

Committee	Cabinet
Date	February 18 th 2025
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis (Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets) / Gary Williams (Corporate Director - Governance and Business)
Head of Service	Helen Vaughan-Evans (Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets)
Report author	Robyn Lovelock (Insight, Strategy & Delivery Manager)
Title of Briefing	Denbighshire County Council Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) - Report and Response

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 Denbighshire County Council’s Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) final report, response statements and Action Plan responding to recommendations. In addition to the recommendation for changes as recommended by Governance and Audit (G&A) Committee held on 22nd January 2025.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 For Cabinet to be provided with the PPA report (Appendix 1), the response statements (Section 4.6 and 4.7), the Action Plan (Appendix 2) setting out responses to the recommendations in the Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) report and the recommendation for changes as recommended by G&A Committee (22nd January 2025) for Cabinet to review, consider and provide a recommendation to Council.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 For Cabinet to note and welcome the Panel Performance Assessment Report (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 For Cabinet to review and approve the statutory statements (Section 4.7 and 4.8) the Council is required to make in response to the Report and the actions the council intends to take, the 'Action Plan' (Appendix 2), and in doing so review and approve the response to recommendations for change provided by Governance and Audit Committee (22nd January) (Appendix 3).
- 3.3 Inclusive of any edits Cabinet wish to make in discharging recommendations 3.2, for Cabinet to recommend approval of the Statements and Action Plan to Council (20th February).

4. Report details

About the PPA

- 4.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires that principal councils must make arrangements for a Panel appointed by the council to assess the extent to which it is meeting its performance requirements at least once between two consecutive ordinary elections (May 2022 and anticipated May 2027), i.e. once per County Council's term.
- 4.2 In addition to fulfilling the statutory requirement, an effective PPA can inform the council's improvement journey, building on the annual self-assessment, supporting it to look to the future through a different lens. The PPA has provided an opportunity to test thinking with impartial expert peers, who provide alternative perspectives through independent, objective challenge in making their recommendations.
- 4.3 The WLGA ran the Panel Performance Assessment on DCC's behalf between 9th – 12th September 2024 – the first PPA in Wales. The draft report was reviewed for accuracy by Cabinet and SLT and all points of edit accepted by the Panel. This report is positive overall and set out 9 recommendations for improvement and identified 8 areas of strength and innovation.

4.4 In responding to the PPA report, the legislation requires us to include:

- The extent to which we accept the conclusions in the report.
- The extent to which the council intends to follow any recommendations contained in the report.
- Any actions it proposes to take to increase the extent to which it meets the performance requirements (an Action Plan).

Governance and Audit (G&A) Committee recommendations for changes

4.5 The G&A committee considered the PPA report, a draft of response statements and the draft Action Plan in their meeting 22nd January 2025 in order to discharge their duties under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, namely, to review aforementioned documents and make recommendations for changes to the statements and the action plan as it deems appropriate.

4.6 The Committee made 11 recommendations for change. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires Cabinet to consider each of these recommendations for change in turn and decide on acceptance or otherwise. Where a recommendation for change is not accepted, Cabinet must provide their rationale for why. Appendix 3 provides the recommendation for change and the suggested response to those changes by Cabinet.

Statutory Response statements

4.7 The statement for the “the extent to which Denbighshire County Council accept the conclusions in the report”, inclusive of the G&A Committee recommended change, is as follows:

“The Council welcome and accept the report and its conclusions. It notes that the Assessment was a useful process and appreciates the thoughtfulness and the thoroughness of the Assessment team. For future Assessments, we would welcome greater content in the final report on the evidence seen which has led to each recommendation. A general observation, which reflects across a number of our responses in the Action Plan, is that we would like to have seen more emphasis in the process and report on how we are building community and council well-being and resilience for anticipated future challenges, in line with the Well-being of Future Generations goals and ways of working.”

4.8 The statement for the “extent to which the council intends to follow any recommendations contained in the report” is as follows (note G&A Committee did not provide any recommendations for change for this statement):

“The Council accepts all recommendations made in the PPA report and has put in place an Action Plan setting out how it will take each recommendation forward. It should be noted that this Assessment has been done at a particular point in time and progress has already happened quickly around some areas, such as prioritisation of the transformation work.”

Action plan

4.9 Actions the Council intends to take in response to the PPA Report recommendations is contained within the Action Plan (Appendix 2). This Action Plan includes changes recommended by G&A Committee as described in Appendix 3.

4.10 Actions will be added to the Council’s Performance Management System and updates given quarterly to the Council’s Well-Run, High Performance Council Board. Progress on actions will also be communicated every 6 months to Committees including within our annual self-assessment as per our Performance Management Framework.

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

5.1. The Panel Performance Assessment will test the effectiveness and efficiency of the council’s functions. This work will particularly support the Corporate Plan’s theme around being a Well-run, High Performing Council.

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

6.1. The PPA was delivered and funded by the WLGA. Internal staff time and very low level expenditure on stationary and refreshments was absorbed by existing budgets and delivered within existing capacity.

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

7.1. No assessment is required for this report.

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

- 8.1. The scoping document, including the areas of focus sought, was developed between May and June 2024 with input from the Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny ([6th June 2024 – Item 9](#)), the G&A Committee ([12th June 2024 – Item 7](#)) and County Council ([9th July 2024 – Item 6](#)), alongside the council's self-assessment of its performance for 2023 to 2024.
- 8.2 To review the draft PPA report for accuracy, the draft version was reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team (17th October 2024) and at Cabinet Briefing (4th November 2024). The report findings were also discussed at the DCC Leadership Conference (3rd December 2024), CET (16th December), Cabinet Briefing (6th January), Council Workshop (14th January) and at Staff Council (15th January) to inform the draft statutory statements and action plan.
- 8.4 G&A Committee considered the report and responses on 22nd January and provided recommendations for change discharging their statutory duty. Following Cabinet and Council consideration of the report, responses and action plan on 18th and 20th February, the council must publish the finalised response on our website and send the response to: The members of the panel; The Auditor General for Wales; Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales; The Welsh Ministers.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. No statement is required with this report.

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

- 10.1. There are no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report.

11. Power to make the decision

- 11.1. Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Part 6, Performance And Governance Of Principal Councils And Corporate Joint Committees (Sections 92, 93, 94 and 108).