acceptable Better	Data pending. Available in summer

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	73% Priority to Improve
Measure: The number of Denbighshire Artisans supported (DLL Contract KPI) - Benchmarked Locally	54 (Annual figure) Excellent	No data	No data	No data	55 (Annual figure) Excellent Better

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

This theme contains 20 projects and activities. 11 have not yet started and these are at various stages (from project brief to business case); five are 'On Target' and three are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. The Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project is 'At Risk'. The status is 'At Risk' on the basis that funding has yet to be secured and therefore the funds are not in place to proceed as planned with the accommodation solution and the activity plan. Subject to the necessary approval from Cabinet, who now also wish to review alternative options in Denbighshire, a funding application to the NLHF (Welsh capital grant funding) will be submitted in either August or November 2023, and the outcome should be known some four months later. In the meanwhile, both archive services will continue to work collaboratively and develop the service under the North East Wales Archive brand.

Our pledge to 'Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events' has not yet started and there is no clear, agreed way forward for delivering the pledge at this time.

Levelling Up Projects are being developed. None of the Clwyd West projects are live yet; most are either at project brief or business case stage and an update will be reported in the next period.

Delivery of the Welsh Language Strategy 2023-28 to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the county and the service delivery, policy making, and operational standards of the Welsh Language Policy will commence once Cabinet approval has been sought in June 2023. The Strategy in particular, may warrant being run as a project to ensure the culture change we want to see is achieved and embedded fully across the council and all its services.

The title of an activity to “Work with partners on the proposed designation of a National Park in North East Wales” has been amended to “Develop Denbighshire County Council’s internal and external governance on the emerging proposal from Natural Resources Wales for the new National Park in North East Wales”, to better reflect the current status of developments in relation to a new National Park.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implement the WESP to support 1 million speakers by 2050	On Target Same	
Deliver the Welsh Language Strategy 2023-28 to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the county	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Deliver the service delivery, policy making and operational standards of the Welsh Language Policy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Develop and deliver a service wide Welsh language and culture project to young people celebrating where they live	Complete Same	We completed activity to develop and deliver a service wide Welsh language and culture project to young people celebrating where they live during the year, culminating in St David’s Day celebrations, Welsh cooking, music, and art sessions.
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events</i>	<i>Not started</i>	<i>Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.</i>
Project: Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project	At Risk	Funding has yet to be secured and therefore

Title	Status	Exception
	Same	funds are not in place to proceed as planned with the accommodation solution and the activity plan. A funding application is being developed.
Develop phase 1 Bodelwyddan Castle as a Country Park and a gateway to Denbighshire	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Develop and deliver the Denbighshire Heritage Service Forward Plan 2023 to 2026	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Develop and deliver the Ambassador Scheme in Denbighshire and across Wales in partnership	On Target Same	
Implement Welsh Government's new Cultural Strategy for Denbighshire Libraries	Not Started	Welsh Government's Cultural Strategy has not yet been published.
Develop Denbighshire County Council internal and external governance on emerging proposal from NRW for new National Park in North East Wales	On Target Same	
Seek the designation of the AONB as a Dark Sky Community	On Target Same	
Support and implement the National Music Service	On Target	
Plas Newydd, Llangollen: Enhance the visitor experience to include improvements to the grounds (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 1)	Not started	At business case stage
Horseshoe Falls (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At business case stage
Ruthin Clock Tower: Renovation of Clock Tower exterior (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At project brief stage
Ruthin Gaol/46 Clwyd Street, Ruthin: Premises restoration including new access and improved public facilities (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At business case stage

Title	Status	Exception
Nant Clwyd-y-Dre, Ruthin: Restoration to the Grade 1 listed building (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At business case stage
Cae Ddol, Ruthin: Public Realm Upgrade and connect to the heritage theme (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	Not started	At project brief stage

A round up of news

The following news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

[A new Walking book, 'The Edge of Cymru', exploring Wales was launched at Plas Newydd, Llangollen](#) in January. The event celebrated the publication of the book and highlighted the importance of raising the profile of Welsh authors, particularly those that explore our landscape, culture and language.

The council informed residents and visitors to the county that following two years of flood recovery work, [Ruthin Gaol will reopen](#) its cell doors to visitors from the April 1, 2023. The restorations include a host of exciting new additions for visitors to explore.

In March, the council held an [open day at the Roman Bath House in Prestatyn](#). People were invited to attend the open day to learn about the ancient site's history, to try Roman-inspired crafts, and learn more about some of the stonework renovations and enjoy historically accurate Roman re-enactment. Funded by Cadw and the AONB Sustainable Development Fund, the project aims to increase visitor numbers and secure the site for generations to come.

[Denbighshire Libraries Service](#) attended Performance Scrutiny Committee in March, to update the Committee on its performance in relation to the 6th Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2017-20. The Service also sought the Committee's observations on the progress made in developing libraries as places of individual and community well-being and resilience.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: At Risk

This chapter in previous reports was entitled “Corporate Health: The council is efficient, well-managed and environmentally sustainable”. Under our new Corporate Plan, the theme of Corporate Health continues, but as “A well-run, high performing council”.

As we explained in the Summary Position section in our [previous report](#), since November 2022, we have held discussions to determine the right strategic set of measures and activity to monitor through these performance reports in future. Many of the measures and some of the activities previously reported under Corporate Health are continuing, and we have updated progress in relation to those below. There is though, still some work to do before a final indicator set is reached that incorporates new indicators for projects or activities that have yet to commence.

Performance Framework: Measures Update

Measuring equal appointments is complex and looks at the protected characteristics for which we readily have data (based on what people have declared). The protected characteristics that we particularly look at here are Race, Disability, Sexuality and Gender Reassignment. Based on recently published data for 2021 to 2022, we see an increase in appointments from 4% to 21%. This compares to 19% when looking at those that do not have these characteristics and were appointed. On closer inspection of the data, more appointments were made to people stating they were gay or bi-sexual or had their gender reassigned than those who stated they were heterosexual/straight. People with a protected characteristic of 'race', disability or religion were less likely to be appointed than those without those protected characteristics (the percentage difference in appointments was 2% for 'race', 3% for disability and 11% for religion).

80.7% of the lowest paid jobs that the council offers were occupied by women during 2022 to 2023 (up from 79.3% on the previous year), which is considered a ‘Priority for Improvement’. Our measure of the mean hourly rate of pay for women showed that women were being paid more than men during both 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021, but the difference in pay swung back to favour men by 6.7% in 2021. Mean hourly rate of pay returned in the favour of women again during 2022 to 2023.

As at March 2023, sickness absence stood at 9.8 days, the same as for the last period, and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. As at March 2023, the percentage of staff who are eligible for one or three 121s and who have had at least one or three one-to-one meetings in the last 12 months stood at 61%, up from 53% in the last period. This is a rolling total. The percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) stood at 49% by the end of the year, and is a 'Priority for Improvement'. Given the challenges facing the council, this theme uses employee turnover as an indicator. More employees have left the council (including and excluding schools) over the last two years, peaking to 12.4% (excluding schools) and 11.7% (including schools) of the total workforce during 2022 to 2023.

We have received no formal recommendations for improvement from external regulators (Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and Audit Wales), and there have also been no low assurance reports in this period from internal audit. The joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) took place in Denbighshire in February 2023, involving Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn. A draft report has been received but we expect to be able to report on the outcomes of the Review in the next reporting period.

One corporate project is currently presenting as 'Compromised' (Dewi Sant Childcare project), with 96% of all projects being regularly updated by project managers, an improvement of 1% from our last report.

We currently have a total of 20 risks on the register, 11 of which are inconsistent with our risk appetite (55%). This is considered to be a 'Priority for Improvement'.

Just under half (49.5%) of all Corporate Plan measures were showing as a 'Priority for Improvement' during January to March, which is considered 'Acceptable'.

Our measure on budget variance (i.e. what we have and receive versus what we are spending) has decreased to £1.585million. The council's reserves have also decreased to £5.531million.

We have started to monitor the revenue outturn expenditure per head of population, which we benchmark nationally. Revenue outturn expenditure per head of population in Denbighshire stood at £2913.25 in 2021to 2022. We need to agree our methodology for determining what excellence looks like. On the basis of our default methodology, whereby

excellence is determined by calculating the median across Wales - which for 2021 to 2022 stood at £2,669.31 - our performance would be considered a Priority for Improvement, ranked second highest when compared to all local authorities in Wales. However, this is a single crude measure that could warrant being examined alongside council tax rates for example. It does though offer a lens into a debate about value for money, which is one of the pledges within this theme; a pledge that needs scoping further.

By the end of March, 35% of the council’s spend was with local suppliers and 66% of contracts (over £25k and under £1,000k) during the period contained community benefits. Two collaborative procurements were awarded during the period, and one collaborative procurement opportunities was missed. There were 15 potential collaborative procurements on the horizon, and these will be explored and developed in the coming months.

The percentage of negative news stories about the council (taken as a proportion of all news stories about the council) has increased from 12% in the previous period to 14% between January and March 2023. This represents 27 negative stories out of a total of 190 and is a ‘Priority for Improvement’. The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter has decreased from 53% to 42%. This represents 24 from 56 complaints upheld or partly upheld, and is considered ‘Good’.

Several of our stakeholder survey questions have seen some improvement this year but all of those relating to this theme remain a ‘Priority for Improvement’. Each question reflects the pledges within the new Corporate Plan and are an area of focus for the council. These questions will be asked every year for the remainder of this Corporate Plan, and we anticipate seeing improvements in the survey results as the Plan is delivered.

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

Annual or biennial measures

2019 to 2022 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
The percentage of new appointees from applications where it was disclosed that they are either from a racial or religious minority	15%	4%	21%

Title	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
group, have a disability, are gay or bi-sexual, or had their gender reassigned – Count Only			

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage difference in the mean hourly rate of pay for women – Benchmarked Locally	6.7% Acceptable	-13.4% Excellent Better
The percentage of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) that are women – Benchmarked Locally	79.3% Priority to Improve Better	80.7% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of attendance by elected members (expected and present), year to date - Benchmarked Locally	89%	84% Good Worse
The percentage of employees who leave Denbighshire as a percentage of the total workforce (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Nationally	10.6% Good Worse	12.4% Acceptable Worse
The percentage of employees who leave Denbighshire as a percentage of the total workforce (including schools) – Benchmarked Nationally	10.2% Priority to Improve Worse	11.7% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council is transparent, well-run, and high performing – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	40.69% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council works well with partners – Benchmarked Locally	62% Good	41.26% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is a good working relationship between political leaders and senior management – Benchmarked Locally	63% Good	29% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its performance well – Benchmarked Locally	28% Priority to Improve	42.53% Priority to Improve Better

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its risks and challenges well – Benchmarked Locally	30% Priority to Improve	41.47% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its finances well – Benchmarked Locally	26% Priority to Improve	37.41% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council has effective long-term plans in place – Benchmarked Locally	31% Priority to Improve	37.59% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats its workforce well – Benchmarked Locally	35% Priority to Improve	48.27% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council makes best use of its assets and resources – Benchmarked Locally	20% Priority to Improve	27.95% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council purchases its goods and services in a fair and efficient way – Benchmarked Locally	25% Priority to Improve	28.47% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council acts on the concerns of residents – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	38.62% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats all people fairly – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	42.39% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council's Corporate Plan and priorities reflect the needs of the local community - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	37.3% Priority to Improve
Revenue outturn expenditure per head of population (£s) - Count Only	2,913.25 Thresholds pending	Data pending. Available October 2023

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of Corporate Plan Measures showing as 'Priority for Improvement' – Benchmarked Locally	47% Acceptable Worse	51% Priority to Improve Worse	51% Priority to Improve Same	No data: does not apply	49.5% Acceptable Better
The number of projects on the project register showing as 'Compromised' – Benchmarked Locally	1 Good Better	1 Good Same	2 Acceptable Worse	1 Good Better	1 Good Same
The percentage of projects whose delivery confidence was updated in the last three months – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent Better	95% Good Worse	100% Excellent Better	95% Good Worse	96% Good Improved
The percentage of corporate risks inconsistent with the council's risk appetite statement – Benchmarked Locally	64% Priority to Improve Worse	No data: does not apply	55% Priority to Improve Better	No data: does not apply	55% Priority to Improve Same
The cumulative The number of negative reports from external regulators – Benchmarked Locally	0	0	0	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same
The cumulative The number of Internal Audit low assurance reports, financial year to date – Benchmarked Locally	4 Acceptable Worse	0	0	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
Corporate and Service Budget Variance (£k) – Count Only	-2,399	1,109	2,661	2,189	1,585
Council reserves (£k) – Count Only	7,135	7,135	7,135	7,135	5,531
Negative news stories as a percentage of all news stories about the council – Benchmarked Locally	9% Priority to Improve Worse	10% Priority to Improve Worse	11% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Worse	14% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter – Benchmarked Locally	60% Priority to Improve Worse	46% Good Better	67% Priority to Improve Worse	53% Acceptable Better	42% Good Better
The percentage of Members that have completed Code of Conduct training – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The rolling average The number of working days / shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence – Benchmarked Nationally	9.57 Priority to Improve Worse	10.18 Priority to Improve Worse	10 Priority to Improve Worse	9.8 Priority to Improve Better	9.8 Priority to Improve Same
The percentage of staff who are eligible for one or three one-to-ones and who have had at least one or three one-to-ones in the last 12 months (by person) – Benchmarked Locally	43% Priority to Improve Better	45% Priority to Improve Better	52% Priority to Improve Better	53% Priority to Improve Better	61% Priority to Improve Better

Title	Quarter 4 2021 to 2022	Quarter 1 2022 to 2023	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023
The percentage of staff for whom we have equality monitoring information – Benchmarked Locally	52% Good Worse	51.4% Good Worse	76% Excellent Better	72% Excellent Worse	71.5% Excellent Worse
The number of vacancies advertised during the quarter – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Locally	No data	No data	No data	No data	49% Priority to Improve Better
The number of career pathways – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of actual collaborative procurements – Count Only	1	5	2	1	2
The number of missed collaborative procurements – Count Only	1	0	0	0	1

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Projects Update

This theme includes several suggested activities that need to be scoped. Some are already in progress (such as delivering the action plans identified by staff in the five staff-led task and finish groups created by the Chief Executive). Two activities are 'On Target', seven are 'Experiencing Obstacles', and the remaining 13 are due to start between 2023 to 2024 (four of which are suggested and need to be scoped). Governance arrangements

for this theme are under discussion and we hope to report on an agreed way forward in our next report.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Prepare for Peer Review for Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Deliver action plans identified by the five staff-led task and finish groups	Not started	<i>This activity is being scoped</i>
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Develop and launch a new customer service framework (linked to our Welsh Language Strategy and Policy)	Not started	<i>This activity is being scoped</i>
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Procure a new corporate CRM (timescale 2025)	Not started	<i>This activity is being scoped</i>
Implement the Public Participation Strategy	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Develop a co-production strategy (DCC wide)	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Update the procurement strategy (to become a new project: Implement the new procurement strategy to deliver decarbonisation and the principles of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Develop and secure Asset Management Group adoption of new Asset Management Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Develop and deliver portfolio plans to determine the shape, size and future use of assets for each of the council's asset management portfolios	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Undertake an annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan 2022 to 2027	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Ensure value for money is embedded within our organisational culture, and that decisions	Not started	<i>This activity is being scoped</i>

Title	Status	Exception
<i>are balanced by considering service quality and social value.</i>		
Establish the Ethical Liaison Group	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Update the Members' Code of Conduct to include a timeframe within which Members are expected to have completed Code of Conduct training	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Develop a framework to guide councillors in handling harassment, abuse and intimidation	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Implement the new requirements of the UK Elections Act 2022 and other electoral reform	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Ensure that the Constitution is fit for purpose following the changes brought about by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Raise awareness of mental health issues across the council through delivery and embedding of the Time to Change action plan	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Promote and enable career pathways, where possible, to support workforce development and progression	Not started	Work to commence during 2023 to 2024.
Embed the new agile working policy and support any learning and development needs from it	On Target Same	
Improve the information we have about our workforce, including equality information, to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports	Experiencing Obstacles Same	
Deliver the Corporate Workforce Action Plan	On Target Same	
Deliver the action plan of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Operational group	Experiencing Obstacles Same	

Self-Assessment: Governance Areas

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

Corporate Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Embedding our new Corporate Plan, 2022 to 2027

Following the approval of our new Corporate Plan (denbighshire.gov.uk/corporateplan), the Strategic Planning and Performance Team have been working to align the council's reporting functions to the new Plan, which includes our governance arrangements and a revised Performance Management Framework that will support the nine themes. Our first Programme meeting for the new Corporate Plan was held with the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet on March 17 to agree our 'blueprint document' for delivery of the Plan. This report is the first to present performance against this new framework. A further session planned with our Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet on April 25 will agree governance arrangements for the nine themes in the Plan. We have also ensured that all Service Plans align to, and include content from the Corporate Plan to ensure reporting clarity.

Senior Leadership Team

Following the conclusion in January of the formal consultation on the proposed options for the new Senior Leadership Team restructure, agreement around the final structure was circulated in February, with implementation effective from April 1, 2023. In brief, new service groupings have been created beneath two Corporate Support Services covering 'People' (which includes the former Legal, HR and Democratic Services, Corporate Health and Safety, Communications and Marketing, and Customer services) and 'Performance, Digital and Assets' (which includes most aspects of the old Business Improvement and Modernisation service, but with the addition of Property Services). A new Housing and Communities Service will also include Community Development, Archives, and Housing Development and Maintenance. Community Support Services will also change its name to

become the Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service. Finally, Internal Audit will move to make up the new Finance and Audit Service. We are currently carrying four vacant head of service posts within the structure, being covered by interim arrangements with managers acting up. These posts will be recruited in two batches, starting with the heads of Adult Social Care and Homelessness, and Highways and Environmental Services being advertised in April; followed by the Corporate Support Service posts hopefully in May. For more information on the new structure, [visit our website](#).

Councillor Meetings

A survey of councillors opened in December to determine whether meetings held during the day is a detriment to working members where employers are reticent to release staff to attend meetings. The results were shared with [Council in January](#). 34 responses were received (72% of the membership) and concluded that the majority of members preferred morning meetings, did not want to see the timings of meetings rotated, and that evening meetings would be the most difficult to attend. Members duly approved and confirmed existing arrangements for the timing of Council, committee and other member meetings.

Agree and implement a whole council approach to New Ways of Working

A briefing note was circulated in November (covered in our previous report) that outlined the position with regard to staff and office / home working. This position remains unchanged. However, following the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team, responsibility for the New Ways of Working project has now moved to the Corporate Director for Governance and Business. It is anticipated that the next phase of the project will look at the council's office estate, i.e. what it needs and where.

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

One outstanding requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act concerns arrangements for a peer 'Panel Assessment' of council functions, to take place once within the electoral term. The position remains unchanged since our last report, where we are waiting on the Welsh Local Government Association to provide us with detail on their national Peer Assessment offer, including costs. We had anticipated this detail by the spring of 2023, with the first panel assessments of local authorities taking place in the autumn of 2023 at the earliest. However, there are ongoing delays and we will seek clarity.

Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)

Twelve projects for Year 1 of the Shared Prosperity Fund were approved by Cabinet in January, but we are still waiting for permission to issue grant agreements and claim forms to projects to draw down the funding. The window for Year 2 and 3 applications was opened between January 31 and February 24, and in Denbighshire we received 110 applications: 70 for regional projects, with the remaining 40 being direct delivery in Denbighshire only. Following receipt and appraisal of the applications, including consultation with the wider Denbighshire SPF Partnership, the Senior Leadership Team and Member Area Group Chairs, 60 projects were discussed at a Partnership meeting on March 21, with 29 being shortlisted, and 3 placed in reserve.

We have now also received the first draft of the regional agreements that outline arrangements and next steps after the approval of applications at Stage 1. Discussion has also taken place with the regional team about how we collectively provide feedback on regional applications. Meanwhile, Finance has gathered evidence for our first claim for Administration fees, claimed retrospectively to January 2023.

In February, Cabinet agreed to commission Cadwyn Clwyd and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council to deliver Key Funds in the area of Business Support and Community Capacity Building. Officers and Heads of Service are working with Legal, Finance and regional colleagues to confirm who will be the Project Lead for these Key Funds. We are also in the process of seeking additional information from the Regional Team about the requirements needed to request advanced payments for projects.

Financial Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Finance Update Reports

In January, Cabinet considered a [finance report](#) detailing the latest financial position and progress against the agreed budget strategy. Plans to spend a capital grant to implement a homelessness leasing scheme were approved. Cabinet received a further [finance report at February's meeting](#) and members approved the commissioning form to tender for all classes of insurance services (except for marine and terrorism) for the authority. Also approved was the writing-off of unrecoverable Business Rates. The latest [finance report](#)

for the period was presented to Cabinet in March. Approval was given for the match-funding requirement for the Clwyd West Levelling Up Grant programme and the 'Four Great Highways' project as part of the Clwyd South Levelling Up Grant programme.

The net revenue budget for 2022 to 2023 is £233.696million (up from 216.818m in 2021 to 2022). The position on service and corporate budgets is a forecast overspend of £1.585million. The 2022 to 2023 budget required service savings and efficiencies of £0.754million to be identified and these are assumed to have been achieved. At the end of February, the council's borrowing totalled £273.035million at an average rate of 4.08%. Investment balances were £36.2m at an average rate of 3.44%.

With regards to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the latest revenue position assumes a decrease in balances at year end of £578k compared to £4k at the time the budget was approved. The decrease relates to a reduction in estimated rental income. HRA balances are therefore forecast to be £1.479million at the end of the year. The HRA Capital budget of £23million is largely allocated between planned improvements to existing housing stock (£12million) and new build developments and acquisitions (£11million).

The reports also give a summary of the council's Capital Plan. The approved Capital Plan for 2022 to 2023 is £51.1million with expenditure to date of £30.3million. The Capital Plan contingency was increased by £1.676million to £2.176million (up from the £0.500million agreed in February 2022) due to carrying forward the unhypothecated element of a capital grant received from Welsh Government in March. After allocations to the Waste Project and the Levelling Up Scheme, the contingency level at £764k will help mitigate the risks to the overall programme of the impact of inflation on capital costs.

The budget for Education and Children's Services remains an area of concern as the current forecast overspend is £3.437million (previously £2.999million). Most of the pressure relates to children's placements, which have either commenced this financial year, or are now projected to continue longer than previously predicted. The Education service overspend (£182k) relates to Out-of-County income budget pressure of £704k due to a reduction in the number of pupils from other councils attending council facilities, offset by grant maximisation and efficiencies across the service. The Community Support Service budget remains a high-risk area, with the current outturn prediction being £2.318million (previously £2.369million) due to an overall pressure of £4.8million, in high cost placements and homelessness service, netted off by fully utilising a cash reserve of £2.4million.

Statement of Accounts

The council has a statutory duty to produce a statement of accounts that complies with approved accounting standards. In March, the Governance and Audit Committee were updated on the progress of the [Statement of Accounts for 2021 to 2022](#). A technical issue affecting all Welsh local authorities was resolved in December, however, two more specific issues concerning Denbighshire County Council's council house asset values have resulted in further delays to work being completed in order for Audit Wales to approve the accounts. As it is also important to address the backlog in preparations with the closedown process for the 2022 to 2023 Statement of Accounts, an audited final set of accounts for 2021 to 2022 is unlikely to be taken for approval until September 2023.

Annual Treasury Management

In January, the Governance and Audit Committee received an update on the council's [Treasury Management](#) activity during 2022 to 2023. The Committee also reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2023 to 2024 showing how the council would manage its investments and borrowing, including Prudential Indicators which set limits on the council's Treasury Management activity. Meeting in February, Council members approved the [Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023 to 2024 and Prudential Indicators](#) for financial years between 2023 and 2026. The council is required to invest its treasury funds prudently, striking an appropriate balance between risk and return and the TMSS outlines the council's approach in this regard.

Budget Process Update

At its meeting in January, the Governance and Audit Committee received a [budget process update](#) from the Head of Finance. Members were assured that the process had involved extensive consultation, including a Council Briefing held earlier in January, which had been supportive of the budget proposals. The [budget for 2023 to 2024](#) had also been discussed and approved by Cabinet. The [final proposals for the budget 2023 to 2024](#) were then approved by Council at its meeting in late January.

The budget report set out the implications of the draft Local Government Settlement for 2023 to 2024, which had resulted in a positive settlement of 8.2% (compared to the Welsh average of 7.9%). The settlement included all pay increases for teaching and non-teaching posts and responsibility to pay social care staff the Real Living Wage. As the settlement generated £14.231million, and pressures amounting to £25.116million were calculated, a

funding gap of £10.885million was identified. Proposals for balancing the budget were outlined in the Medium Term Financial Plan, including the recommended Council Tax rise of 3.8%, which was at the lower end of indicative increases across Wales.

Due to the very late date for the Final Settlement, it was recommended and agreed that Cabinet and Council delegate authority to the Head of Finance and Property in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance to adjust the use of cash included in the budget proposals by up to £500k. The draft settlement included a slightly increased indicative average settlement of 3.0% for the financial year 2024 to 2025. Although this increase was welcomed it does indicate that difficult decisions will be required over the coming years.

As part of the budget proposals for 2023 to 2024, members of the Council agreed in January the adoption of the [All Wales Council Tax Reduction Schemes](#) and Prescribed Requirements (Wales) Regulations 2013 and the All Wales Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements and Default Scheme) (Wales) Amendment Regulations 2023. The nationally defined scheme aims to provide consistent levels of support to vulnerable people. Members also approved the discretionary elements of the scheme detailed in the report.

At its meeting in February, Council was required to pass further resolutions relating to setting the levels of [Council Tax for 2023 to 2024](#) to ensure the legal validity of the process. The detail of recommended amounts calculated can be found in the appendix of the report. These are in line with the requirements of the regulations and were approved by full Council.

Other developments in the last period

Recommendations of the Budget Board

Following the cessation of the Strategic Investment Group, a new capital approval process has been in development. In the interim, the Budget Board – Capital met to consider bids prepared by each service. In February Cabinet gave support for projects identified for inclusion in the 2023 to 2024 Capital Plan as per the [recommendations of the Budget Board](#). Members were advised that the total funding available for 2023 to 2024 block allocations for on-going programmes of work was £13,368,000. The list of projects included Highways works which would require £4m prudential borrowing to maintain the level of spend. It was noted that a rise in costs would be difficult to support due to the

reduction in the Welsh Government's Capital Budget and as a result, the council would need to resort to funding through capital reserves for those areas viewed as priorities. Meeting in February, Council approved the [recommendations of the Budget Board and Capital Plan](#) for financial years between 2023 and 2026.

Performance Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Implement annual process for stakeholder engagement on council performance.

Our annual Stakeholder Survey was launched on November 7 and closed on March 19. It was promoted through our Libraries and receptions, with paper copies available at those locations, as well as through social media campaigns. We received 630 responses, which is an increase on the previous year. The results have been included within the data in this report, which includes of course for the first time new questions around our new Corporate Plan themes. Existing questions that we asked last time around our seven governance areas have also been updated and included within this report. We will hold a lessons learned meeting in the coming months before the launch of the survey again for 2023 to 2024.

Address Staff Capacity within Internal Audit

Two Career Pathway Auditors commenced in their roles during this period, and recruitment into the vacant Principal Auditor role, which is being advertised for a third time, will commence in April 2023.

Self-Assessment of Performance

During this last period, and continuing our ongoing process for Self-Assessment of performance against our functions, the council produced its third in-year performance update report covering September to December. This was circulated to the Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and Scrutiny for their information, and is now available to view on the [performance page of our website](#). This January to March update report is the fourth and final report in the set, which, combined with our Executive Summary, makes up our Self-Assessment for 2022 to 2023.

Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: Performance Management Framework

As described earlier in this report, considerable work has been carried out by the Strategic Planning and Performance Team to develop the Performance Management Framework for the new Corporate Plan. We have worked closely with Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet leads, and officers from every level of the council to bring forward a comprehensive set of measures and actions in response to our Corporate Plan themes and pledges, which are presented in this report for the first time. We have sought to challenge services around their ambition for performance and actively include national measures, where appropriate, to allow for good benchmarking and comparisons to be drawn. Service Plans have also been aligned to the new framework to allow for clarity of reporting, the whole now being built into our Performance Management System, Verto. There will be aspects still in need of development and some gaps to fill, but the foundation is now in place to be taken forward through our routine reports to managers and committees. It would be timely now that this framework and, shortly, new governance arrangements for the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 are in place for the Strategic Planning and Performance Team to update its [Performance Management Guide](#). This work will be taken forward in the summer.

Other developments in the last period

Service Performance Challenge

Following agreement from the Senior Leadership Team in January and Cabinet Briefing in February, arrangements have been put in place for our internal Service Performance Challenge programme to commence from May. The challenges are an important aspect of the council's Performance Management arrangements, allowing senior managers, Cabinet, scrutiny members and our regulators to 'deep-dive' into the performance of a particular service area, and to freely discuss and seek solutions to key issues or risks. The Service will prepare a short SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis that will form the basis of the discussion, alongside performance data on their Service Business Plan and Service Risk Register.

Performance Report: Cefndy

At its [meeting in January](#), Performance Scrutiny received a performance report on Cefndy, which is a site that provides important employment opportunities for local disabled people who would otherwise struggle to find employment. Cefndy manufactures various living aids

and has been in existence for approximately 40 years, with many staff having worked there for many years, the average length of service being 17 years. It was noted that disruption and cost volatility to global supply chains in recent years had increased Cefndy's competitiveness against imports and impacted positively on sales with old and new customers. However, there have also been some unforeseen budget pressures too during the current financial year, including additional energy costs, higher than expected salary increases, and emergency building repairs. Work has taken place over the previous 18 to 24 months to stabilise the service. The committee requested a further information report following the close of the current financial year (2022 to 2023) to give an update on Cefndy's performance, and to receive their annual performance report for 2023 to 2024 in the summer of 2024.

Christ the Word Catholic School

Following the [Estyn report](#) that placed Christ the Word Catholic School in special measures last summer, at its [meeting in January](#), Performance Scrutiny received an update on all the steps undertaken by the council's Education Service, the School's Governing Body, Diocese and GwE to date, including the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP), and joint Local Education Authority (LEA) and GwE Support Plan for the school. These measures included the appointment of additional governors for the School's Governing Body; the appointment of an interim school leadership team; and the provision of additional support to help move the school forward. All of these actions and the measures outlined in the PIAP had been accepted by Estyn and the delivery of the PIAP and LEA/GwE action plans were now subjected to regular challenge and monitoring. Following an in-depth discussion, members supported all parties' efforts to address Estyn's recommendations, and requested that an update report be presented to the committee in September 2023.

Risk Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Corporate Risk Register

We currently have a total of 20 risks on the register, 11 of which are inconsistent with our risk appetite (55%). We have updated our presentation of the register, which now incorporates risk colour and trend. Whilst risk scores had not changed, the risks we are

facing, in some cases, remain severe and serious. The February 2023 review of the corporate risk register will be presented to Performance Scrutiny in April 2023. The next planned review of our corporate risk register will commence from September 2023.

Risk Appetite Statement

In November, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) received an update on the application of risk management methodology. Members were in agreement to endorse the proposal to amend the Corporate Risk Appetite Statement. The council's [risk appetite statement](#) was reviewed and adjusted in November 2022. The council's minimalist risk appetite in relation to Workforce: Terms and Conditions has been relaxed very slightly to a cautious risk appetite, to reflect the way we are 'flexing' recruitment processes – in a safe way – to alleviate challenges in filling roles. All other aspects of our risk appetite statement have remained the same.

Information Risk Policy

The council has drafted a revised Information Risk Policy, which it will shortly seek approval for. The requirement for services to consider Information Risk as part of their Service Planning for 2023 to 2024 was also included within our 'Service Planning Prompts', which are always shared with Heads of Service and managers when developing new service plans. Services are also encouraged to continually review their Service Risk Registers, which should capture any information risks that services are carrying.

Workforce Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Staff Training, Development and Mental-Health

A review of our current flexible working policy and guidance is complete and approval has been obtained from the Local Joint Consultative Committee. The policy needs to be presented to Cabinet for approval. If approved, it will be implemented from June 2023 together with a communications plan, induction materials and sessions to support staff and managers with the new ways of working.

HR has appointed a lead Learning and Development Specialist to oversee and deliver the mental health action plan. They will work alongside Mental Health Champions, once they

are in place, to ensure support for mental health and well-being is embedded across the council. The action plan has two outstanding actions (a survey and to establish Champions).

Improve the information we have about our workforce

This action includes equality information to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports. By the end of March, we had equality information for 71.5% of staff. Due to continual changes in staff the equality information we have about our workforce tends to vary. However, performance has improved greatly since June 2022, at which point we had information for 51.4% of staff.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning actions remain underway to progress the findings of the corporate and service-level workforce planning reviews. There continues to be a significant focus on recruitment, especially in social care and health roles. An annual update will be presented in April 2023. A fresh workforce planning process will commence once the new senior leadership structure is in place later in the year.

We are working to develop our Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh Language Policy, both of which will impact upon workforce development and service delivery to support and raise the profile of the use of Welsh within the council and in the wider community. The policy has been approved by the Senior Leadership Team and the Welsh Language Steering Committee. Both the Strategy and the Policy were both expected to be approved with delivery starting from April 2023, but full approval will be sought from Cabinet in June 2023.

A detailed report about recruitment, retention and workforce planning across the council was presented to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in January 2023. This report was stimulated by earlier reports received by Governance and Audit Committee in [November 2022](#), about the September 2022 risk review and an information report about recruitment and retention issues in Social Services. The Committee said it was reassured officers were aware of, and responding adequately to, challenges in relation to recruitment and retention and Members were reminded of a planned Internal Audit review that would take place in the new financial year (2023 to 2034).

Social Care Workers

In January, the council launched a campaign to attract people to a career in Social Care, in roles varying from health and social care to catering. Recruiting more staff into social care is critical for effective services to vulnerable people and is part of wider efforts to reduce risks associated recruitment and retention in social care in Denbighshire and nationally. The council is committed to working with prospective employees to remove any barriers to work, and is promoting the job security, staff benefits - such as competitive rates of pay, an excellent pension scheme, travel allowance, and generous annual leave entitlement, together with flexible working hours and contracts – to attract new staff into these critical roles.

Service Challenge Action: DBS Compliance

Safer recruitment remains a high priority for the council. The additional resource in the team addressed the backlog of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) renewals. That resource is no longer in place and has been replaced with a business-as-usual approach. Weekly monitoring by Human Resource Assistants continues and additional reports have been created to assist with performance monitoring. This has resulted in an increase in compliance to 92%, up from 90% on the previous period. The remaining 8% are in progress and the reasons for their outstanding status are due to staff needing to action a task or are awaiting the DBS process to be concluded and the certificate produced.

A more formal monitoring process is being prepared and we are actively reminding recruiting managers of their responsibilities with regards to safer recruitment; to ensure that new staff have all the appropriate checks in place before they start. Communications to new employees and managers has been revised setting out the safer recruitment checks that need to be completed. We expect this action to be complete within the next period.

Assets

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Asset Management strategy

Progress in this area has continued to be affected by a lack of capacity within the team. An additional staff member has been appointed and we expect that person to be in post by June 2023. Once the new asset management strategy is in place, we will develop and deliver portfolio plans to determine the shape, size and future use of assets for each of the council's asset management portfolios.

Service Challenge Action: Remote Meeting Hubs

The aim of this action was to support remote meetings in areas where broadband connection is poor. Whilst we have delivered broadband infrastructure to community sites to enable the creation of hubs, finance and resources are not available to progress this action further at the present time.

Supporting Businesses and Partners to Adapt

As is outlined [below](#) in more detail, a key area of work for the year ahead, working across the council, will be to implement the new procurement strategy, which once approved, will set out our approach to delivering decarbonisation, the principles of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill and the requirements of new UK Government procurement legislation. This will involve working across the council to support Denbighshire's local supply chain. The new decarbonisation procurement specialist role will be instrumental in coordinating this support. There is an opportunity in the interim to use the material produced by Welsh Local Government Association for businesses as part of the Decarbonisation Procurement Toolkit. We will need to ensure there is clarity first though, to ensure roll out of the toolkit is effective. A particular priority for the year will be to work with suppliers on the Design and Print Framework to ready them for carbon reporting from April 2024.

Procurement

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance.

Decarbonisation Procurement Expertise

The Procurement Team has secured agreement to recruit jointly, with Flintshire County Council, a new decarbonisation specialist within the team to progress decarbonisation in

our procurements and supply chain. The post of Procurement Business Partner – Decarbonisation is being advertised again with an application deadline of May 2023.

Biodiversity Protection and Decarbonisation in Procurement

There continued to be capacity issues and these are still affecting the pace of progress in relation to actions in this area. However, positively, a Collaborative Procurement and North Wales Construction Framework Manager has now been appointed and has been in post since March 2023. The postholder was formerly the Community Benefits Hub Manager.

A key area of work for the year ahead, working across the council, will be to start delivering procurement and community benefit activities within our new Corporate Plan; primarily to implement the new procurement strategy, which once approved, will set out our approach to delivering decarbonisation, the principles of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill and the requirements of new UK Government procurement legislation. This will involve working across the council to support Denbighshire's local supply chain.

The Welsh Local Government Association has produced and launched a Decarbonisation Procurement Toolkit, which includes carbon-related questions by sector and level of spend. The new carbonisation procurement specialist will be leading on this work. We have yet to fully start supporting businesses and suppliers in Denbighshire to encourage lower carbon practice, and again this will be a key focus for the new procurement specialist.

Reduction in miles travelled on contract delivery continues to prove challenging to measure and report. The Community Benefits Hub plans to review the approach to measurement considering the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill.

Contract Procedure Rules

Contract Procedure Rules will be updated to reflect new UK Public Procurement legislation due in 2023 to 2024. We will continue to report on progress through this report in the meantime.

Improvement Actions

Below is a new improvement action that has been identified through this report:

- Update the [Performance Management Guide](#) to reflect the new Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework and governance arrangements.