

Corporate Plan Performance Update: April to September 2024

This document presents the council's performance against its Corporate Plan themes and governance areas between April to September 2024, including our application of the Sustainable Development principle, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Socio-Economic Duty.

Contents

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Contact details and more information | 4 |
| Summary position | 5 |
| A Note on Measuring Performance..... | 11 |
| A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs..... | 12 |
| Corporate Plan Update | 12 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update | 14 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update | 17 |
| A round up of news | 19 |
| A prosperous Denbighshire | 19 |
| Corporate Plan Update | 19 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update | 21 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update | 24 |
| A round up of news | 27 |
| A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire | 28 |
| Corporate Plan Update | 28 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update | 31 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update | 35 |
| A round up of news | 37 |
| A learning and growing Denbighshire | 38 |
| Corporate Plan Update | 38 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update | 40 |
| Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update | 43 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| <u>A round up of news</u> | <u>44</u> |
| <u>A Greener Denbighshire</u> | <u>46</u> |
| <u>Corporate Plan Update</u> | <u>46</u> |
| <u>Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update</u> | <u>49</u> |
| <u>Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update</u> | <u>50</u> |
| <u>A round up of news</u> | <u>51</u> |
| <u>A well-run, high performing council</u> | <u>53</u> |
| <u>Corporate Plan Update</u> | <u>53</u> |
| <u>Performance Framework: Measures Update</u> | <u>56</u> |
| <u>Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Projects Update</u> | <u>60</u> |
| <u>Self-Assessment: Governance Areas</u> | <u>62</u> |
| <u>Corporate Planning</u> | <u>62</u> |
| <u>Financial Planning.....</u> | <u>63</u> |
| <u>Performance Management.....</u> | <u>68</u> |
| <u>Risk Management</u> | <u>70</u> |
| <u>Workforce Planning.....</u> | <u>71</u> |
| <u>Assets</u> | <u>72</u> |
| <u>Procurement</u> | <u>73</u> |
| <u>Improvement Actions</u> | <u>75</u> |

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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

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.

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: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The Corporate Plan Housing and Homelessness Board (CPHHB) continues to oversee this theme though hasn't had an opportunity to convene since June 2024. At that meeting, the Board reviewed the update on the affordable housing outturn and Programme Development Plan / Social Housing Grant for 2023 to 2024 where the Council, in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), successfully brought forward 156 additional affordable housing units in total over the year. The number of people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) register has increased to 1,842 this period and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. During April to June, as part of efforts to reduce reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens, we reduced the reliance on Bed and Breakfasts. This work progressed for July to September, where we saw the numbers reduce to 130. We are confident that further solutions, working with the Sanctuary Trust, should contribute to less use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation moving forward. Other housing projects are likely to continue into the next financial year, for example the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Cymru will soon be working with the Housing and Communities Service to carry out a standards review. Denbighshire will be the first council in Wales to undertake this partnership work, and this will inform the future direction of our Tenants Engagement Framework, which is reviewed annually.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The measures status for this theme has been summarised overall as a 'Priority for Improvement'. The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire and the cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits have both declined from April to June, while still considered to be 'Excellent'. The particularly strong performance in the first quarter reflects two significant contracts that were awarded to Denbighshire-based construction companies during that time. Community benefits were also included in all contracts during April to June. This level of performance cannot be sustained every quarter because it largely depends on the scale of procurements, but it does demonstrate that good procurement can deliver excellent results. Deaths and Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population are both considered a 'Priority for Improvement', with business births being half the rate of those that started in 2019 (109). Recognising the local and global economic challenges it faces, the council is currently developing an Economic Strategy to include green, rural, and urban economic growth plans as well as enhancing tourism, which significantly increased during the reporting period. The new Economic Strategy will also take into account the county's cultural offer and how it contributes to wider economic and well-being outcomes. Overall, progress has been made with the twenty-four programmes, projects and activities identified in support of this theme. However, four projects are now showing as 'At Risk'. The overall summary has, therefore, been amended from 'On Target' to 'Experiencing Obstacles' to reflect this current position.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

Most of the data we currently publish in relation to Children's Social Care is released annually and it is therefore difficult to summarise performance at this stage in the year; we will be in a better position to make a judgment on this in the next performance report. That being said, safeguarding enquiries for adults completed within the target time remained at an 'Excellent' level and community-based support for health and well-being continued to be provided, with 99% of those receiving assistance from Talking Points between July and September not needing to be referred into Adult Social Care. The number of schools adopting a Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being has remained fixed at

67% since the last reporting period, and is considered to be 'Acceptable'. We continued to monitor data giving us an indication of the prevalence of crime in our communities, and worked with partners to address these issues. Many projects were 'On Target', including those providing support to citizens in relation to community well-being and cost-of-living pressures. However, the Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project continued to report an 'At Risk' delivery confidence status due to being behind schedule.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In support of early years' child development, 642 children (considered 'Good') took part in the childcare offer across Denbighshire in the quietest period, between July and September. The learning and development of Denbighshire's children continues to be a priority for the council, and we plan to improve the way we work with schools to collect data. This includes data to help us monitor bullying in schools and the use of the Welsh language in education. We have received the results of the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey conducted during the previous academic year, which showed that 81% of pupils responded positively in terms of feelings about school (considered 'Good'). Attendance in primary and secondary schools for the academic year 2023 to 2024 improved but remains a 'Priority for Improvement' at 92.3% and 88.2% respectively. We monitor schools' attainment data held internally, supporting and challenging schools to improve their attainment. There will be continued development of relationships with colleges and further education institutions following the closure of Llwybrau, the project designed to support young people to reduce their risk of disengagement. The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures rose from 3 to 4, which is 'Acceptable' while disappointing. Developments in regional school improvement continue to be carefully monitored in the light of the impending cessation of GwE as the regional school improvement service for North Wales. The council will explore whether any new project is needed to ensure that progress continues and updates will be provided in time. For this period, most projects were 'On Target' or 'Experiencing Obstacles,' which shows good progress overall in support of this theme, including improving the well-being of children from low income and disadvantaged families. However, delays to a number of projects continued to impact the progress of the Modernising Education Programme - designed to provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the current and future needs of pupils and families as part of the Welsh

Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme - meaning that this particular stream of work remained 'At Risk'.

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy was carried out during 2023 to 2024. The final version following consultation was submitted for adoption by Cabinet and Council in June 2024 and is now called the [Denbighshire County Council Climate and Nature Strategy 2021 to 2022 to 2029 to 2030 \(Year 3 Updated Version\)](#). The percentage of council owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness has very slightly increased to 42.5% in 2023 to 2024 and indicates we are making 'Acceptable' progress towards becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030. Our 2023 to 2024 carbon emissions data has now been reported to Welsh Government as part of the annual public sector reporting. The Council's Net Carbon Zero position as at 31 March 2024 has increased by about 600 tonnes (roughly the equivalent of driving 1.5m miles in a car) to 12,653 tonnes, which, by 2030, needs to be zero tonnes. This indicator remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. Whilst we have concerns about the methodology relating to this indicator, the total carbon tonnage emitted (corporately) through supply chains rose from 36,912 in 2022 to 2023 to 50,233 in 2023 to 2024, and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that insufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero. The financial pressures all local authorities are facing now and in the coming years will continue to impact on that pace. We have maintained our Climate and Ecological Improvement ambition and have not adjusted our targets - despite their challenge. During the period we saw the roll out of the new recycling service. It soon became apparent that some of the assumptions were flawed and several rounds per day were not being completed, resulting in large and unacceptable numbers of missed collections.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The measures status for this theme remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. This reflects the stakeholder survey responses, and also other key indicators, such as one-to-ones and

sickness absence, where we are not meeting our expected thresholds for Excellence (it is important to acknowledge that these are ambitious thresholds, particularly given increasing workforce pressures). This last period has been particularly challenging for the Council as the new waste collection and recycling service had a difficult start (the significant increase in external complaints upheld or partly upheld reflects this). We pulled together as “One Council” (see our [values and five principles here](#)) to support our waste service, and continue to work closely with members and residents to understand and resolve issues. Notwithstanding these issues, the council continued to provide robust financial management despite deepening financial challenges around our budget, which all local authorities are experiencing. During the period, the Panel Peer Assessment took place which engaged a wide range of council stakeholders including city, town and community councils, elected members and more – and which has resulted in some very positive feedback for the council. A draft report is anticipated in the Autumn. One-to-ones, sickness absence and completion of e-learning remain areas for concern. These indicators, alongside Services’ financial management and budget and transformation ideas will be explored as part of Service Performance Challenges commencing in November. Our new Welsh Language Officer is in post and will be working alongside officers and members to increase opportunities to use Welsh and celebrate our culture. The Well-run, high performing council Board will be focussing in future on how our culture can facilitate effective transformation and ways in which we can work more closely with our communities. The Board will also be examining the general decline in responses to our stakeholder survey. As stated previously, this decline is perhaps unsurprising but there does seem to be a dichotomy between stakeholder responses in the survey and the actual performance of our council (and indicative feedback from the Panel Performance Assessment). It is important that we demonstrate improvement in these areas and respond to the expectations of our customers. We are looking to build on the positive findings from the recent closer to communities work, which seeks to build stronger and more responsive relationships with communities.

Governance areas

Significant work continues to ensure we respond effectively to the significant financial pressures the council is facing (along with all local authorities) in order to try to protect the most vulnerable as far as possible. Tracking of savings has been implemented and budget and transformation will be a core focus of Service Performance Challenges commencing in November. 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 during the period. The budget situation remains extremely challenging and will place further pressure on the council's ability to deliver on customer expectations. Significant engagement across the council, with members and with communities, will continue. The months ahead will involve key milestones or many governance areas. The September Risk Register Review has now been completed and the final reports are due to be presented to Governance and Audit and Performance Scrutiny Committees in November. A People Strategy has been drafted and will be presented to the Well-run Board in October for feedback. A revised staff survey will be presented to our Senior Leadership Team for approval in October for a November launch. Approval for a new Asset Management Strategy 2024 to 2029 will be sought from Cabinet in October 2024. This will be a critical development and has interdependencies with workforce planning. Our Procurement Team continues to prepare the organisation, businesses and partners for the changes in procurement legislation, and the opportunities for greater local benefits. Efforts continue to be targeted at decarbonising the supply chain and the third generation North Wales Construction Framework was launched in May 2024.

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: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Ensure that there is quality housing that meets the needs of vulnerable people, assisting them to lead independent lives in appropriate accommodation for as long as possible

Phase 2 of Llys Awelon in Ruthin is open and existing tenants have been decanted over to the new site. The Phase 1 site is now closed off ready for the refurbishment. New tenants are being supported to move into the new site on an incremental basis.

Prevent homelessness, and ensure that any instances of it are rare, brief, and unrepeated. This includes young care leavers (Equality Objective)

The number of referrals received into the Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) fluctuated during the reporting period. For April, May and June it rose from 64 to 93, however at the end of September this had much reduced to 59. During the period, there was also fluctuation in the percentage of referrals that have been prevented from presenting to our homeless prevention services, where for April, May and June the figure rose to 95.81% and then dropped to 93.22% ('Excellent') for July, August and September. Both figures are an improvement on the last financial year recording of 90.62%.

Upgrade the council housing stock to ensure it is safe, secure, and well-maintained and where possible, suitable for the needs of residents, for example, those with disabilities (Equality Objective)

The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time is 95.24% for the period July to September, which, though 'Acceptable', has reduced slightly from 96.26% from the previous period. A total of 315 emergency jobs were completed in the period with fifteen falling outside of target. A further 122 disabled adaptations were carried out for council house tenants between April and September.

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) is a government scheme that helps homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes and is the newest activity in support of this theme. It is promoted and administered via Flintshire County Council for energy efficiency in private sector dwellings and has resulted in 197 properties having ECO4 measures approved for Denbighshire between April and September. The scheme was on hold in early August due to staffing reasons and reopened in mid-September. We are still developing the energy pathway to meet the 2030 submission. Retrofit works, including some photo voltaic installations, are planned to commence from October in Rhyl and Denbigh, which will all count towards the pathway.

According to Welsh Government's [Social Landlords' Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024](#), Denbighshire County Council is the highest performing stock-holding Council in Wales, in terms of 'the percentage of tenants that were satisfied with Denbighshire Housing, taking everything into account' with 85% tenants in agreement.

Deliver more homes to meet local need and demand

The delivery confidence for Additional Council Housing Developments has improved and reflects the completion of the new apartment development at Llys Llen on Nant Hall Road in Prestatyn, the new apartments in the former tax office building at Llys Elizabeth in Churton Road, Rhyl; and the appointment of a contractor to complete the fit out works at the terrace of Victorian houses at 2-16 Aquarium Street in Rhyl.

During 2023 to 2024 there were a total of 258 new homes completed in Denbighshire. This is two more than the figure for 2022 to 2023, which was 256.

Delivery confidence remains unchanged for the affordable housing project Edward Henry Street – whilst further progress has been made with the construction of the new homes, completion has been delayed until autumn 2024.

Following on from the completion of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), the GTAA Site Selection can now progress. It is, though, still at project brief stage.

There has been no progress update on the Rhyl Residential Strategy, now running under the activity, "Work with Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to contribute to progressing Rhyl Residential Strategy" for this financial year to date however we are advised this project is down on the Forward Work Plan for the Prosperous Denbighshire Board to be discuss and decide whether it should continue.

Case study: Llys Elizabeth

[Llys Elizabeth](#) is designed for people aged 55 and over and contains 12 new homes comprising eight two-bedroom apartments and four one-bedroom apartments. Each home is designed to offer high levels of energy efficiency to support the new tenants with the cost of living and help the council and Wales achieve its targets of lowering carbon emissions. The development is part of the council's [commitment to tackling accommodation waiting times](#) by enabling the creation of more social housing. At an [event](#) designed to bring the tenants and their neighbours together, one tenant said: "It's really lovely, I can't fault it at all. It's been like winning the lottery really, we have got such a beautiful place... Denbighshire Housing have all been very attentive and I can't say anything bad."

[Ensure that our residents are informed about available housing options and routes to housing, seeking also to reduce the Single Access Route to Housing \(SARTH\) waiting list](#)

The number of people on the SARTH register increased to 1,842 between April and September, which is an increase of 7.97% on the previous reporting period and is a 'Priority for Improvement'.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity related to the support offered to those experiencing homelessness please see our [learning and growing theme](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time - Benchmarked Locally | 96.90% Acceptable Worse | 95.82% Acceptable Worse | 95.57% Acceptable Worse | 96.26% Acceptable Better | 95.24% Acceptable Worse |

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| The number of disabled adaptations carried out for council house tenants – Count Only (Equality Objective) | 56 | 68 | 51 | 61 | 61 |
| The number of people on the SARTH waiting list (live applications only) - Benchmarked Locally | 1,760 Priority to Improve Better | 1,560 Priority to Improve Better | 1,706 Priority to Improve Worse | 1,831 Priority to Improve Worse | 1,842 Priority to Improve Worse |
| The number of referrals received into Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) – Count Only (Equality Objective) | 64 | 54 | 64 | 93 | 59 |
| The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that have been prevented from presenting to homelessness prevention service - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 92.18% Excellent Better | 92.59% Excellent Better | 90.62% Excellent Worse | 95.81% Excellent Better | 93.22% Excellent Worse |

Annual or Biennial Measures

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective) | 66 Priority to Improve Worse | 63 Priority to Improve Worse |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| The number of people who were on the Complex Disabilities Specialist Housing Needs Register for whom supported housing has been secured - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 16 Excellent Better | 8 Good Worse |
| The percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (section 66) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective) | 38.35% Priority to Improve Worse | 37.11% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (section 73) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective) | 15.96% Priority to Improve Worse | 11.68% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of households positively discharged from homelessness (section 75) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective) | 50.22% Priority to Improve Better | 54.18% Priority to Improve Better |
| The percentage of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 15% Priority to Improve | 17% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of council properties compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Benchmarked Nationally | 100% Excellent Same | 100% Excellent Same |
| The percentage of tenants that were satisfied with Denbighshire Housing, taking everything into account - Benchmarked Locally | No data: does not apply | 85% Excellent |
| The percentage of existing and acquired Council housing stock achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above - Benchmarked Locally | 41.89% Acceptable Better | 46.1% Acceptable Better |
| The additional supply of Council Homes provided - Benchmarked Locally | 15 Acceptable Better | 25 Good Better |
| The total number of (new) homes completed during the year in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally | 256 | 258 |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|
| The number of empty private properties brought back into use through direct action by the local authority - Benchmarked Locally | 181 Good Worse | 150 Acceptable Worse |

Stakeholder Survey

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | With an opinion, and agree | With an opinion, and agree |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is sufficient, good quality housing in Denbighshire, which meets people's needs - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 40% Priority to Improve | 31% Priority to Improve Worse |

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|-----------|--|
| Deliver and monitor the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan (Equality Objective) | On target | No exception however for information, ownership on this has now transferred from the LDP Team to the Housing and Communities Service moving forward. |
| Llys Awelon (Phase 2) (Equality Objective) | On target | No exception |
| Reduce the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens (Equality Objective) | On target | No exception |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses | Complete | A new activity (directly below), reflects the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards and replaces this project, thus it is marked Complete. |
| Devise and implement a plan to achieve SAP 75 housing by 2030 (including revising current baseline assessment methods and producing a costs analysis) along with a Targeted Energy Pathway | On Target | No exception |
| Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (Equality Objective) | Complete | |
| Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) Site Selection (Equality Objective) | At Project Brief stage | |
| Denbighshire replacement Local Development Plan | At Business Case stage | |
| Edward Henry Street | On Target Better | No exception |
| Additional Council Housing Developments (Equality Objective) | On Target Better | No exception |
| Work with Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to contribute to progressing Rhyl Residential Strategy | Experiencing Obstacles | There has been no update since 10 May (where this was 'yellow', experiencing obstacles). This work will be discussed on the Forward Work Plan of the Prosperous Denbighshire Board to see whether or not it should continue. |
| Develop a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing | Complete | |
| Signpost to Welsh Government's NEST Scheme | Complete | |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|-------------------|--------------|
| Promote and administer the Energy Company Obligation Scheme (ECO4) via Flintshire County Council – energy efficiency in private sector dwellings | On Target Same | No exception |

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council’s website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of categories. The [Communities Scrutiny Committee](#) considered a report in May regarding the voids maintenance process and challenge to the budget, mainly as a result of impacts of the new Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) 2023. In May, [Cabinet](#) considered the draft Local Housing Market Assessment for Denbighshire, seeking approval of its submission to Welsh Government. The [Communities Scrutiny Committee](#), in September, considered an update on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and homelessness triage service. In September, [Partnership Scrutiny Committee](#) considered the draft Asset Management Strategy for 2024 to 2029.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Work collaboratively with communities and partners to deliver projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic growth](#)

The measures status for this theme has been summarised overall as a ‘Priority for Improvement’. However, it should be noted that these include broad and long-term indicators such as those from the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation and stakeholder survey responses.

In September 2023, the UK Government launched the Long-Term Plan for Towns initiative as part of its Levelling Up programme. In March 2024, it was announced that Rhyl would receive circa £20m as one of the second tranche of towns to be included in the initiative.

The funding was awarded to Denbighshire County Council and we remain accountable for the funding and for delivery of the plan. In May, [Cabinet](#) received and supported the actions to be taken to meet the requirements of the funding, which included the creation of a new Town Board and the appointment of an independent [Chair](#). A further report to [Cabinet](#) in June confirmed these arrangements and Cabinet was also advised of actions required by the Board to be undertaken by 1 November 2024, which include agreeing governance, engagement plans, reviewing data and developing a ten year vision and a delivery plan for the first three years.

The council has also secured funding from the Welsh Government Transforming Towns Programme to offer the Transforming Towns Property Development Grant to regenerate commercial properties located in Rhyl town centre. [Applications opened in August.](#)

[Develop an economic strategy](#)

Recognising the local and global economic challenges it faces, the council is still developing an Economic Strategy. We are currently consulting on an assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats as part of the first phase of development.

We can now report that Denbighshire's tourism figures have seen a rise for 2023 in comparison to the previous year. The latest STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures show that the total visitor numbers for Denbighshire in 2023 reached 6.39 million, an increase of almost 6% (5.9%) in comparison to 2022 figures. The data also shows that the number of day visitors to the county for 2023 was 4.72 million, a 7.5% change when compared to 2022. The total economic impact of tourism was £736.05 million, an increase of 17.1% on the previous year and is considered 'Excellent'.

[Work in partnership to support an economy that promotes fair work, justice, and socially responsible public procurement, benefitting the local supply chain and local communities \(Equality Objective\)](#)

The total spend via procurement, including grant funding, during the 2023 to 2024 financial year was £226,978,810; £83,426,447 of this being spent within Denbighshire (35.2%). 56% of relevant procurements contained community benefits and work is ongoing to align these with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023. Our April to June performance was 'Excellent' and reflects two significant contracts that were awarded to Denbighshire-based construction companies during that time. Community benefits were also included in all contracts during April to June. This level of performance cannot be

sustained every quarter because it largely depends on the scale of procurements, but it does demonstrate that good procurement can deliver excellent results.

[Support access to education, employment, services, goods, and activities](#)

There are a number of benchmarked measures that give an indication of performance compared to other local authorities in Wales. The data for A, B and C classified roads that are in overall poor condition for 2023 to 2024 is unavailable. The percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) has seen an improvement from 27.60% in April to June to 44% between July and September. However, this remains a 'Priority for Improvement' (and a continuing Improvement Action) as the service continues to struggle with meeting the demands of the asset within the limited budgetary and staffing resources available.

Case Study: [Young Carer Secures Full-Time Employment After Work Placement](#)

Mali, a dedicated young carer, has transitioned into full-time employment following a Working Denbighshire Work Start placement. Mali's journey began with a "Taster to Care" training course and work experience, leading her to secure a 12-week placement at Dolwen Care Home. Supported by her Work Start Placement Mentor, Mali completed the application process for a permanent 24-hour contract at Dolwen Care Home and she accepted the job on her 18th birthday. Mali's exceptional performance during the placement earned her a permanent position, marking a significant step towards a prosperous career. This case study also links to efforts under our [A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire theme](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment please see our [learning and growing theme](#) and the [well-run, high performing council](#) for further activity connected to the local economy.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| The percentage of working age people who are claiming Out of Work Benefits - Benchmarked Nationally | 3.6% Priority to Improve Better | 3.5% Priority to Improve Better | 3.8% Priority to Improve Worse | Data pending | Data pending |
| The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally | 15.90% Priority to Improve Worse | 41.8% Excellent Better | 38.6% Good Worse | 78% Excellent Better | 36% Good Worse |
| The cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits – Benchmarked Locally | 53.3% Good Worse | 55.60% Good Better | 56.00% Good Better | 100% Excellent Better | 87% Excellent Worse |
| Year to date average for the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) Benchmarked Locally | 23.33% Priority to Improve Worse | 52.33% Priority to Improve Better | 42.00% Priority to Improve Worse | 27.60% Priority to Improve Worse | 44.00% Priority to Improve Better |

Annual or Biennial Measures

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|--|--------------|
| The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective) | 28.1% Priority to Improve Better | Data pending |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Average gross annual pay for people who live in the area and work full time (£) - Benchmarked Nationally | 27,121 Priority to Improve Better | Data pending |
| External funding (in pounds) secured for economic development – Count Only | No data. New to 2023 to 2024 | £1,041,250 |
| STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) - Benchmarked Locally | £628.58m Excellent Better | £736.05 Excellent Better |
| Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally | 56 Priority to Improve Worse | Data pending |
| Deaths of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally | 69 Priority to Improve Better | Data pending |
| The percentage of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally | 2.2% Excellent Better | Data unavailable |
| The percentage of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally | 3.5% Excellent Better | Data unavailable |
| The percentage of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally | 16.4% Priority to Improve Worse | Data unavailable |
| The percentage of premises that receive less than 30Mbps broadband speed - Count Only | 4.57% | 3.88% |
| The percentage of premises that receive less than 10Mbps broadband speed - Count Only | 2.88% | 2.4% |

Stakeholder Survey

| Title | 2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree | 2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree |
|---|---|---|
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has a prosperous economy that provides access to the right skills, jobs, and income - Benchmarked Locally | 40% Priority to Improve | 30% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the transport and road infrastructure to support thriving, cohesive, and well-connected communities - Benchmarked Locally | 31% Priority to Improve | 28% Priority to Improve Worse |
| 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 | 52.2% Acceptable | 52% Acceptable Same |
| 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 (Welsh Language and Culture) | 51% Acceptable | 49% Priority to Improve Worse |

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

| Title | Status | Exception |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Programme: Shared Prosperity Fund | On Target | No exception |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| | Same | |
| Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd South | Experiencing Obstacles Same | The tight delivery timeframe remaining for sub-project 3d (Active Travel) and the uncertainty over the budget position is a concern. |
| Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd West | Experiencing Obstacles Same | There is a level of uncertainty and increased risks that require monitoring and mitigation at this stage of the programme |
| Placeholder: Levelling Up Fund Round 3 – Vale of Clwyd | At project brief stage | Awaiting final confirmation from UK Government. Plans for funding for this year and next year are expected to be released in October. |
| Enabling and supporting North Wales Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales | Experiencing Obstacles Same | Quarterly reports are provided to the Partnership Scrutiny Committee. The annual report from Ambition North Wales will be presented in November |
| Former North Wales Hospital | At Risk Same | The project remains ‘At Risk’ until all the necessary funding and planning agreements are in place. |
| Queen’s Buildings Rhyl | At Risk Worse | ‘At Risk’ due to delays in securing an operator to manage and funding deadlines. |
| Coordinating Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding programme streams | On Target Same | No exception |
| Develop Town Centre Place Making Plans | On Target Same | No exception |
| Develop the council’s new Economic Strategy (Welsh Language and Culture) | On Target Same | No exception |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Victorian Post Office (Rhyl) | On Target Same | No exception |
| Progress the Rhyl Public Realm Strategy | Experiencing Obstacles Same | Discussions about the best way forward with the Strategy are ongoing. |
| Reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach (Rhyl promenade) | At Risk Worse | The project is currently on hold due to LUF3 UK Government funding. |
| Seeking to improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties | At Risk Worse | The Planning Compliance Team has halved, and this is expected to result in targets for this project being missed. |
| Co-Relocation of Rhyl Tourist Information Centre and Rhyl Museum | At business case stage | No exception |
| Develop the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Tourism Plan and work with local businesses to develop the actions | On Target Same | No exception |
| Deliver the Denbighshire Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027 | On Target Same | No exception |
| Raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for adults who work in the business community (Welsh Language and Culture) | On Target Same | No exception |
| Complete feasibility report for move-on accommodation at St Asaph Business Park | On Target Same | No exception |
| Develop a Community Benefits Framework to align with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act | Experiencing Obstacles Same | This is complete, as far as possible, while we await full implementation of the Act. Reporting on the duty will be reliant on contract management reporting. |
| Aim to deliver the most viable option to replace the Llannerch Bridge | On Target Same | No exception |
| Contribute to the development of the new Regional Transport Plan | On Target Same | No exception |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| Work with partners on the proposed designation of a National Park in North East Wales (Welsh Language and Culture) | On Target Same | No exception |
| 3rd Generation - North Wales Construction Framework | Complete | The Framework has been launched. |

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council's website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of categories. In April, we reported on another successful [March For Business](#). Through the Transforming Towns Grant provided by Welsh Government, we managed to work with a number of businesses and business owners in Rhyl, helping them to add [visual improvements to their buildings](#). In April, [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) received a report on Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

Corporate Plan Update

[Ensure that the council's social care offer is of a high standard](#)

There continues to be a steady increase in the number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with the right type of specialist equipment. Some recognised benefits of right-sizing care include improved outcomes for citizens and improved staff efficiency. With regard to projects in relation to this theme, the council has a number of ongoing activities in support of those with additional learning or complex needs, as can be seen in the table of projects below. There has been a change in delivery confidence to 'Experiencing Obstacles' for the project at Ysgol Tir Morfa to develop a hydrotherapy facility at the school. Successful delivery remains probable, though delays are likely due to the funding and design work required to mitigate surface water drainage issues.

In July, the council's [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) considered the draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023 to 2024, endorsing it as a clear account of the council's performance whilst acknowledging the financial and resource pressures within which the services are operating. At the same meeting, the Committee endorsed the [Cefndy year end report 2023 to 2024](#), noting the progress made in planning for the future viability of the enterprise. July also saw the council's [Cabinet](#) consider a report on the replacement of the Social Care Information Management System. The council's [Governance and Audit Committee](#) reviewed the recent Care Inspectorate Wales inspection report on Dolwen Care Centre, fully supporting the positive inspection report. In news related to the council's social care offer, topics included local authority [fostering services](#), [Hafan Deg Day Centre](#), the [Micro-provider initiative](#), [adaptation in social care](#), and the [Community Resources Team](#).

[Support the well-being, mental-health, and resilience of individuals within communities \(Equality Objective\)](#)

The Talking Points service takes place in libraries across Denbighshire and is a way for people to find out what help and support is available in their local area to improve health

and well-being. The number of people supported at Talking Points has increased since the previous reporting period and the percentage of citizens accessing this support who did not need to be referred into the Adult Social Care Service has also increased to 99%.

Case study: Future Generations thinking

Talking Points is an example of the way the council is applying the five ways of working for the well-being of future generations, by thinking about the long-term needs of our citizens, working collaboratively with partners in health services to prevent problems from worsening, increasing involvement by reaching out to people in their communities, whilst taking an integrated approach to supporting other well-being goals including those that are social and cultural as well as the goals of our partner organisations such as the local health board.

During the period we publicised topics such as [Ageing Well](#), [support for people living with dementia](#), [mental health support](#), raising [mental health awareness](#), and [community food](#) initiatives.

Promote personal and community well-being

A good number of community well-being projects have received support from the council during this period. Many of these projects provide support to citizens in relation to cost-of-living pressures. Key projects include developing Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the county and the 'Cogog' project supporting community food initiatives, which is designed to address issues of food waste and food poverty. Both of these are 'On Target.' The Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project continues to report an 'At Risk' delivery confidence status and this is due to being behind schedule. There has been successful collaboration between the two organisations, though joint arrangements around funding are yet to be finalised.

We publicised a range of news this period related to Welsh language, culture and heritage included the [Summer Reading Challenge](#) and [art workshops](#) at libraries; [young rangers](#) volunteering; [pupils volunteering](#) with the Salvation Army; Ruthin Gaol [immersive activity](#) and [summer events](#); [St Asaph Workhouse](#) events; [Plas Newydd volunteering](#); and North East Wales Archives [funding](#), [digital content](#), and [1920s](#) events.

Foster community cohesion by ensuring people are protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation (Equality Objective)

The council continues to monitor the prevalence of reported domestic abuse, hate crime and youth offending in Denbighshire. According to North Wales Police, repeat victims are people who have been a victim of crime on three or more occasions in 12 months. There were 207 repeat victims, and 48 repeat offenders of domestic abuse reported during this period. In comparison to the same period last year, for reported repeat victims this is a decrease of around 26% (from 279) and for reported repeat offenders this is an increase of around 30% (from 37). Reports from the Domestic Abuse Support Unit show that referral rates in Denbighshire have remained above 400 each quarter since April 2024, and that 27 of the 433 referrals recorded between July and September were for children. The number of hate crimes reported for Denbighshire to North Wales Police was 48 between April and June, with the majority of those categorised as related to sexual orientation. Between July and September, 46 reports were made, with the majority of those categorised as racial hate crime.

The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire was reported as 106 for July to September, this is an increase of around 39% from the same period last year (at which point the number was 65). In July, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) considered a report by the Corporate Director for Social Services and Education regarding feedback on the recently published HMIP Joint Inspection of Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service. Of the 12 areas rated, 2 were deemed inadequate: governance and leadership and partnerships and services. Related to these, seven recommendations were made. The Committee acknowledged that the report did not contain good news; however, good comments ran throughout the report. The committee sought and was given reassurance that the actions identified within the report would be carried out. It was agreed that the Denbighshire Youth Justice Service Board and Partnership be discussed at the relevant scrutiny committee.

In September, the council's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered the [Community Safety Partnership Annual Update for April 2023 to March 2024](#), accepting the performance update within the report. In other news related to community cohesion, topics included Rhyl town centre [Public Space Protection Order](#), [Armed Forces Day](#), and [Emergency Services Day](#).

[Continue to support and resettle refugees through the UK Global Resettlement Scheme, in support of Wales’s declaration to be a Nation of Sanctuary \(Equality Objective\)](#)

The council continues to support unaccompanied asylum seeking children, 15 of whom were looked after by the council between April and June, and 14 of whom were looked after by the council between July and September.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For information about our work to reduce deprivation and inequality, please see our [prosperous](#) and [well-run, high performing council](#) themes respectively. For further detail around our work to support learning, development and well-being, see our [Learning and Growing](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| The percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse - Benchmarked Locally | 99% Excellent Worse | 96.5% Excellent Worse | 98% Excellent Better | 98% Excellent Same | 97% Excellent Worse |
| The number of referrals and enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway - Count Only | 4,020 | 3,731 | 4,001 | 4,169 | 2,548 |
| The number of children looked after in Denbighshire – Count Only | 206 | 209 | 210 | 207 | 196 |

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| The number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with the right type of specialist equipment – Baseline Year | 11 | 16 | 12 | 22 | 31 |
| The percentage of schools in the county using the Public Health Wales Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Tool – Benchmarked Locally | No data. | 66% Acceptable Better | 67% Acceptable Better | 67% Acceptable Same | 67% Acceptable Same |
| The number of Single Point of Access contacts for information, advice and assistance – Count Only | 4,911 | 4,821 | 4,259 | 4,936 | 5,075 |
| The number of Talking Point contacts for information, advice and assistance (libraries, One Stop Shops and hosted by Community Navigators etc) - Count Only | 218 | 214 | 194 | 305 | 297 |
| The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care - Baseline Year | 87% | 97% | 92% | 97% | 99% |
| The number of projects or groups supported by the Community Resilience Team - Benchmarked Locally | 73 Excellent Worse | 75 Excellent Better | 53 Acceptable Worse | 87 Excellent Better | 61 Good Worse |

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 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 (Equality Objective) | 279 | 360 | 490 | 128 | 207 |
| The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat offenders of Domestic Abuse reported (3 or more in 12 months) - Count Only (Equality Objective) | 37 | 63 | 88 | 23 | 48 |
| The number of referrals to the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit North Wales (DASU) for Denbighshire to support victims of domestic abuse – Count Only (Equality Objective) | Data reported from January 2024 | Data reported from January 2024 | 382 | 466 | 433 |
| Denbighshire hate crimes reported (from North Wales Police) – Count Only (Equality Objective) | 54 | 52 | 34 | 48 | 46 |
| The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire – Baseline Year | 65 | 78 | 78 | 117 | 106 |
| The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) looked after by | 20 | 18 | 17 | 15 | 14 |

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Denbighshire – Count Only | | | | | |

Annual or Biennial Measures

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally | 77% Priority to Improve Better | 65% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of child protection conferences held within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally | 95% Good Better | 93% Acceptable Worse |
| The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided - Count Only | 1,159 | 1,094 |
| The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year (cumulative) – Count Only (Equality Objective) | 401 | 370 |
| Number of micro providers in existence in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally | 30 Excellent | 57 Excellent Better |
| The number of schools that have achieved Trauma Informed School status by 2027 - Benchmarked Locally | 1 Excellent | 1 Priority to Improve Worse |
| The number of young people who receive school-based counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally | 338 Acceptable Better | 301 Acceptable Worse |
| The number of contacts provided through the council's Edge of Care volunteer service - Count Only | 795 | 333 |
| The cumulative number of families resettled within Denbighshire – Count Only (Equality Objective) | 41 | 50 |

Stakeholder Survey

| Title | 2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree | 2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree |
|--|---|---|
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree 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 | 55% Acceptable | 46% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the social infrastructure needed to support personal and community well-being – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 62% Acceptable | 66% Good Better |
| 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 (Equality Objective) | 46% Priority to Improve | 53% Acceptable Better |

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| Monitor and implement requirements of Foster Wales and monitor effectiveness of national approach. | On Target Same | No exception |
| Implement Post 16 of Additional Learning Needs work | Experiencing Obstacles Same | The regional inclusion group continues to seek further information from Welsh Government. |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Develop an in-county residential short breaks and emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire | On Target Same | No exception |
| Implement and embed the Autism Code of Practice requirements at local authority level across Children's Services. | Experiencing Obstacles Same | Numerous workstreams are progressing with key partners and support is available to people who are awaiting a diagnostic assessment. |
| 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 Same | No exception |
| Ysgol Tir Morfa - Hydrotherapy pool | Experiencing obstacles Worse | This is delayed due to the availability of funding and design work required to mitigate surface water drainage issues. |
| Work with local unpaid carers to identify the respite opportunities they need, and how barriers are overcome to enable this. | On Target Same | No exception |
| Work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire, with World Health Organisation, in partnership with Ageing Well in Denbighshire multi-agency group. | On Target Same | No exception |
| Work in partnership regionally to contribute to the embedding of the All Wales Dementia Pathway of Standards | On Target Same | No exception |
| Progress towards digitalisation of telecare services before the 2025 deadline for ceasing of analogue telephone services. | On Target Better | No exception |
| Bruton Park, Rhyl (working with Bruton Park residents to maximise community well-being). | On Target Same | No exception |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|---|---------------------|---|
| Develop Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the County. | On Target Better | No exception |
| Develop and deliver the county wide Food Strategy and Food Partnership Network (including social supermarket project – Cogog) around Denbighshire | On Target Same | No exception |
| Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project | At Risk Same | Delivery of the project is behind schedule and joint arrangements around funding are yet to be finalised. |

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council's website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of categories. At September's meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee considered an information report on [Urgent and Emergency Care: Flow out of Hospital – North Wales Region](#) and recommended that the item be referred at the relevant scrutiny committee for discussion. In September, the council's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered the [North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2023 to 2024](#), taking account of the work undertaken by the Board.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Promote the learning and development of our children and young people](#) [\(Equality Objective\)](#)

Between July and September, 642 children took part in the childcare offer across Denbighshire, which is considered as 'Good' performance given this is always the quietest period as the children start school. We plan to improve the way we work with schools to collect data. This includes data to help us monitor bullying in schools and the use of the Welsh language in education. The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures rose from 3 to 4, which is 'Acceptable'. Christ the Word Catholic School remained in Special Measures and Ysgol Clawdd Offa was in need of Significant Improvement. These are the two statutory categories into which schools may be placed by the inspectorate if they are causing concern, with Special Measures being the category of highest concern. Ysgol Pendref and Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn were in Estyn Review, a status applied if inspectors have seriously considered but rejected placing a school in a statutory category, but are concerned that follow-up action is necessary. Developments in regional school improvement continued to be carefully monitored in the light of the impending cessation of GwE as the regional school improvement service for North Wales. The council is working on creating a new project to ensure that progress continues in this area of work and updates will be provided in time.

Attendance in primary and secondary schools for the academic year 2023 to 2024 improved, though the figures remain a 'Priority for Improvement' at 92.3% and 88.2% respectively. In news related to learning and development, there was an update on the expansion of the [Flying Start](#) childcare offer, an article detailing the installation of a [sensory path](#) in Rhyl, and guidance on Denbighshire's new [schools admissions system](#). During the period, school pupils celebrated [GCSE results](#), [A Level results](#), and the [80th anniversary of D-day](#).

Provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the needs of pupils, families, and the wider community, including working with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme

The council continued to progress its long-term plans for delivering this pledge. Unfortunately, delays in the progression of certain projects within the Modernising Education Programme - designed to provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the current and future needs of pupils and families as part of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme meant that this stream of work remained 'At Risk.' The Community Focussed Schools pilot project in Prestatyn remained 'On Target' and continued to strengthen, with work being undertaken to grow this initiative. In April, [Cabinet](#) approved the submission to Welsh Government of the draft Strategic Outline Programme for the Sustainable Communities for Learning. In May, the [Partnerships Scrutiny Committee](#), considered a review of the Cabinet decision relating to Sustainable Communities for Learning, in accordance with the Council's call-in procedure, and it was resolved that Cabinet's original decision be upheld.

Work with partners to ensure that people of all ages, including those who are vulnerable or in our care, are resilient and prepared for employment, further education, or training (Equality Objective)

We are no longer able to report on Llwybrau data, as it has not been possible to secure funding to extend the project, which supported young people to reduce their risk of disengagement. There was continued development of relationships with colleges and further education institutions following the closure of Llwybrau and the council continued to work collaboratively with partners such as Ambition North Wales and the Regional Skills Partnership, to enhance people's opportunities to develop skills and receive training. The council's Working Denbighshire Service continued to support citizens seeking employment, further education or training through the [Work Start Scheme](#). We have now received the results of the Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) surveys which were conducted during the 2023 to 2024 academic year and these show that a 'Good' proportion (81%) of pupils responded positively against feelings about school.

Improving the well-being of children from low income and disadvantaged families (Equality Objective)

Projects in support of this pledge were 'On Target', including the roll-out of [universal free school meals](#) for all primary school pupils. We are working on gathering data around the numbers of primary and secondary school pupils that are eligible (based on household income) for free school meals as this will help us to understand the levels of child poverty in Denbighshire. We will publish this data as soon as it is available. The council also issued guidance for families to support them to access the [School Essentials Grant](#). In September, [County Council](#) considered and agreed a notice of motion brought by the Plaid Cymru group proposing that the council write to all the members of parliament who represent Wales in Westminster on the matter of the two-child benefit cap supporting the need to abolish it.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [healthier, happier and caring theme](#) and for further detail around our work to support employment and the economy see our [prosperous](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| The number of children taking part in the childcare offer – Benchmarked Locally | 624 Good Better | 701 Excellent Better | 772 Excellent Better | 822 Excellent Better | 642 Good Worse |
| The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures – Benchmarked Locally | 2 Good Same | 2 Good Same | 3 Acceptable Worse | 4 Acceptable Worse | 4 Acceptable Worse |

Annual or Biennial Measures

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally | 82% Excellent Better | 83% Excellent Better |
| The percentage of parents that have reported a positive impact through attending Bookstart and Rhyme-time – Benchmarked Locally | 99% Excellent | 99% Excellent Same |
| The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – Benchmarked Locally | 85% Good Worse | 81% Good Worse |
| The number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | No data | Data expected October 2024 |
| The percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools – Benchmarked Locally | 90.8% Priority to Improve Worse | 92.3% Priority to Improve Better |
| The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools – Benchmarked Locally | 86% Priority to Improve Worse | 88.2% Priority to Improve Better |
| The percentage of reception pupils receiving Welsh medium education - Count Only (Welsh Language and Culture) | 27.4% | 28.4% |
| 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 Year 11 Leavers from schools know Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), at the preceding 31 August in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally | 2.3% Priority to Improve Worse | 2.4% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of Year 11 pupils that do not have an identified Post-16 pathway in place – Benchmarked Locally | 10.5% Priority to Improve Worse | 2.4% Good Better |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The percentage of children or young people who are looked after that have a Personal Education Plan in place – Benchmarked Locally | 96% Good Worse | 98% Good Better |
| The percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the collection year – Count Only | 73% Excellent Better | 75% Excellent Better |
| The percentage of primary school pupils assessed as eligible for Free School Meals (Denbighshire) – Benchmarked Locally | Data expected October 2024 | Data expected October 2024 |
| The percentage of secondary school pupils assessed as eligible for Free School Meals (Denbighshire) – Benchmarked Locally | Data expected October 2024 | Data expected October 2024 |
| The percentage of primary school pupils taking up the offer of a free school meal – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 61% Priority to Improve Worse | 76% Excellent Better |
| The percentage of secondary school pupils taking up the offer of a free school meal – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 76% Excellent Better | 81% Excellent Better |
| The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally | 82% Excellent Better | 83% Excellent Better |

Stakeholder Survey

| Title | 2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree | 2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree |
|--|---|---|
| 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 | 62% Acceptable | 56% Acceptable Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is a county where the Welsh language is a living, | 62% Acceptable | 56% Acceptable |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree | 2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree |
|---|---|---|
| thriving language - Benchmarked Locally (Welsh Language and Culture) | | Worse |

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

| Title | Status | Exception |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Flying Start Expansion | On Target Same | No exception |
| Implement School Improvement Guidance: Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability | Experiencing Obstacles Same | Delayed by reforms in the Welsh Government School Improvement Partnership Programme. |
| Support the regional project on Emotional Health, Well-being and Resilience Framework, which will provide resources for parents | On Target Better | No exception |
| Support schools in developing digital competency through educational leadership of the EdTech project | Experiencing Obstacles Same | A change in systems is required and the Schools Digital Strategy will need to be revised to reflect these changes, which were overseen by Welsh Government. |
| Implement the WESP to support 1 million speakers by 2050 (Welsh Language and Culture) | On Target Same | No exception |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 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 | No exception |
| Implement requirements of the of ALN Reform Act within Education and Children's Services to ensure compliance | On Target Same | No exception |
| Modernising Education Programme | At Risk Same | Delays continue in the progression of Sustainable Communities for Learning projects. |
| Community Focussed Schools: Prestatyn High Pilot | On Target Same | No exception |
| 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 | Experiencing obstacles Worse | We are working with the Ambition Board on a procurement and social value conference which will be held in November. |
| Through our Community Benefits Policy, secure business led strategy workshops for the benefit of residents seeking to upskill | Experiencing obstacles Same | We are still working with Balfour Beatty to deliver workshops. |
| Universal Free School Meals for all Primary School Pupils (Equality Objective) | On Target Same | No exception |
| Enhance the School Holiday Enrichment Programme to support children to eat well | On Target Same | No exception |
| Reducing the impact of poverty on Education Attainment, including implementing the Price of Poverty project (Equality Objective) | On Target Same | No exception |

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. We have not listed all of the items here. The council's website contains a wealth of news, which can be found on our [news](#) page and filtered by a range of

categories. In June, the council's [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) considered, and was satisfied with, a report on the progress made in addressing the recommendations in the 2018 Estyn Inspection Report of Denbighshire County Council education services. In July, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) received a report regarding the recent CIW and Estyn inspection at Little Acorns at Christ the Word and fully supported the positive inspection report. In September, the council's Performance Scrutiny Committee received and discussed the [Additional Learning Needs Transformation Update](#) report. At the same meeting, the Committee considered a report on the current position with regards to [School Attendance And Engagement In Education](#). The Committee also reviewed the [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) Transformation Update](#) report. Finally, the Committee considered a report providing an update on the progress made by schools since the [Curriculum for Wales](#) became statutory in September 2022.

A Greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Deliver our Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030](#)

The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy was carried out during 2023 to 2024. The final version following consultation and feedback received was submitted for adoption by Cabinet and Council in June 2024. The document approved now being entitled : [Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Nature Strategy 2021/22 to 2029/30 \(Year 3 Updated Version\)](#).

There are a number of key performance indicators 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. Data for the year 2023 to 2024 is now contained within this report. The percentage of council owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness has very slightly increased to 42.5% in 2023 to 2024 and indicates we are making 'Acceptable' progress towards becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030.

Our 2023 to 2024 carbon emissions data has now been reported to Welsh Government as part of the annual public sector reporting. The Council's Net Carbon Zero position as at 31 March 2024 is 12,653 tonnes, which, by 2030, needs to be zero tonnes. This indicator remains a 'Priority for Improvement'.

The total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains rose from 36,912 in 2022 to 2023 to 50,233 in 2023 to 2024. The target is a reduction by 35% from 2019/20 baseline. This indicator remains as a 'Priority for Improvement'.

The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that insufficient progress is being made to meet the 2030 goal of net zero. The financial pressures all local authorities are facing now and in the coming years will continue to impact on that pace. We have

maintained our Climate and Ecological Improvement ambition and have not adjusted our targets - despite their challenge.

Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

In June 2024 we introduced a new recycling system to help us meet Welsh Government's 70% recycling target which has been set for all local authorities in Wales. The new household waste collection model is a specific project within this Greener theme because it will help us to increase the quantity and quality of recycling collected from households and increase opportunities for "closed loop recycling". Through adoption of low carbon technologies at the new Waste Transfer Station and inclusion of infrastructure for Zero and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, the aim is to minimise the impact of the service in support of the wider corporate goals on net zero by 2030. The project also supports the Prosperous theme, which aims to support economic recovery, capitalising on opportunities to enable residents to access decent employment and income. The project has led to the creation of additional jobs within the waste service. In addition, the building of the new depot enabled the creation and protection of many local private sector jobs. We worked with four important local businesses at the Colomendy Business Park, Denbigh, as part of the development of the new Depot. This allowed them to unlock and develop new employment land to enable those four businesses to remain in Denbigh and expand their operations.

It soon became apparent after the roll out of the new service that some of the assumptions were flawed. The main issue being some of the daily recycling rounds had been designed with too many properties requiring collection. This meant we were seeing several rounds per day not completing, resulting in large and unacceptable numbers of missed collections. At [Cabinet](#) in June, the Leader raised the roll out of the new recycling and waste collection service as an urgent item, apologising on behalf of the council to residents affected by problems associated with the roll out of the new service and to elected members who had been working hard on behalf of residents. He also thanked members for reporting missed collections in their wards and residents for their patience and efforts in recycling. A report will be taken to Cabinet on 1 October regarding [Additional resources required for the new weekly trollibocs recycling service and associated waste collection functions](#). There will be a full review of how the roll out was planned and implemented, which will include an examination of the assumptions underpinning the design of the new service. Elected Members and residents will be involved in the review.

[Support communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change](#)

Case study: Rhyl Coastal Defence Scheme provides work experience

This is an example of the community benefits that can be delivered through our procurement and the ways in which our themes complement each other. The [work experience](#) was arranged between the council's Llwybrau project (that supports young people at risk from disengaging from education) and Balfour Beatty, the contractor undertaking the works for the Rhyl and Prestatyn Coastal Defence schemes. Nine young people from Rhyl College and Christ the Word Schol were given the work experience placements to gain an insight into civil engineering.

Two participants said: "I think the positives about Balfour Beatty are that what they are doing is amazing and will help Rhyl out in the long run. The staff are also really nice and the stuff behind how machines work and what the actual plan is for the sea defences is really interesting."

"I liked how nice the people were and how they treat you with respect. I really enjoyed going out on site to see how things get done and why they do it."

[Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan that makes travel and tourism within our county 'greener'](#)

The Sustainable Transport Plan project has now been closed and removed from the Corporate Plan as recommended in our last report. Working closely with the Corporate Joint Committee on the Regional Transport Plan is now the council's priority going forward. The unreported Active Travel measures have also been removed. To learn more about active travel you can visit the [Active Travel page](#) on our website.

We are now able to report the cumulative number of journeys using the Fflecsi bus service and cumulative number of concessionary journeys and have provided data in this report.

[Support our county's green infrastructure](#)

By August, our [EV charging public network](#) reached its first anniversary by providing thousands of green miles for motorists to travel around Denbighshire. The network located at all towns have provided 239,146kwh of charging for motorists using the

facilities, the equivalent of 837,000 miles of greener lower carbon travelling and nearly 34 times travelling around the circumference of the earth.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

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

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cumulative number of journeys using Fflecsi bus services – Count Only | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | 3,644 | 6,915 |
| Cumulative number of concessionary journeys – Count Only | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | 178,922 | 370,709 |

Annual or Biennial Measures

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|--|--|
| Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains) – Benchmarked Locally | 12,062 Priority to Improve Worse | 12,653 Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness – Benchmarked Locally | 42.00% Acceptable Better | 42.50% Acceptable Better |
| Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through fleet – Benchmarked Locally | 2,302 Acceptable Better | 2,166 Acceptable Better |
| Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through business travel – Benchmarked Locally | 251 Excellent Worse | 276 Excellent Worse |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|---|--|
| Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains– Benchmarked Locally | 36,912 Priority to Improve Priority | 50,233 Priority to Improve Worse |
| Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed in our buildings (owned and operated) - Count Only | 1Mw | 1.190Mw |
| The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted - Benchmarked Nationally | 65.91% Good Worse | 67.59% Excellent Better |
| The number of properties with a high or medium risk of flooding (DCC wide) - Count Only | 1,171 | 1,171 |

Stakeholder Survey

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|---|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | With an opinion, and agree | With an opinion, and agree |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is resilient against the impacts of climate change and nature's decline - Benchmarked Locally | 52% Acceptable | 44% Priority to Improve Worse |

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Welsh Government's next Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026. Until new data is published please refer to our [Performance Self-Assessment Update: July to September 2023 report](#).

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Programme: Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 – 2030 | Experiencing Obstacles Same | This is due to delays in some projects and their delivery not being at the |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|---------------------|---|
| | | pace required to meet our ambition. |
| Deliver the annual programme of Ash Dieback work | On Target Same | No exception |
| Rhyl Green Infrastructure | On Target Same | No exception |
| Remodelling Waste Service Operations | At Risk Worse | The roll out of the new service hasn't gone entirely to plan and the service has encountered a variety of issues. |
| Reduce plastics in schools and promote recycling in relation to the new waste model | On Target Better | No exception |
| Develop and implement a new Denbighshire Flood Risk Management Strategy for the county | On Target Same | No exception |
| Prestatyn Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme | On Target Same | No exception |
| Rhyl Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme | On Target Same | No exception |
| 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 Better | No exception |
| Work with Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board to develop and assess our organisation's climate risk resilience | On Target New | No exception |

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme. The council's website contains a wealth of news about nature, our local environment and community activity around climate change, which can be found on our [news](#) page by applying the filter for "Climate and ecological change".

As part of the current programme of work on the Rhyl Coastal Defence scheme, Balfour Beatty will also be undertaking the demolition of the old SeaQuarium building [to improve the public realm](#) and declutter the promenade. In September, [Cabinet](#) agreed to endorse a [Local Area Energy Plan \(LAEP\)](#) for the county. The LAEP is an evidence-based, holistic plan that outlines the scale of change and opportunity to decarbonise Denbighshire's local energy system.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

[Embed a positive “one council” culture \(Equality Objective\)](#)

This last period has been challenging for the Council as the new waste collection and recycling service has had a difficult start (the significant increase in external complaints upheld or partly upheld reflects this). We pulled together as “One Council” (see our [values and five principles here](#)) to support our waste service, and worked closely with members and residents to understand and resolve issues. We are a learning organisation and are committed to listen and apply the lessons learned to future transformational projects.

Whilst wider communications about the Well-run, high performing council Board (that supports this theme of the Corporate Plan) were postponed during the period, the Board, in April, inputted into the annual self-assessment, service performance challenges and the peer-led Panel Performance Assessment, which has now concluded. Two further workshops were held with office-based staff, and a task and finish group consisting of officers, elected members and partners has progressed ideas about how the council could build stronger relationships with and improve its engagement, support and collaboration with communities and partners, including City, Town and Community Councils. This is likely to contribute to wider efforts to improve engagement in council business, for example Scrutiny Committees, which was also cited as part of the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees 2023 to 2024 provided to [County Council](#) in July. The Board’s July meeting was postponed and will take place in October. The theme for that meeting will be the emerging transformation agenda and how our culture can enable transformation; bringing staff along on that journey and to ensure our values and principles are reflected in the customer experience.

We aim to provide consistently good customer service, and a key part of that is about our systems. During the period, the council signed a new contract with Civica for C360 CRM, our customer relationship management system, until February 2027. This will enable us to consider opportunities to integrate, unify and streamline business operations and IT systems as well seek out digital transformation possibilities.

Case study: Example of our values and principles in action

Officers from across the council have been supporting [Llanfair Community Council | Dyffryn Clwyd DC Community](#) with its Llanfair Playground Planning Application. Our support has ranged from helping with the technical aspects of the Application, to supporting conversations with external funders on timescales.

Performance in relation to the percentage of staff who have had at least one or three one-to-ones in the last 12 months has deteriorated these last two quarters from 91% at the end of March to 72% at the end of September, and is considered a 'Priority for Improvement'. Every Services' performance in relation to one-to-ones will be included in Performance Reports for Service Performance Challenges in November and December this year. Sickness levels corporately have also increased slightly to an average of 9.07 working days / shifts per full time equivalent. Following a review of the thresholds that determine what excellent performance looks like, we have decided to retain existing thresholds rather than update them in line with wider sector averages. Our own thresholds, based on employee absence across all sectors and the public sector, are significantly more stretching and help us to maintain a focus on managing sickness absence. The percentage of employees that have completed all 10 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) has decreased to 45.79% and remains a 'Priority for Improvement'.

[Reduce inequalities by ensuring that the experiences of people from diverse backgrounds, seldom heard groups, and those at a socio-economic disadvantage are heard and inform decision making \(Equality Objective\)](#)

An engagement network of people and groups with protected characteristics has been developed in partnership with the Community Cohesion Team, the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network and Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC). The final list was presented to the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group in April 2024 and will be published on our website.

The Youth Council and youth forums are being relaunched. This work is closely linked our workstream to be closer to communities. A report to the Well-run Board will include recommendations about how we can enable young people's voices to be heard. This work also supports our [healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire theme](#).

Case study: [Denbigh Youth host consultation event for safer bike routes](#)

A group of young people from Denbigh Youth Club recently came together to start a “Bumps and Jumps” campaign to highlight the need for safer biking routes in the town for young people to be able to get out and about and keep active. The idea came when Osian Gregson, 13, who attends Denbigh Youth Club decided to take action after becoming frustrated that there wasn’t anywhere suitable in the town for him and other young people in the area to be able to play out on their bikes safely. He shared his concerns with a Youth Worker who advised him on what he would need to do to get his voice heard. The group also set up a portable pump track at the event to show off some of their biking skills and to exhibit the benefits of a potential pump track in Denbigh. Osian said: “The idea for this campaign came partly from the fact that I love being outside; I would rather be outside than on my PlayStation! But also, not everyone is able to easily get about. Some parents don’t drive and so young people rely on our bikes a lot to get around and I want to be able to feel safe riding from one place to the other in Denbigh. That’s why something like a pump track in the area would be great because it would offer a space for us to go where we can socialise and keep active and not just sit at home.”

[Play our part in achieving one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050, by building a culture and ethos that encourages the daily use of Welsh \(Welsh Language and Culture\)](#)

During the period, a new Welsh Language Officer was appointed and started in post in August. The Officer has recommenced ‘gair y wythnos’, delivered local celebrations on Diwrnod Owain Glyndŵr and will be recommencing monthly ‘paned a sgwrs’ sessions to provide staff with an informal opportunity to practice speaking in Welsh. There is now a cohort of 33 officers participating in Welsh language training and there continues to be a growing use of Welsh formally at committee meetings, and informally in the day-to-day business of the council. A meeting with our Welsh language partners will take place in October, to expand and promote Welsh-medium opportunities, in particular those available to young people in Denbighshire. Notwithstanding these positive developments, the percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning is not increasing and remains ‘Acceptable’. Corporate Support Services: People has been tasked with an action to support and encourage the greater use of Welsh, informally and formally, throughout the council following its Performance Challenge in March 2024. As reported previously, officers have been developing guidance to inform recruitment of staff

with Welsh essential and Welsh desirable skills. The aim is to move to a position whereby every job has, as a minimum, a Level 1 Welsh language skills requirement (some positions will require a Level 5 skill). During the period, we published our [annual report](#) to monitor the work done over the past year to comply with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

[Working collaboratively to alleviate problems with recruitment and retention](#)

A social care workshop was hosted at County Hall in Ruthin on August 1, for people who are looking for a new opportunity to get into the social care field. The event provided information about Denbighshire’s successful social care teams and the specific job vacancies that were available. Information on how to apply was also shared at the event, with the chance for applicants to complete an application form. Interviews were also held on the day and four appointments were made. Another event was held on September 19 focussing on recruiting into vacancies in Domiciliary Support Services, community roles, and roles supporting citizens who are based in the south of Denbighshire, resulting in another four appointments.

Performance Framework: Measures Update

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

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| The percentage of projects whose delivery confidence was updated in the last three months – Benchmarked Locally | 100% Excellent Better | 98% Good Worse | 90% Good Worse | 88 Acceptable Worse | 88 Acceptable Same |

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| The cumulative number of Internal Audit low assurance reports, financial year to date – Benchmarked Locally | 0 Excellent Same | 0 Excellent Same | 0 Excellent Same | 0 Excellent Same | 0 Excellent Same |
| Corporate and Service Budget Variance (£k) – Count Only | 3,446 Priority to Improve Worse | 3,229 Priority to Improve Better | 513 Excellent Better | 0 Excellent Better | -400 Excellent Better |
| Council reserves (£k) – Count Only | 5,531 Excellent Same | 5,600 Excellent Better | 5,577 Excellent Better | 5,531 Excellent Worse | 5,531 Excellent Same |
| The percentage of forecast savings achieved for the year – Benchmarked Locally | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | No data. New to 2024 to 2025 | 45.4% Priority to Improve | 53.3% Priority to Improve Better |
| The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter – Benchmarked Locally | 55% Acceptable Worse | 20% Excellent Better | 44% Good Worse | 80% Priority to Improve Worse | 95% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The rolling average number of working days / shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence – Benchmarked Nationally | 8.82 Priority to Improve Worse | 8.63 Priority to Improve Better | 8.55 Priority to Improve Better | 8.69 Priority to Improve Worse | 9.07 Priority to Improve Worse |

| Title | Quarter 2 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 3 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 4 2023 to 2024 | Quarter 1 2024 to 2025 | Quarter 2 2024 to 2025 |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| 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 | 56% Priority to Improve Worse | 54% Priority to Improve Worse | 91% Priority to Improve Better | 75% Priority to Improve Worse | 72% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of employees that have completed all 10 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 49.8% Priority to Improve Worse | 39.5% Priority to Improve Worse | 48.32% Priority to Improve Worse | 50.06 Priority to Improve Better | 45.79 Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning - Benchmarked Locally (Welsh Language and Culture) | 79.26% Priority to Improve Worse | 82.6% Acceptable Better | 85% Good Better | 84.59 Acceptable Worse | 82.68 Acceptable Worse |

Annual or biennial measures

2020 to 2023 data

| Title | 2020 to 2021 | 2021 to 2022 | 2022 to 2023 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| The percentage of new appointees from applications where it was disclosed that they are either from a racial or religious minority group, have a disability, are gay or bi-sexual, or had their gender reassigned – Count Only (Equality Objective) | 4% | 21% | 20% |

2022 to 2024 data

| Title | 2022 to 2023 | 2023 to 2024 |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| The percentage of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) that are women – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 80.7% Priority to Improve Worse | 80.6% Priority to Improve Better |
| The number of community projects co-produced with the community and third sector - Count Only | No data: does not apply | 15 Excellent |

Stakeholder Survey

| Title | 2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree | 2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree |
|---|---|---|
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council is transparent, well-run, and high performing – Benchmarked Locally | 49% Priority to Improve | 39% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council works well with partners – Benchmarked Locally | 74% Good | 63% Good Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is a good working relationship between political leaders and senior management – Benchmarked Locally | 55% Acceptable | 47% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its performance well – Benchmarked Locally | 53% Acceptable | 43% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its risks and challenges well – Benchmarked Locally | 55% Acceptable | 44% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its finances well – Benchmarked Locally | 48% Priority to Improve | 30% Priority to Improve Worse |

| Title | 2022 to 2023 With an opinion, and agree | 2023 to 2024 With an opinion, and agree |
|--|---|---|
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council has effective long-term plans in place – Benchmarked Locally | 56% Acceptable | 40% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats its workforce well – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 76% Excellent | 67% Good Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council makes best use of its assets and resources – Benchmarked Locally | 35% Priority to Improve | 30% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council purchases its goods and services in a fair and efficient way – Benchmarked Locally | 54% Acceptable | 47% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council acts on the concerns of residents – Benchmarked Locally | 48% Priority to Improve | 44% Priority to Improve Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats all people fairly – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 58% Acceptable | 51% Acceptable Worse |
| The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council's Corporate Plan and priorities reflect the needs of the local community - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective) | 51% Acceptable | 42% Priority to Improve Worse |

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Projects Update

Projects or Activities

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Embed a positive culture of ambition, transparency and continuous improvement by placing our values of | Experiencing Obstacles Worse | Whilst two workshops took place in the period, we need to examine progress by other workstreams to agree next steps. This will |

| Title | Status | Exception |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| integrity, respect, unity, and pride at the heart of everything that we do | | be discussed by the Board in October. |
| Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Be close to our communities (Equality Objective) | On Target Same | No exception |
| Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Have clear performance expectations | Experiencing Obstacles Worse | Two workshops have taken place with staff. A change in staff mood was apparent in the meetings in June. We await further direction from the Board when we meet in October. |
| Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Promote strong staff and elected member relations | Experiencing Obstacles Worse | This has been delayed and will re-commence in January 2025. |
| Well-Run, High Performing Council workstream: Ensure Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work (Equality Objective) | On Target Same | No exception |
| Implement new Panel Performance Assessment Process and report findings to Council | On Target Same | No exception |
| Review and revise the Youth Council for Denbighshire | On Target Better | No exception |
| Undertake an annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan 2022 to 2027 | On Target Same | No exception |
| Improve the information we have about our workforce, including equality information, to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports (Equality Objective) | On Target Same | No exception |
| Subject to the outcome of the corporate conversation regarding corporate contact/customer service, review requirements for and procure a Corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system (including undertaking workshops with members and services to inform development of the new system) | Experiencing Obstacles | The activity has been delayed. The council has now signed a new contract for our CRM system. Workshops to inform further developments to the system will commence in the next few months. |

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. Corporate Planning is about how the council sets out and makes arrangements to deliver on its strategic objectives.

Corporate Plan Governance Arrangements

Since the revised Corporate Plan was unanimously adopted by County Council at its meeting in February 2024, governance structures have subsequently been amended (including revised terms of reference for our Boards) to align with the new themes. This has resulted in the cessation of the Fairer, Safer, More Equal Denbighshire Board, but will place greater importance on the work of the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group. Governance arrangements will be reviewed as part of the planned Corporate Plan Tranche Review¹ taking place in October.

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

Our first (and the first in Wales) Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) took place between 9-12 September 2024. Initial informal feedback was positive and we expect to receive the draft Panel Performance Assessment report in October. We will then be working on a Management Response to the final report which will be presented to Council in January 2025. The Management Response will be developed with input from our Senior Leaders, Cabinet, Governance and Audit Committee.

¹ The purpose of a Tranche Review is to review and evaluate performance and delivery, with an opportunity to both reflect and look ahead to consider progress towards achieving the ambitions set out in our Corporate Plan. Tranche Reviews take place around every six months and are attended by Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.

Transformation Agenda

Work is underway on establishing the council's transformation programme, with governance structures now in place, helping to move the council to a place where it can respond innovatively and collaboratively to the challenges ahead. The Strategic Planning and Performance Team has delivered a number of 'insight' projects during the period including about agricultural estates, city, town and community councils, housing voids, and social care delivery models. A project looking at building control is currently underway.

Training was delivered between May and July in Continuous Improvement theories and practices to support this work. Staff from across various Services participated to ensure the learning is shared across the organisation.

Other developments in the last period

New Ways of Working Journey Checker

We previously committed to an improvement action to consider the findings and recommendations of the Well-being of Future Generations Commissioner's New Ways of Working Journey Checker. Findings of the checker (previously reported) informed the focus of the Panel Performance Assessment and a report about the findings, and their relationship to Well-being Impact Assessments (our integrated impact assessment screening tool), was presented to our Senior Leadership Team in September. The same report will be presented to Cabinet at Cabinet Briefing in October. We are also making improvements to our Well-being Impact Assessment resources, by offering new web pages and training for example, which will also offer information and guidance about the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working ([Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)) and equality, diversity and inclusion.

Financial Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Financial planning relates to the management of our income and expenditure.

Finance Update Reports

In April, [Cabinet](#) was updated on outstanding matters relating to the 2024 to 2025 budget. The report set the scene for budget setting in the medium term (2025 to 2026 – 2027 to 2028) and self-assessed the council's current level of financial resilience and

sustainability. Cabinet approved the commencement of the design phase for Ysgol Bro Elwern, Ysgol Henllan, Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch and Ysgol y Llys projects to enable the full business case to be submitted to the Welsh Government for approval. The same report was considered by [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in April.

At its meeting in [June](#), Cabinet received an update on the council's financial position. The 2023 to 2024 final Revenue Outturn figures were provided. The final position on service and corporate budgets (including schools nondelegated budget underspend of £115k) was an overspend of £513k. On the funding side, there was a small shortfall in Council Tax collection of £163k. This resulted in the requirement to use £676k of the Budget Mitigation reserve to fund the net overspend. The School overspend was £5.258m resulting in a total budget overspend of £5.934m. The 2023 to 2024 budget included savings and efficiencies of £8.172m, of which £6.09m were achieved from corporately held budgets and by schools at £0.82m. Services put in place measures and monitored the remaining £1.26m within overall budgets. Collectively services overspent by £3.2m during the year. Budgetary control measures to mitigate against increasing costs and demand for services, put in place in Autumn 2023 (and detailed in our Performance Update Report October 2023 to March 2024 [here](#)) due to the predicted level of overspend which reached a peak of £4.5m, helped to reduce the overall level of overspend. Most services ended the year with an underspend. To help deliver the overall budget strategy, it is proposed that services do not carry forward any under spends. Education and Children's, Highways and Environmental, and Adult Social and Homelessness Services ended the year in an overspend. Despite budgets increasing in 2023 to 2024, increases in demand and the complexity of delivering, what are mainly statutory services, has outstripped the enhanced budgets. Transfers to and from reserves had also been set out and most of the movements had been budgeted for or had been previously approved.

Cabinet received a Finance Update report in [July](#). The net revenue budget for 2024 to 2025 was £271.021m (£250.793m in 2023 to 2024). In setting its budget for 2024 to 2025 the Council faced pressures of £24.6m from inflationary increases such as pay and increases in demand and costs of providing social care. The increase in Welsh Government funding and in the level of Council Tax meant the 2024 to 2025 budget required service savings and efficiencies of £10.384m. These included:

- Major Savings Proposals – large-scale saving projects (£2.388m)

- Non-Strategic savings – Operational efficiencies/smaller scale savings within Head of Service delegated responsibility in consultation with Lead Members. These include both the proposals already identified in the budget setting report, as well as the further £3m target given to Heads of Service at the time of setting the budget to enable a balanced budget to be set (£5.296m)
- Schools received funding to cover all inflationary pressures including pay awards, pension contributions and energy, and an increase for demography. Given the scale of the challenges, schools were asked to find savings of 3% (£2.7m). The net position was an increase of £4.916m (5.82%).

The report emphasised that at that point it was still early in the financial year and the budget position in some service areas would not become evident until early Autumn. Delivery of savings approved as part of setting the 2024 to 2025 budget is being tracked and a status update was provided in the report. All of the major saving proposals were progressing and 62% of the non-strategic savings had already been achieved. Progress updates for the remaining non-strategic saving proposals will continue to be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis going forward.

Cabinet received an updated Finance Update Report in [September](#). High risk areas included changes to residential placements in Children’s Services, Homelessness, care fees in Adult Social Care and school transport. Pressures are emerging in some of these areas, which are on current forecasts, and will be mitigated by underspends recurring from last financial year in the centrally held contingency budgets. Significant service narratives explaining pressures and risks of over- and under-spend were detailed in the appendices. Cabinet agreed that the gainshare of £1.2m received from the refinancing of the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Partnership could be treated as income for the Waste Service and used to offset additional costs since the new service was launched.

Budget pressures

The council has faced a significant financial challenge in setting its 2024 to 2025 budget, which is set to continue in the medium term due to a combination of no increases in funding from Welsh Government (working assumption), the continued impact of inflation and increases in demand for services and the complexity of needs. The scale of the financial challenge facing the council should not be underestimated. Pressures are difficult to forecast but are ranging from £12m to £24m in 2025 to 2026 with a mid-range of £18m. Similar ranges are forecast for 2026 to 2027 and 2027 to 2028. Further detailed

information is available in the reports taken to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in July. [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) considered the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Plan (MTPF) in June and made observations about the key role of Scrutiny going forward, whose feedback would inform feedback to Cabinet.

The budget is being viewed as an evolving process rather than a one-off event every year in January, as it used to be. Significant engagement across the council, with members and with communities continues. Staff briefing sessions took place both in person at various locations (including depots) and online. These were well received, and staff appreciated the opportunity to speak with senior officers and lead members to gain a better understanding of the council's financial position. One of the main issues was better engagement with the public around the council's financial position and understanding how complicated local government finances are.

A meeting with City, Town and Community Councils (CTCC) took place in July to discuss the financial position and they were asked to continue those discussions at their own CTCC meetings to discuss how we can work together in the future. A report will be presented to the Budget and Transformation Board and Cabinet to explore ways in which we can support and work closely with CTCCs.

Statement of Accounts

The council has a statutory duty to produce a statement of accounts that complies with approved accounting standards. The annual statement of accounts reports on the council's position at the end of the financial year and transactions during that year. The draft [Statement of Accounts for 2022 to 2023](#) is available online.

The Responsible Financial Officer has not signed and certified the accounts for the years ended on 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024 and due to continuing work on the audit of 2022 to 2023 accounts, will work to an extended deadline for completion of the Statement of Accounts. After consulting with Audit Wales, it is currently planned that the audited accounts will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in autumn 2024 for formal approval.

Treasury Management

Treasury Management involves looking after the council's cash, which is a vital part of the council's work because approximately £0.5bn passes through the council's bank account

every year. At any one time, the council normally has up to £20m in cash so it needs to ensure that the best rate of return possible is achieved without putting the cash at risk. In April, Governance and Audit Committee examined the council's governance around [treasury management](#) (includes the council's borrowing, investments and cash flow) and in July, reviewed the [annual treasury management report for 2023 to 2024](#).

Other developments in the last period

T1

The council introduced its new financial system called T1 during the period. This is a significant change project to replace most of the council's existing financial systems to a new single finance system. We have encountered some issues but there are no major concerns. We are working to reduce the backlog of invoices, delays in implementation of the budget enterprise module and continuing to work on the salary worksheets for forecasting.

Audit Wales's Financial Sustainability Review – Denbighshire County Council

During the period, [Governance and Audit Committee](#) reviewed the report of the recent Audit Wales review and the management response to its recommendations. The review concluded that “the Council engages well with Members and officers when setting its budget, but it currently lacks an approach to find sufficient savings or an implemented transformation plan to bridge its funding gap.”

Changes to Libraries opening hours

In [June](#), the council announced the new opening hours of Denbighshire Libraries and One Stop Shops. No Library within Denbighshire is closing its doors permanently through these changes, and core Library services have been protected and are fully accessible during these new hours. We want to continue working with partners and community groups so that we can continue to keep Libraries at the heart of our local communities. For some areas, additional funding and support is received through local town councils, for example Rhuddlan Town Council has contributed additional funds to ensure that existing hours at Rhuddlan Library were maintained.

Consultation to develop a new Public Toilet Scheme

In July, the council launched a [public consultation](#) and needs assessment to support work to review the needs of the local population and to produce a public conveniences strategy that will set out how it will try to meet these needs. From the autumn, we will commence a two-stage process to develop and consult on a draft strategy. It is anticipated that the final strategy will be approved by Cabinet in April 2025.

Performance Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Performance management means the structures and processes we have in place to ensure that we deliver what we said we would, whilst encouraging active involvement and challenge from across the council, our elected members, and residents.

Internal Audit Reviews

The Chief Internal Auditor attended the Governance and Audit Committee in [June](#) to provide the annual internal audit report for 2023 to 2024 and to report on the Internal Audit Charter, strategy and quality assurance improvement programme for 2024 to 2025. At the same meeting a presentation was received on the outcomes of the [External Audit Assessment of Denbighshire Internal Audit function](#), which concluded in April. The assessment was undertaken by Ceredigion County Council, as a member of the Welsh Chief Auditor Group. In [July](#), Governance and Audit Committee reviewed the draft annual governance statement for 2023 to 2024, including progress made on the associated action plan. In [September](#), the Governance and Audit Committee received an update on the work of the Internal Audit Team and a summary of Internal Audit reports. Since the last Governance and Audit Committee update in March, 10 internal audit reports had been completed with six being awarded a high assurance rating and four receiving a medium assurance rating (ICT Contract Management; Wellbeing Impact Assessment Medium; Climate and Ecological Change; and Flood Risk Strategy). During the period, to support the new waste collection and recycling service, three members of the Internal Audit team were seconded over to support the waste service initially on a part-time basis, followed by two staff members working with the service on a full-time basis for a short period. This resulted in the Audit Plan falling behind schedule, which the team are now working towards getting back on track. It was also noted that the Internal Audit Team had been engaged in two special investigations during this period, affecting the capacity of the team.

As part of a plan to tackle recruitment challenges, we are pleased to report that two Career Pathway Senior Auditors have passed their level 2 qualification with the Association of Account Technicians (AAT) and are enrolled onto level 3.

Self-Assessment of Performance

Our annual Self-Assessment of Performance was approved by [County Council](#) in July, following discussion at [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) in April, and [Governance and Audit Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in June. The Self-Assessment summarises our performance and governance across the year 2023 to 2024 into some general observations about our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. It concluded that we have responded to the financial pressures all local authorities are facing responsibly; we have used our resources economically, efficiently, and effectively; our governance is good; and our focus is on securing the best possible outcomes for our environment and communities in Denbighshire. Our efforts to actively engage members and staff from across the organisation around the budget have been good and positively received, and we will build on this approach with our 2025 to 2026 budget. Our governance is well-functioning and responsive - demonstrated by the additional Scrutiny that was put in place, at the request of members, around aspects of our budget proposals. We want to capitalise on the growing understanding of our culture, what it means to be a part of the “Denbighshire family” and promote our One Council approach. In the year ahead, we want to establish an on-going programme of cross-service conversations and capitalise on the growing confidence of members and officers using Welsh informally and formally during council business. We must strive to be agile in recognising and resolving barriers to progress; and ensure we remain resilient as our capacity reduces. The report, including our October 2023 to March 2024 Performance Update Report, is published on our website – www.denbighshire.gov.uk/performance.

Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework and Tranche Review

In the context of the present difficult financial environment, we committed to an improvement action in our last performance report to keep our Corporate Plan commitments and performance expectations under continual review going forward. This will form part of the planned Corporate Plan Tranche Review taking place in October.

Update the Performance Management Guide

The updated guide may be viewed on [our website](#).

Annual Stakeholder Survey

Our last report identified an improvement action to “Consider the Stakeholder Survey 2023 to 2024 responses”. A report was presented to our Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet, and individual Corporate Plan Boards will be considering the results and comments that relate to their portfolio. We are now planning our next Stakeholder Survey, due to go live in October.

Service Performance Challenge

Service Performance Challenges will be concentrated over a one-month period during mid-November to early-December, which will support ongoing budgetary discussions with a greater focus on finance and transformation. Broadly the agenda will be in three parts – Identified Savings and Performance; Future Savings and Performance; Transformation, Change and Re-Shaping.

Risk Management

Risk management refers to our planned approach to identify, assess, control and monitor risks and opportunities facing the council. As per our guide [‘Managing Risk for Better Service Delivery’](#)

Corporate Risk Register

The purpose of the Corporate Risk Register is to identify the potential future events that may have a detrimental impact on the council’s ability to deliver its objectives, including its corporate priorities. The identified controls and actions are, therefore, crucial to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027. The September Review has now been completed and the final reports are due to be presented to Governance and Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committee in November.

Risk Appetite Statement

As part of the current September 2024 review the Risk Appetite Statement has also been revisited.

Risk Reporting

We are currently facilitating quarterly, lighter touch reviews with risk owners. Summaries are provided to Governance and Audit throughout the year and are tabled for discussion, as was previous practice, in November.

Workforce Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Workforce planning means the process by which we analyse, forecast and plan workforce supply and demand, and assess gaps to ensure that we have the people and skills - now and in the future - to deliver our services and fulfil our strategic objectives.

Staff Training, Development and Mental Health

A People Strategy has been drafted and will be presented to the Well-run Board in October for feedback. The strategy includes health and well-being, equalities, diversity and inclusion and Welsh language considerations alongside staff voice, pay and rewards. A revised staff survey will be presented to our Senior Leadership Team for approval in October for a November launch. Training has taken place for mental health champions and further work needs to be done with information to support mental health champions and publicise the initiative. Work will commence once the Learning and Development Specialist position is filled.

Improve the information we have about our workforce

Due to continual changes in staff, the equality information we have about our workforce tends to fluctuate. HR has completed a data collection survey, which asked staff to update the information we hold about them to ensure that we have as much data in the HR system as possible. It should be noted however that some staff choose not to disclose information about themselves. Updated data will be available from Autumn 2024 to support our Public Sector Duty Reports.

Workforce planning

Workforce planning is a continually important area of work and HR Business Partners work closely with all services on a regular basis by issuing monthly reports. Workforce planning will commence in the autumn/winter of 2024 (by which time the senior leadership structure will have been in place since November 2023) and will focus on supporting the pressures

associated with the budget and its impacts. A follow up review of the Internal Audit Review of workforce planning (previously Medium assurance) is being completed.

Impact on the workforce (and any risks to effective governance) as a result of budget proposals and the voluntary exit scheme remain under consideration and a report will be presented for discussion to the council's Strategic Equality and Diversity Group in October.

Other developments in the last period

A Pay Policy Statement for 2024 to 2025 was taken to [County Council](#) in May. A council policy on Member Training was discussed [County Council](#) in September. Our annual health and safety and annual whistleblowing reports were presented to [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in September.

Assets

Below are updates on areas of governance for assets. By assets we are referring to our management of the council's estate (including office buildings and highway infrastructure owned and / or controlled by the council) and digital assets.

Asset Management Strategy

The Asset Management Strategy 2024 to 2029 was reviewed by Partnerships Scrutiny in September 2024 and will be submitted for approval by Cabinet in October 2024. The underlying principle is that "we will provide the right assets, in the right place, and in the right condition to meet current and projected future service delivery needs, considering who best to own and operate each asset and opportunities for collaboration". There are four priority outcomes in the strategy aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan, which are:

- Climate Action and Nature Recovery – which would include improving energy performance of buildings, reducing the overall building footprint, facilitating reduced travel, increasing carbon sequestration from existing and new properties, improving biodiversity on our sites, etc. In addition to increasing the understanding of, and improving, our assets resilience to climate impacts.
- Modernising Education – delivered primarily by Education but will involve significant investment in our school buildings over the next five years.
- Regeneration – where the council is directly intervening in the property market to promote regeneration and economic development, particularly in town centres.

- New Ways of Working (NWOW) and Collaboration – looking specifically at our office portfolio and how this needs to change considering significant increase in home working (post-COVID), along with progressing collaboration opportunities to create an asset ownership and operation model that is sustainable.

The New Ways of Working project continues to progress well. The Caledfryn office in Denbigh closed in August 2024, with staff now working from Russell House, Rhyl, County Hall, Ruthin and at the new Waste Depot in Denbigh. Plans for disposal of Caledfryn are progressing with informal tenders closing on 27 September 2024.

In September, the [Audit and Governance Committee](#) received an information report from the Asbestos Property Manager regarding the Annual Property Compliance Report.

ICT (Digital) strategy

The current ICT (Digital) Strategy runs until the end of 2025 and a review has taken place on delivery of each of the seven priorities listed in that strategy. This was reported to the [Partnerships Scrutiny Committee](#) in September 2024 addressing Audit Wales's recommendations (following its review of the Council's current Digital Strategy). Development of a new strategy from 2026 onwards will commence in the next period.

Procurement

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Procurement is the process by which the council meets its needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money and good outcomes for society, culture and the economy, whilst contributing to decarbonisation and nature's recovery.

Denbighshire Procurement Strategy

The council's Procurement Strategy reflects and supports the council's corporate priorities and the seven well-being goals and aligns with the UK Government Procurement Act and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. Expectations about what we buy and how we buy it are increasing, and we will be expected to deliver not only value for money but also have a positive impact on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities, known as socially responsible procurement. A joined up and streamlined approach to commissioning, procurement, contract management and

reporting will be required to ensure Denbighshire gains the best possible outcomes from new procurement regulations. This will involve working across the council to support Denbighshire's local supply chain. These outcomes include community benefits.

The Procurement Service is a collaborative service shared with Flintshire County Council. The Joint Management Board is the governing body of the joint procurement service, in place until March 2025, established as part of a collaborative agreement in 2014. Between now and March 2025, we will review, refresh or redesign the service, and consider the resources that are available to support and provide greater resilience for the collaboration. We are starting to explore opportunities that may exist for more collaborative working on a regional footprint.

During the period, just under 300 commissioning staff, across both councils, attended new procurement regulations "Knowledge Drop" sessions. New procurement forms and accompanying decision trees will be produced when statutory guidance is finalised and received.

Biodiversity Protection and Decarbonisation in Procurement

During the period, we have been working with other local authorities across Wales to develop a common approach to measuring decarbonisation through the life of all contracts. The Procurement team is signposting businesses to carbon reduction plan training delivered by Crown Commercial Services. We will be seeking agreement to use the WLGA procurement toolkit and to incorporate decarbonisation indicators within that toolkit. We have successfully completed a pilot for the North Wales Construction Partnership Framework. We can ask bidders wishing to join the Framework to provide Carbon Reduction Plans and each client local authority will apply their own carbon priority asks. Further work is required to work across the council to embed a decarbonisation approach at the earliest stages of procurement; when services are being designed or we are determining what and how something needs to be procured - this where most carbon savings can be achieved. During the period, we have been working with other local authorities across Wales to develop a common approach to measuring decarbonisation through the life of all contracts.

Contract Procedure Rules

Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) have been reviewed to reflect new UK Public Procurement legislation but we are still awaiting secondary legislation and statutory

guidance is to finalise CPRs. We will continue to report on progress through this report in the meantime.

Supporting Businesses and Partners to Adapt

Following on from carbon-themed events as part of the [2024 March for Business campaign](#), our Economic and Business Development Team is developing the draft Economic Strategy, which includes a theme around supporting small and medium sized enterprises with procurement. As reported previously, Balfour Beatty, as part of the coastal defence schemes, has committed to deliver workshops - supported by Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council - to community-led organisations on how to develop strategies. Whilst workshops have not yet taken place, the intention to deliver them remains.

North Wales Construction Framework Phase 3

The third generation of the North Wales Construction Partnership Framework is complete and has been launched. This is a framework for all North Wales local authorities and has been a catalyst for engagement and upskilling of local contractors operating within the regional supply chain.

Improvement Actions

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

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- 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.