sir ddinbych Cyngor
denbighshire County Council

Improving services for our communities

A guide to performance management

This booklet is to help you understand how the council plans its work. It is a tool for anyone who works in the council, as well as a guide for those who receive our services.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

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For more information on anything in this booklet

Please feel free to contact the Strategic Planning and Performance Team. We would be happy to provide any additional guidance and materials to help you.

Email: strategicplanningteam@denbighshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01824 70 6291 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm). Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg - We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

Write to us: Strategic Planning and Performance Team, Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, Ruthin, LL15 9AZ.

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Introduction

This booklet is our guide to the council's Performance Management Framework. In essence it is the structure that supports the planning of our work. There are some common things that it is useful to know, and these are outlined in the first few pages of this document. These include:

- [Why is performance important?](#)

- [Where does the data go, and how do we report it?](#)

- [How do we challenge our services to improve?](#)

- [What do red, orange, yellow and green mean for performance?](#)

- [What is the Well-being of Future Generations Act?](#)

- [What is the Local Government and Elections Act?](#)

It's also recommended that you take a look at the section titled '[Something for everyone](#).' After this there is a chapter for every role; but don't feel restricted by that, it is sometimes interesting to know what other people are doing too, whether you are:

- **A member of the public**
- **An elected member**
  - A Cabinet Member
  - A Scrutiny Member
  - A Governance and Audit Member
- **A member of staff**
  - The Chief Executive or a Corporate Director
  - A Head of Service
  - A Manager
  - A Performance Officer within a service
  - A Strategic Planning and Performance Officer

At the end, there is a [Glossary](#) of terms you may find useful when using this booklet.

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Why is performance important?

We are always being told that performance management is important. But emphasis has tended to be on having strong monitoring systems, which have often led to complicated processes and large reports. This puts people off, and although good performance management systems are important, they do not need to be a burden.

What's more important than the systems in place is the energy that goes into them. Strong engagement throughout – the active and ongoing involvement and participation of users in development and production – is key to good performance management. If this is done well, then monitoring and reporting can be kept simple, and allow for greater focus on improving services for our customers.

The chapters in this guide show the variety of roles that are involved in performance management. With this many people there needs to be openness, trust and understanding. This places a focus on the council as a learning organisation. We must be clear about our performance expectations and continuously encourage positive challenge to facilitate and support the development of staff and services. In this way, we can ensure that the organisation itself also learns.

Where does the data go, and how do we report it?

There are a number of key documents that guide the delivery of our services in Denbighshire. They are all connected.

Our work is given direction by the Public Services Board (PSB). The PSB is responsible under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to bring together a Well-being Plan for the region (responding to the Welsh Government's Well-being Goals). This is agreed by all partners on the Board and comes from extensive analysis of need and stakeholder engagement.

Public bodies on the PSB, which includes Denbighshire County Council, then need to consider how they will work towards the Well-being Plan. We call this our Corporate Plan. As well as including our contribution to the Well-being Plan, it will also cover other important areas of work for the council. In Denbighshire, our Corporate Plan also

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incorporates our Strategic Equality Objectives. Again, this is developed after extensive analysis of need and stakeholder engagement.

The Corporate Plan is agreed by the County Council and is monitored through regular performance update reports (at least six-monthly) to Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Our end of year report is presented to County Council and the Governance and Audit Committee following each financial year. Governance arrangements are in place for the Corporate Plan to assess our progress and the risks that we face in delivery. Cabinet Lead Members work with the Corporate Executive Team to oversee these arrangements. Programme boards may be put in place where necessary. Further information on governance arrangements can be found on our Corporate Plan [webpage](#).

Service plans for every service in the council sit beneath the Corporate Plan. These ensure that services are working towards the well-being objectives and priorities that have been agreed by the Council and the PSB. Service plans should be developed with the involvement of staff and elected members to ensure that there is commitment and ownership. They are approved by the responsible Cabinet Member and monitored quarterly by service managers and the Strategic Planning and Performance Team. Service area performance will also be thoroughly scrutinised once a year as part of the [Service Performance Challenge Programme](#).

Larger services may also have a level of operational plans for individual teams, but there should always be a link between staff objectives and the Service Plan to enable teams and individuals working for the council to be clear in their understanding of what they do to contribute to the Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan.

In Denbighshire we use a cloud storage system called [Verto](#) to help us manage our performance and project information.

Officers in services help to collect and input data, risk and project information into Verto for service plans. This information only needs to be submitted once and automatically feeds into the Corporate Plan, Well-being Plan, Corporate Risk Register, and Corporate Project Register. This keeps our reporting simple and avoids any duplication. Services have one month after the end of the quarter to submit this.

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The following is an outline of the reporting timetable. This may alter depending on the committee timetable.

Month	Financial Planning	Service Planning	Political
April	Not applicable	Service Plans start Services update plans and risks for Quarter 4	Corporate Risk Review to be presented to Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny, and shared with Governance and Audit for information
May	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
June	Not applicable	Corporate Risk Register reviewed	Quarter 3 and 4 Performance Update Report (Self-Assessment) tabled at Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny, and Governance and Audit
July	Not applicable	Services update plans and risks for Quarter 1	Corporate Risk Review shared with Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and Governance and Audit for information Quarter 3 and 4 Performance Update Report (Self-Assessment) tabled at Council for final sign-off
August	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
September	Not applicable		Not applicable
October	Not applicable	Services update plans and risks for Quarter 2 Corporate Risk Register reviewed	Not applicable
November	Not applicable	Not applicable	Corporate Risk Review to be presented to Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny, and Governance and Audit QPR1 and 2 (Self-Assessment) presented to Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny

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December	Draft Financial Settlement issued by Welsh Government	Corporate Risk Register reviewed	Not applicable
January	Not applicable	Service planning begins Services update plans and risks for Quarter 3	Corporate Risk Review shared with Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and Governance and Audit for information
February	Final Financial Settlement issued by Welsh Government Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan agreed	Budget finalised	Council agrees budget
March	Not applicable	Service plans finalised Corporate Risk Register reviewed	Not applicable

Please note: The collection, submission and validation of Statutory Returns is ongoing throughout the year. The times depend on the Service area.

The aim of this whole process is to ensure that we are delivering what we said we would, and that we are doing it in a way that means better value services for our customers.

For this reason, we are open and transparent in everything that we do. Our strategic plans and reports can be accessed online through the council's performance webpage, and are available from our libraries and receptions on request.

How do we challenge our services to improve?

The Service Performance Challenge Programme allows for every service in the council to be scrutinised once each financial year. It provides an opportunity for an open and honest two-way dialogue between the Head of Service and an appointed panel about the strengths and weaknesses of a service's delivery, hopefully also providing constructive resolution to any key issues. The panel consists of Cabinet Lead Members, senior managers, regulators, and representation from scrutiny and political groups. The Head of Service, supported by performance officers and the Strategic Planning Team, is required to supply supporting documentation at least two weeks in advance of the meeting. This includes the Service Performance Challenge Actions from the previous Challenge; a self-

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assessment outlining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT); the Service Plan Report and Service Risk Register (taken from Verto).

The Challenges also feed into the council's self-assessment process and help us to identify key improvement activity, as required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. For more information, please contact the Strategic Planning Team.

What do red, orange, yellow and green mean for performance?

We do not use 'targets' to judge how well or badly we have performed. Instead, we articulate our ambition using a four stage approach to assessing the performance status.

Our default approach to setting our performance status is to take the upper-quartile (best performing) as the point where performance is Excellent, and the median as the point at which performance is to be considered a Priority for Improvement. Good and Acceptable performance fall either side of the middle value between these two points. For example:

- 0 to 49 = Priority for Improvement threshold.
- 50 to 62.4 = Acceptable threshold.
- 62.5 to 74 = Good threshold.
- 75 to 100 = Excellent threshold.

Using this approach, in an example where 76% of roads meet an acceptable standard of cleanliness, we would judge our performance as Excellent. Conversely, if our standard of cleanliness was 24%, we would judge this to be Priority for Improvement.

Please note, this approach differs slightly to Welsh Government, which takes the lower quartile (worst performing) as the point that determines a Priority for Improvement status. In Denbighshire we have decided to be more ambitious.

If no data is available that we can compare ourselves with (either nationally or by comparable grouping, for example a family group), then we will take a local view on what we feel reasonably determines Excellent and Priority for Improvement. This will represent our ambition to be a high performing council, an Excellent status only being achieved when we have met our ambition.

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When setting local thresholds, this requires an honest appraisal of how we see our current performance and what our ambition is. We need, therefore, to have a good understanding of customer need. You can view our online well-being (needs) assessment on the [Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board website.](#)

What is the Well-being of Future Generations Act?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

It will make us think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach with partners.

All decisions must be understood in the context of the Sustainable Development Principle, i.e. are the needs of the present being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

There are five things we need to consider to be able to demonstrate that we have applied the Sustainable Development Principle:

1. Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

2. Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

3. Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

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4. Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

5. Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area that the body serves.

For more information on the Act, take a look at the Future Generations Wales [Essentials Guide](#) online.

What is the Local Government and Elections Act?

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the council to report through an annual self-assessment process on its functions. These include our Corporate Plan objectives and the seven governance areas:

- Corporate Planning

- Financial Planning

- Workforce Planning (people)

- Procurement

- Assets

- Risk Management

- Performance Management

The council's Self-Assessment Report must set out any improvement actions that it intends to take in order to improve performance. There is also a need under the Act to engage with stakeholders annually on council performance and we do this through our Stakeholder Survey, the results of which are included in our performance reports.

We provide regular Performance Update Reports (at least six-monthly) including all of the above aspects to SLT, Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny, and together with the end of

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year Executive Summary Report, these reports collectively form our Self-Assessment of performance. The legislation also requires the council's Governance and Audit Committee to review a draft of the Self-Assessment Report and make recommendations where appropriate in advance of Council sign-off. All elements are usually published on our [performance webpage](#) by September of each year.

Panel Performance Assessment

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 also places a duty on councils to arrange for an independent peer-led panel to undertake an assessment, at least once during each electoral cycle, of the extent to which the council is meeting its performance requirements. The purpose of the Panel Performance Assessment is to provide an external perspective, and this should be used to help the council to improve. Typically, an assessment takes place over a four-day period, and involves reviews of documents, and interviews and focus groups with key officers, councillors and stakeholders.

In publishing and responding to the Panel Performance Assessment, the council must consider the conclusions drawn and recommendations made in order to identify actions it will take to better meet performance requirements. A draft of this Panel Performance Assessment Response Report must be reviewed by the council's Governance and Audit Committee. The council should reflect on the Panel Performance Assessment when undertaking its next self-assessment, to see whether learning has been put into action. This forms part of a culture where councils are open to and embrace challenge.

For more information on the performance requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, please view the [Statutory Guidance](#).

What about other legislation?

There are many other important pieces of legislation that we must make sure that we comply with as a council, i.e., the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Equality Act 2010 (Including Socio-economic Duty) and subsequent 2011 (Wales) regulations, Housing Act (2016), and Planning Act (2015). These also support the guiding principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by placing individual and community well-being and involvement at the core of everything that we do.

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Something for everyone

We all expect:

- That council services are delivered to a high standard, meeting customer need.
- Legislative duties to be met.
- Access to up-to-date information and data that tells us how the council is performing.
- To be listened to and our concerns acted upon.

We all have a responsibility to promote:

- Consultation and engagement.
- The Welsh language.
- Access to services and respect of others, keeping in mind the nine protected characteristics and those in poverty.
- The Sustainable Development Principle and the five governance approaches.

How do we do this?

Collectively we all have a role to play to make sure that these expectations are met. We do this naturally through our interaction with one another and the council. To understand the contribution that you can make as an individual, read through the roles below.

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I am a Member of the Public

As a member of the public I expect:

- High quality services that are well-planned and meet my needs.
- Access to up-to-date information and data that is easy to understand.

I am responsible for:

- Informing the council's service planning, and telling them what's important to me.
- Challenging the council's performance and letting them know where things can be done better. Please see Your Voice on our website.

How do I do this?

- Our self-assessment reports are published on our performance page online, this includes our regular performance update reports.
- Like Council meetings, Cabinet and Scrutiny are public and you are welcome to attend. You can also view meetings online through Denbighshire County Council Webcasts.
- You can let the council know what you think at any time in any number of ways:

  - **Visit us:** Find a council office or One-Stop-Shop on our website.

  - **Online:** General Enquiries Form on our website.

  - Complaints, compliments and feedback

  - Find us on Facebook and Twitter!

  - **Phone:** 01824 706000 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm). Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg - We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

  - **Write to us:** Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, Ruthin, LL15 9AZ.

  - **Talk to your councillor:** Find your councillor - www.denbighshire.gov.uk

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I am an Elected Member

As an Elected Member I expect:

- Reliable information, advice and support from council officers to help me make decisions and carry out my role.
- To be kept informed of issues affecting my ward.

I am responsible for:

- Determining the strategic vision of the council and informing the council's service planning, representing the community and giving voice to what's important to residents.
- Challenging the council's performance and risk management, seeking improvement where possible.

How do I do this?

- Participate in meetings, representing the voice of the citizen.
- Raise issues and concerns with relevant managers.
- Engage with and scrutinise the information available in performance reports to help inform decisions and identify ways to make improvements.

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I am a Cabinet Member

As a Cabinet Member I expect:

- Accurate and timely performance and risk reports to help inform decisions and identify areas for improvement.

I am responsible for:

- Informing and signing-off service plans in my portfolio (by March 31st).
- Monitoring the delivery of service plans and the management of Service Risk Registers with Heads of Service on a quarterly basis.
- Monitoring and driving forward the delivery of our Corporate Plan.
- Monitoring and managing risks on the Corporate Risk Register.

Have I?

- Met with the relevant Heads of Service in my portfolio to give input and agree the content of the Service Plan?
- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge process?
- Reviewed performance and risk information for the council and the services I represent on a quarterly basis?

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I am a Scrutiny Member

As a Scrutiny Member I expect:

- Accurate and timely performance and risk reports to aid the scrutiny of service delivery and identify areas for improvement.

I am responsible for:

- Scrutinising the delivery of service plans and the management of service risk registers.
- Scrutinising the delivery of the Corporate Plan.
- Scrutinising the management of our Corporate Risk Register.

Have I?

- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge process?
- Reviewed performance and risk information for the council on a regular basis?

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I am a Governance and Audit member

As a member of Governance and Audit I expect:

- Assurance that our performance and risk processes are robust and being consistently applied across the council.

I am responsible for:

- Monitoring the effectiveness of our performance and risk management processes.

Have I?

- Reviewed performance and risk information in reports taken to Cabinet and Scrutiny?
- Read Service Performance Challenge papers?
- Reviewed and made recommendations on the council's self-assessment reports and the council's response to the Peer Performance Assessment?

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I am a member of staff

As a member of staff I expect:

- To understand the Corporate Plan and the contribution my work makes towards it.
- Tools and systems to be in place that support the development, communication and monitoring of our performance and risk information, helping me to understand how the council and its services are performing.

I am responsible for:

- Supporting the delivery of the Service Plan.
- Maximising opportunities to improve service delivery.

How do I do this?

- Ask questions, contribute ideas and challenge the way we do things.
- Raise any risks or concerns with managers.
- Provide honest and easy to understand updates on the progress of work.
- Get involved in the service planning process and give input to the Service Plan.
- Engage with the Service's self-assessment process and read Service Challenge papers.
- Stay up-to-date on council performance by viewing service challenge papers, our performance reports, or through the committee agendas for Cabinet or Performance Scrutiny. Alternatively, visit our performance webpage.

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I am the Chief Executive or Corporate Director

As the Chief Executive or a Corporate Director I expect:

- Staff to be engaged with our Corporate Plan and understand their contribution.

I am responsible for:

- Communicating the strategic vision of the council, particularly the Corporate Plan.
- Monitoring the Corporate Risk Register.
- Challenging poor performance and supporting improvement in services.
- Keeping elected members informed of issues relevant to them.
- Applying long-term planning and risk assessment to service delivery.

Have I?

- Provided input to service plans?
- Reviewed service performance and risk data on at least a quarterly basis with Heads of Service?
- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge programme?
- Reviewed the content of the Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment and used its intelligence to shape service planning and delivery?

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I am a Head of Service

As a Head of Service I expect:

- Guidance from Corporate Directors, Cabinet Members, and the Strategic Planning and Performance Team on service planning.
- Scrutiny members and staff to also be engaged in the development and delivery of the service.

I am responsible for:

- The development, communication and delivery of the Service Plan with key stakeholders, which includes keeping elected members informed of issues relevant to them.
- Maintaining the Service Plan and understanding the contributions it makes to the Corporate Plan
- Managing service risk, with input from staff.
- Involving staff in the development of the service's self-assessment.
- Understanding the performance of the service and ensuring that performance expectations are met.

Have I?

- Consulted and engaged with key stakeholders during the development of the Service Plan, including managers, staff, and Lead Cabinet Members?
- Taken customer need into account and covered any legislative duties that might apply?
- Considered the implications of the Service Plan and provided an assessment of any financial, support service and workforce requirements?
- Set performance thresholds, start and end dates for projects and activities that are realistic?

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- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge paperwork, with staff giving input to the service's self-assessment?
- Reviewed performance and risk data on a quarterly basis with my Cabinet Member(s) and management team, and identified opportunities to improve?
- Communicated key performance messages to staff (good and bad)?
- Reviewed the content of the Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment and used its intelligence to shape service planning and delivery?

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I am a Manager

As a Manager I expect:

- Clear direction from the Council, Cabinet and senior leaders.
- Staff to be engaged in the delivery of the Service Plan and understand their contribution towards it and the Corporate Plan.

I am responsible for:

- Helping Heads of Service communicate the strategic vision of the council and involving staff in the development and delivery of the Service Plan, which includes keeping elected members informed of issues relevant to them.
- Ensuring staff engage and commit to activity within the Service Plan.
- Supporting the Head of Service with the monitoring of the Service Risk Register, also engaging with team members.
- Providing accurate and timely performance updates, monitoring whether or not our performance expectations have been met.

Have I?

- Consulted and engaged with key stakeholders during the development of the Service Plan?
- Addressed any new legislative duties in the Service Plan?
- Evaluated the implications of the Service Plan, to include an assessment of any financial, support service and workforce requirements?
- Set performance thresholds, start and end dates for projects and activities that are realistic?
- Engaged with the Service's annual Service Performance Challenge and ensured that staff have had an input to its self-assessment?
- Reviewed performance and risk data on a quarterly basis to inform the Service's own improvement?

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- Communicated key performance messages to staff (good and bad)?
- Reviewed the content of the Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment and used its intelligence to shape service planning and delivery?

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I am a Performance Officer within a Service

As a Lead Performance Officer I expect:

- To have a clear understanding of council and partnership commitments.
- Service plans to have input and ongoing challenge from stakeholders, including the Corporate Directors, Lead Cabinet Members, staff, and the public.

I am responsible for:

- Supporting the Head of Service in the completion and communication of a clear and easy to follow Service Plan (by March 31st), ensuring the involvement of the right people in its development, and making sure that staff understand their commitments within it. The focus of the Service Plan should be on key improvement activity for the year ahead, not day-to-day work (this may be captured in operational plans if necessary).
- Supporting the Head of Service in the preparation of Service Challenge papers.
- Keeping the Service Plan up-to-date (the Service Plan is a live document and should be updated with any new activity during the year).
- Ensuring that accurate and easy to understand quarterly performance updates have been provided in Verto within one month after the end of the quarter. Any comments provided should be in plain English and avoid acronyms.

Have I?

- Coordinated service planning meetings between the Head of Service, staff, Lead Cabinet Members, and managers? It is recommended that these begin in January.
- Consulted with and involved the relevant Strategic Planning and Performance Officer to ensure that there is consistency in the approach you take and no conflict with work elsewhere?
- Ensured that customer needs are taken into account, as well as any legislative duties that apply?

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- Analysed the implications of the Service Plan, to include an assessment of any financial, support service and workforce requirements?
- Set performance thresholds, start and end dates for projects and activities that are realistic?
- Used Verto to help collate the detail of the Service Plan and maintain the Service Risk Register?
- Helped prepare the Service's paperwork for its Performance Challenge, which may include the coordination of its self-assessment work?

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I am a Strategic Planning and Performance Officer

As a Strategic Planning and Performance Officer I expect:

- Services to engage in the service planning process, service plans being complete in Verto by March 31st.
- Service Risk Registers to be maintained and up-to-date.
- Accurate quarterly updates to be submitted within one month after the end of a quarter, with clear and understandable comments where applicable.
- Reports to be challenged by stakeholders, in particular by Cabinet, Scrutiny and the public.
- Accurate Service Challenge documentation completed within timescales.
- Services to use the data they collect to inform their own improvement.

I am responsible for:

- Maintaining the integrity of the data collection, monitoring and reporting processes within the council.
- Supporting services in their service planning and risk management, ensuring consistency of approach, giving due regard to key legislative requirements and other council and partnership commitments.
- Producing accurate performance reports as required by senior leaders, the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Governance and Audit, and the Service Performance Challenge process.
- Supporting the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

Have I?

- Facilitated service planning meetings with key stakeholders, ensuring that services are on track to meet the deadline (March 31st)?
- Monitored performance and risk updates from services, producing performance reports as required?

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- Supported services in the preparation of their paperwork for the Service Performance Challenge?
- Supported the Corporate Plan's governance arrangements, including Programme Boards where applicable?

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Glossary

Plans

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is the overarching strategic plan for the council, and responds to the Public Services Board's **Well-being Plan**. It sets out our main priorities for the term of the County Council. This sits above and is aligned with **service plans**.

Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework

There is a Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework (also known as our Technical Document) that identifies all indicators, performance measures and the activity within the Corporate Plan, including performance thresholds where appropriate and data sources.

Medium Term Financial Plan

It is important for the council to look at its finances for more than one year. Denbighshire County Council does this through its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which looks at the coming three years and estimates what might happen to the council during that time, and what it might mean for its finances. The MTFP closely follows the plans put forward by services during the service planning process.

Service Plan

The Service Plan is the basis of the council's performance management structure. It contains all indicators and performance measures and improvement activity relating to the key **outcomes** that services consider important. Service plans feed up into the council's **Corporate Plan**, and are signed off by the relevant Cabinet Lead Member. Some services also have operational plans beneath their service plans, but these are not monitored corporately.

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Strategic Equality Plan

The **Equality Act 2010** requires public bodies to have a plan in place to address inequalities. This has previously been a separate document to the council's **Corporate Plan** but is now incorporated. One of the Well-being Goals set by the Welsh Government is for a More Equal Wales. It makes sense, therefore, to incorporate this into our core business. There are nine protected characteristics when we talk about equalities: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. The council must also have due regard for the Socio-Economic Duty that ensures our decisions and actions do not negatively impact those already experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the council to report on its functions through an annual **Self-Assessment** process, as well as through a peer-led assessment that must take place once in each electoral cycle. For more information on the performance requirements of this Act, please view the Statutory Guidance.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It will make us think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach with partners. All decisions must be understood in the context of the Sustainable Development Principle. For more information, take a look at the Essentials Guide on the Future Generations Wales website.

Well-being Plan

The Well-being Plan is the strategic plan agreed between partners on the Public Services Board (PSB) in response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and seeks to deliver on key outcomes that are shared across different organisations.

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Reports

Executive Summary – Self-Assessment

An accessible end-of-year summary report of our performance against key functions. This includes our performance objectives as a council, and performance against the seven governance areas. This is produced in response to the **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021**.

Panel Performance Assessment

A peer-led panel must undertake an assessment on the council's performance and produce a report of their findings once in each electoral cycle.

Panel Performance Assessment Response

A response must be produced by the council following a **Panel Performance Assessment** which outlines actions the council will take in order to improve its ability to meet performance requirements.

Performance Update Report

The Strategic Planning and Performance Team produce regular Performance Update Reports (at least six-monthly) to Performance Scrutiny, Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team that demonstrates the council's ongoing progress against the delivery of the Corporate Plan and the seven governance areas.

Self-Assessment Report

The **Performance Update Reports** plus the Executive Summary make up the Self-Assessment of performance produced by the council.

Service Performance Report

A Service Performance Report is produced by our Verto **Performance Management System** ahead of a **Service Performance Challenge** and examines performance against the **Service Plan**.

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Service Self-Assessment

Services conduct a self-assessment SWOT exercise in preparation for the **Service Performance Challenges.** These help senior managers and councillors to understand a service's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to its delivery.

Well-being Impact Assessments

Well-being Impact Assessments are an evaluation of the potential impact of decisions made by the council, which includes changing or developing new projects, policies, guidelines, plans and strategies. They also support an evaluation of the extent to which the sustainable development principle is being applied. The requirement for an impact assessment is a matter of professional judgement, but officers should consider the risk of not impact assessing a proposal. Generally, reports to committees will require a Well-being Impact Assessment, and projects on Verto require impact assessments to be undertaken as things progress from project brief to business case gateways.

Performance Management

Excellence Threshold

The Excellence Threshold is the point at which performance for an **indicator** or **performance measure** may be considered to have met our ambition. Excellence Thresholds are therefore by their nature challenging and aspirational. The council's default position is usually for the upper-quartile, if a national comparison is available.

Improvement activity

Improvement Activity are key programmes, projects or actions that have been identified to support the **outcome**. This includes actions arising from Internal Audit, **Service Performance Challenges**, the staff survey or **risk registers**. Improvement activities can also be developed through the council's Performance Update Reports and the Executive Summary that make up the annual Self-Assessment of performance.

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Indicator

An indicator is a measure that we do not have full control over and usually captures the 'effect' of what we do. There are other factors outside of the council's control that determine an indicator's performance. The template at the back of this booklet should be used to define indicators.

Intervention

The Intervention, or Improvement Threshold is the point at which performance for an **indicator** or **performance measure** may be considered a Priority for Improvement. The council's default position for this is the Wales Median, if a national comparison is available.

Outcome

The council uses an outcome focussed approach, utilising Results Based Accountability (RBA), to monitor the delivery of its plans. An outcome is a benefit experienced by a customer (usually the public) or community (such as businesses, for example). For support services the customer may be internal. An example of an outcome is 'Students achieve their potential.'

Performance Management

By performance management, we mean the structures and processes we have in place to ensure we deliver what we said we would deliver, whilst encouraging active involvement and challenge from across the council, our elected members and residents.

Performance Management System

The council uses a cloud management system called Verto to monitor service performance, project and risk management information.

Performance Measure

A Performance Measure is entirely in the council's control, and usually counts activity that we deliver ('effort'). The template at the back of this booklet may be used to help define measures.

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Project register

The Project Register is a record of current projects being delivered by the council.

Service Performance Challenge

The Service Performance Challenge (or Service Challenge) is an annual process that looks at the overall performance of a service. Generally, one is held per month. The panel is usually chaired by the Chief Executive, and attended by the relevant Lead Cabinet Member(s), Scrutiny and political group representatives, Corporate Directors, Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets, and Head of Finance and Audit. Our regulators also attend.

Service Planning

Service planning is activity that usually takes place between January and March to agree the content of **service plans** for the following financial year. Strategic Planning and Performance Officers work with Performance Lead Officers, Service Managers and Heads of Service to develop these in Verto by March 31st, though they are live documents that should be kept up-to-date throughout the year. The template for **service plans** is in Verto, and is based on the Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach. For further guidance on how to build a service plan, speak to the Strategic Planning and Performance Team.

Thresholds

In Denbighshire we avoid the term 'target.' Instead, we prefer to work within a range that represents what it means to be Excellent, Good, Acceptable, or a Priority for Improvement. To determine that range we set an Excellence and **Intervention** (Priority for Improvement) threshold for all indicators and performance measures, usually as part of our **service planning** activity. Acceptable and Good thresholds are calculated by taking the half-way point between Excellence and Intervention. Where possible, national data will be used to determine thresholds, otherwise these will be determined locally. Denbighshire works to the same four stage assessment approach within Performance, Project and Risk Management.

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Risk Management

Corporate Risk Register

The Corporate Risk Register is owned by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet. It is monitored by them and Performance Scrutiny on a regular basis (as least six-monthly). It takes the most severe and common risks from Service Risk Registers and Corporate Director portfolios. Like the **Service Risk Registers**, it is stored on Verto.

Issue

An issue refers to the consequences of an event that has already occurred and management mitigation actions are underway or planned. Please see the council's risk management guidance for more detailed information.

Risk

A risk is an event that, should it occur, would impact our ability to successfully achieve our priorities. Risk is a measure used to describe the uncertainty surrounding an event and its potential impact.

Risk Appetite

Risk Appetite is the level of risk we are prepared to tolerate or accept in the pursuit of our long term, strategic objectives. For example, the council may decide that it will tolerate no risks to its finances, but is willing to be more open to reputational risk. Read about risk management and our appetite on our website.

Service Risk Register

The Service Risk Register captures risks within a Head of Service's portfolio. Like the **Corporate Risk Register**, these are monitored through Verto.

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Regulators

Audit Wales

Audit Wales conduct field work to review the work of public bodies such as Denbighshire County Council and produce an Annual Audit Summary of their overall findings. To view recent reports, see the [Audit Wales](#) website.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

The principal regulator of social care and childcare in Wales. Recent reports reviewing local authority children and adult social services can be found on their [website](#).

Estyn

As the education and training inspectorate for Wales, Estyn regularly produce inspection reports which may be viewed by accessing their [website](#).

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Measure Template

The following is a useful guide for defining indicators and performance measures. Using this will ensure that data is captured in a consistent way from one year to the next. If you need any advice on what makes a good indicator or performance measure, please contact the Strategic Planning and Performance Team. This information can be captured within Verto.

Domain

This identifies what outcome this measure relates to. If it does not relate to an outcome, use an appropriate descriptor.

Reference

This is the identification number of the indicator.

Title

The wording of the actual measure.

Guidance

Detailed guidance covering: clarification of definitions, information on what to include or exclude when collecting the data for the indicator, etc.

Calculation

These are the data items that need to be collected to calculate the indicator along with the formula to use when doing so.

Data Source

A cross-reference to other instances of this data, for example, StatsWales, WasteDataFlow, PARIS, etc.

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Frequency

Identify the frequency of data collection for the measure.

Excellence Threshold

The identified excellence threshold according to the corporate methodology.

Intervention

The identified intervention levels associated with the excellence threshold according to the corporate methodology.