

Cumulative Impact Assessment for 2024 to 2025 Budget Proposals, as at January 2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This document provides a cumulative view of impact of major budget saving proposals currently being progressed as of January 2024 on Denbighshire's people and places. It is based on the evidence provided by officers within the relevant Service areas through the Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) tool, outlines the key findings of the cumulative impact assessment and makes recommendations for the next steps. It is intended that this cumulative assessment work is updated as existing WIAs are revised, and as new budget saving proposals are developed.

2. Approach

2.1 Major budget saving proposals that have an impact on Denbighshire's people and places have completed the Council's Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) tool as part of their consideration and development and to aid decision making by Cabinet and the Corporate Executive Team (CET). WIA is an important and useful tool in identifying impacts, ensuring exposure of opportunities and consequence and a way of exploring mitigation action and controls. Eight savings proposals have been included within this cumulative assessment as of January 2023 and include:

- Review of Libraries Provision
- Car Parking fees
- Reduction to capital investment in highways
- Social Care Packages and Homelessness prevention
- Public Conveniences
- Asset Strategy
- School Budgets
- Increase in Council Tax

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2.2 Consideration of budget savings for the 2024 to 2025 budget will be a continuous process rather than a single event. This cumulative assessment will be revisited and updated along this continuous process as additional future saving proposals are put forward for consideration that have an impact on Denbighshire's people and places and a WIA is completed.

2.3 The cumulative assessment work has been undertaken by officers within the Council's Strategic Planning Team. The framework for assessing and analysing the cumulative impacts of savings proposals to date is based on the evidence provided by officers through the Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) tool, and takes into account important legislation:

- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and The Equality Act (Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty) (Wales) Regulations 2021
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

2.4 A core pillar of the approach is about balancing the needs of the present with the needs of future generations. This framework considers the sustainable development principle and considers risks for the future.

2.5 Evidence within the saving proposals WIAs has been reviewed and summarised. In some cases, existing WIAs have been challenged by officers within the Council's Strategic Planning Team where it is felt there is some possible optimism (and in some cases pessimism) bias. In these cases, overall impacts have been amended (e.g., from positive to neutral or negative to neutral) and indicated where impacts are probable or possible, pending additional evidence.

2.6 Taking the eight budget saving proposals together and analysing the distribution of their impact, conclusions have been drawn about those impacts and whether certain

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people, groups or places are affected differentially or disproportionately negatively impacted. Where a negative impact has been identified, an analysis of the ‘impact severity’ has been provided based on Public Health Wales methodology. This is to provide members and officers with an understanding as to the extent or degree to which a negatively identified impact may affect people or places (minimal, moderate, or major).

2.7 It should be noted that savings proposals are at different stages. Some are further developed and have a more comprehensive Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) – e.g., parking charges. The majority are new and are still in development. Those WIAs tend to be in the form of a light-touch screening of impacts, with some gaps and a lack of supporting evidence.

3. Summary of findings: cumulative impact for people and places in Denbighshire

3.1 The table below provides a summary of the analysis of cumulative impact of the eight proposals taken together and provides a conclusion on nature of the impact (positive, negative, or neutral) and, where the impact is negative, the possible severity.

Locality Impact	Cumulative impact of the seven proposals	Possible severity* where negative (minimal, moderate, or major)
Rhyl	Negative (probable)	Moderate
Prestatyn	Negative (probable)	Moderate
Elwy	Negative (probable)	Moderate
Denbigh	Negative (probable)	Moderate
Ruthin	Negative (probable)	Moderate
Dee Valley	Negative (probable)	Moderate
Well-being Goals		
Prosperous Wales	Neutral	-
Resilient Wales	Positive (probable)	-
Healthier Wales	Negative (probable)	Minimal
More Equal Wales	Negative (probable)	Moderate <i>(Taken with impacts in areas with socio-economic deprivation the severity could be at least moderate).</i>

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Locality Impact	Cumulative impact of the seven proposals	Possible severity* where negative (minimal, moderate, or major)
A Wales of Cohesive Communities	Negative (possible)	Minimal
A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language	Negative (possible)	Unknown <i>(Following inclusion of the Schools Budget proposal into this cumulative assessment, the overall impact is considered to be Negative (possible). Subject to how the savings proposals are achieved. There could be some reduction in support for cultural and Welsh-medium extra-curricular activities).</i>
A Globally Responsible Wales	Neutral	-
Sustainable Development		
Long Term e.g., impact and opportunities for recovery	Negative (probable)	Unknown <i>(Impacts could be felt over the longer-term, and service standards could be difficult to recover).</i>
Prevention e.g., likely impact on public service partners (and impact on demand for services)	Negative (probable and possible)	Minimal to moderate
Integration e.g., of sustainable development into all aspects of operation	Unknown <i>(Some proposals need to consider their impact on wider organisational objectives).</i>	-
Collaboration e.g., between departments, organisations, and sectors	Unknown <i>(Some proposals have not considered their impact on other partners.)</i>	Unknown <i>(Subject to how the savings proposals are achieved. There could be some impact on opportunities for collaboration).</i>
Involvement e.g., extent to which community can be involved and shape the proposal	Negative (probable)	Moderate.

*Possible severity is based on Public Health Wales Methodology and descriptions as follows:

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- *Major: Significant in intensity, quality, or extent. Significant or important enough to be worthy of attention, noteworthy.*
- *Moderate: Average in intensity, quality, or degree.*
- *Minimal: Of a minimum amount, quantity, or degree, negligible.*

3.2 Overall, there is a negative impact for all areas in the County. It is likely to be most acutely felt in areas with existing socio-economic disadvantage, and areas where it is more likely that people with protected characteristics live (which, the [evidence](#) suggests, tends to be areas of disadvantage). Pre-existing well-being inequality could be exacerbated for people (including children, young people and families) due to reduced capacity within schools or changes to public conveniences for example, which is likely to affect most negatively vulnerable or disadvantaged people. However, subject to mitigations the reduced service could have impacts that amount to some short-term disruption.

3.3 The severity of negative impacts for people in areas of socio-economic disadvantage / possessing one more protected characteristic is unknown and largely depends on how proposals can reduce negative impacts or design them out entirely, either by changing our proposals and / or by working alongside our partners.

3.4 The proposals offer some potentially positive long-term gains for sustainable development, e.g., by reducing our carbon emissions. However, the need to deliver savings quickly means that proposals are unlikely to be perfect in terms of whether they can safeguard the well-being of future generations; whether the proposals have been developed and informed by those affected by them; and in terms of how a proposal from one service could deliver budget savings in one area but increase costs or demands in another. It was observed that there is little scope for communities to have their say on savings proposals currently. It is likely that over the long-term, the proposals may result in poorer performance and standards. The ability to improve and recover is unknown at this time and depends on the extent to which services could be readily built back up again should financial recovery and

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investment into public services occur sooner or to a greater extent than might be expected.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 All WIAs, but less developed ones in particular, will need to be revisited and updated as proposals develop. As proposals develop, mitigating controls should be identified through the WIA process to help minimise the severity of impact.
- 4.2 All existing and new WIAs should be undertaken as a group. Officers should seek advice from the Strategic Planning Team where there is uncertainty as to who to involve, or where facilitation may be required. Officers should engage, where that is possible, with groups likely to be affected.
- 4.3 Going forward, in line with budget savings being considered as continuing process rather than a single event, impact assessment will also need to be a continual process. All major budget saving proposals which have an impact on Denbighshire's people and places must continue to complete the Council's Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) tool as part of their consideration and development. Impacts should be identified as confirmed, probable or possible. The Strategic Planning Team should continue to appraise and update the cumulative impact assessment to support CET and Cabinet in keeping a watchful eye on overall impacts arising from the whole set of budget proposals.
- 4.4 The council should share its assessment work with the Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) and the North East Wales Community Cohesion Team to look at ways in which we can support each other and mitigate any unintended disproportionately negative impacts. A meeting to do so with representatives has already been arranged for January 22.