

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	28 November 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis, Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets Helen Vaughan-Evans, Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets
Report author	Emma Horan, Planning and Performance Officer
Title	Corporate Plan Performance Update: April to September 2024

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The Council's performance against its [Corporate Plan](#) during April to September, including Strategic Equality objectives and the seven governance areas (corporate planning; financial planning; performance management; risk management; workforce planning; assets; and procurement).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. Regular performance reporting is part of our [values and principles](#). It is an essential monitoring requirement of the Council's performance management methodology, and our statutory duties as set out in section 11.

2.2. This report aims to support discussion about our performance and the identified improvement actions.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Scrutiny Committee considers the report, and agrees any further actions required to respond to any performance related issues highlighted within it.

4. Report details

4.1. The report contained within appendix 1 is our familiar Performance Update Report, which is our process for ongoing self-assessment, for the period April to September

2024. The report should be seen as a tool to support constructive, open and honest discussion about our performance, helping to identify good practise and areas for intervention or further scrutiny. We are seeking to answer the questions of 'How well are we doing', 'How do we know', and 'What and how can we do better'?

4.2. The report is presented in two parts that seek to outline progress against our performance objectives. These comprise of our Corporate Plan / Strategic Equality Objectives (which also form our Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) and the seven governance areas (as set out in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021).

4.3. This report also identifies indicators or activities that are Equality Objectives or contribute to Welsh Language and Culture (this is a work in progress). The report also now contains case studies to exemplify good work that has taken place. Any further opportunities to continually improve the Performance Management Framework and Performance Update Reports, as always, will be taken by Strategic Planning Team.

4.4. Whilst it is not possible to highlight all significant points of interest here (see appendix 1), positive highlights and areas for improvement from April to September 2024 include:

- Reducing reliance on Bed and Breakfasts (although a significant number of people are on the housing waiting list).
- According to Welsh Government's [Social Landlords' Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024](#), Denbighshire is the highest performing stock-holding council in Wales, in terms of tenants' overall satisfaction with Denbighshire Housing.
- Some excellent community benefits from two large procurements.
- Positive preventative community-based work; with 99% of those receiving assistance from Talking Points not needing to be referred into Adult Social Care.
- Early years support is resulting in a good take up of the childcare offer.
- The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy was carried out during 2023 to 2024, with the final version following consultation being adopted by Cabinet and Council in June 2024.
- Some exciting areas for action are emerging from the closer to communities task and finish group. We hope these will help address the dichotomy that seems to exist between stakeholder responses in our stakeholder survey and the actual performance of, and experience working for or with, the Council.

- We continued to provide robust financial management despite deepening financial challenges around our budget, which all local authorities are experiencing. Tracking of savings has been implemented and budget and transformation will be a focus of Service Performance Challenges. We continue to examine and find ways to mitigate the impacts of budget proposals, building on the cumulative impact assessment presented to [County Council](#) in January. For example, a workshop with Headteachers was held on June 18.
- The budget situation remains extremely challenging and will place further pressure on the Council's ability to deliver on customer expectations.
- We need to ensure momentum in respect of developing a new Economic Strategy and ensure that it will take account of the county's cultural offer and its contribution to economic, environmental, community and personal well-being.
- Attendance at primary and secondary schools is concerning and the number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures has risen from 3 to 4. There will be continued development of relationships with colleges and further education institutions following the closure of Llwybrau and developments in regional school improvement continue to be carefully monitored in the light of the impending cessation of GwE
- The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that insufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero.
- This last period has been particularly challenging for the Council as the new waste collection and recycling service had a difficult start. We pulled together as "One Council" to support our waste service and continue to work closely with members and residents to understand and resolve issues.
- Finally, the Panel Performance Assessment was very positive. One Panel member, during the fieldwork week, said that Denbighshire was "The kind of place I would really enjoy working!" Further detail will be provided in next reporting period once the final report has been received by the Council.

4.5. Three improvement actions have been identified through discussions about this report (the first builds upon a previous improvement action). The first two demonstrate the interplay between resources, performance and risk.

- Consider performance relating to the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale), which has fallen short of the 95% target time for some years. The service continues to struggle with meeting the demands of the asset within the limited budgetary and staffing resources available, and a substantive discussion is needed about the

prospects of improvement and what continuing poor performance is likely to mean given expected increased impacts of flooding, landslips and heat risks on road condition and community connectivity.

- Linked to last period's improvement action to keep our Corporate Plan commitments and performance expectations under continual review going forward, the next Corporate Plan Tranche Review should consider the impact of reducing capacity and ceased projects such as Llwybrau, and how these will impact on our ability to deliver the Corporate Plan and outcomes.
- Publish details of the engagement network of people and groups with protected characteristics on our website.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. This report includes an evaluation of our success in delivering the Corporate Plan.

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

6.1. There is no additional cost associated with this report.

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

7.1. A [WIA](#) was undertaken on the Corporate Plan, which has been updated as part of the revision of the Corporate Plan, and should be reviewed following the Tranche Review.

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

8.1. The report has been compiled in consultation with council services. The report has been discussed at the Tranche Review and has been shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) by email for comment. It was discussed by Cabinet on November 19.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. No statement is required with this report.

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

10.1 That we fail to improve areas of concern leading to unsatisfactory outcomes. Failure to publish our Self-Assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, with implications for the reputation of the Council. The risk of poor performance being reported out of context, impacting on our reputation. On this basis, we have already shared the draft report with the Communications Team.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Part 6 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

11.2. Part 2 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

11.3. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011; and The Equality Act (Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

11.4. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7 of the Council's Constitution outline Scrutiny's powers in relation to performance management.