

The Denbighshire We Want: 2022 to 2027

This document presents the council's revised strategic plan for delivery from 2024 to 2027, reflecting the financial challenges that the council is now facing. It includes our key objectives that will help secure the well-being of residents now and in the future (under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015), and forms our Strategic Equality Plan in response to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010 and subsequent 2011 (Wales) Regulations).

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Foreword and Introduction

The increasingly difficult and unprecedented financial environment that the council is operating in means that it is now necessary to revise our Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2027. This is a pragmatic step to reduce the administrative burden on already stretched council services across the board. It will help release capacity to support our new transformational agenda that will enable us to innovatively respond to the challenges ahead, improving performance and efficiency, whilst still ensuring that we can continue to deliver essential services to our residents and communities.

We remain committed to delivering our activity in a sustainable way for the long-term benefit of our communities and their future generations. This Plan meets both our aspirations and obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Equality Act. It also captures our key performance functions for the purposes of The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Although we are having to rationalise our ambitions, we remain aspirational, and the Plan is underpinned by our desire to work as 'One Council', where our diverse services are working together towards shared goals more effectively. We will continue to provide a focus on preventative actions that protect people from harm and address the challenges that our communities face, such as the cost-of-living crisis and the Climate Emergency, ensuring sustainable economic growth, promoting well-being, and quality of life. We still want to work collaboratively with our residents, communities, businesses, and partners to help shape the services we provide and the way in which we provide them in challenging times.

If you have any questions, or want to learn more about our Corporate Plan, please feel free to contact us or visit our [website](#).



Jason McLellan
Leader



Graham H Boase
Chief Executive

Developing this Plan

During the summer of 2021, residents in the county were asked about their long-term aspirations for their communities. We did this through our 'County Conversation' approach, a series of workshop discussions held with residents across the six areas of Denbighshire (Rhyl, Prestatyn, Elwy, Denbigh, Ruthin, and the Dee Valley), and an online survey (with hard copies available in all libraries and One Stop Shops). We also met with each of our secondary school councils. All the feedback that we received informed a larger [Assessment of Local Well-being](#), produced with our partners on the [Public Services Board](#). This has helped us to understand the current state of Well-being in our county and to identify necessary interventions to benefit future generations.

Having drafted a long-list of pledges for our Corporate Plan, we initiated a second phase of our County Conversation between January and March 2022, inviting feedback on the themes identified from the initial engagement and the Well-being Assessment. Feedback was also sought from colleagues from other organisations, including Health, North Wales Fire and Rescue, Natural Resources Wales and the third sector. During the spring, further workshops were held for Denbighshire County Council staff on an individual theme basis to start to plan the actions that we would deliver.

Following the election of the Council in May and further planning sessions with the new Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team, a final phase of public engagement and meetings with political groups was held at the end of the Summer, 2022, to 'sense-check' our nine themes and pledges, which were subsequently adopted by Council in October of that year.

However, in light of the worsening financial context and budgetary position that became clear during 2023, discussions were again held with senior managers and councillors between January and February 2024 to rationalise the content of the Corporate Plan, focussing on those ambitions that remain important areas of improvement for our communities, and de-escalating the reporting of already embedded, operational activity. This has seen us move from nine themes to six.

Well-being Statement and Our Objectives

As described above, the [Conwy and Denbighshire Well-being Assessment](#), which examines data and the views of local people through the lens of the Well-being Goals for Wales, has supported the setting of our well-being objectives for Denbighshire. Our objectives, therefore, directly contribute to the achievement of the national goals. This gives us confidence that we are focusing our resources on delivering the right outcomes that will be of the greatest benefit to our communities.

The following are the council's revised Well-being and Equality Objectives that will help to deliver sustained performance improvement across the council's work from 2024 to 2027.

- 1. A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs**
- 2. A prosperous Denbighshire**
- 3. A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire**
- 4. A learning and growing Denbighshire**
- 5. A greener Denbighshire**
- 6. A well-run, high performing council**

Sustainable development, and applying the five ways of working to improve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, has been central to the work that we have done to identify our objectives and develop the actions that we will take forward in support of each theme in this plan.

- **Long-term:** Having analysed past, current, and predicted future data trends, and also discussed long-term aspirations with our residents, we are confident that this plan will deliver long-term benefits for our communities.
- **Prevention:** Looking at future trends, including risks and opportunities, has also enabled us to identify preventative steps that we can take now to prevent problems from getting worse in the future.

- **Involvement:** Developing our Plan through Involvement has been a key driving principle. In addition to online consultation, we have invested significant time to holding focus groups discussions across the county, including with all secondary schools, and with staff. We endeavoured to make these groups representative (reflecting age, gender, social status, occupations, hard to reach groups, etc.).
- **Collaboration:** Delivery of the objectives cannot be isolated to one service alone and will therefore require collaboration (within and outside of the council). We will form a collaborative working group for each of our objectives (nominating one senior officer and Cabinet Member as a lead for each themed area).
- **Integration:** We have aligned our Plan with national programmes of work, such as the Programme for Government, as well as the work of our partners regionally and locally. As we take our activities forward, we will continue to evaluate the impact of our work on the goals of our partners and other organisations, and always look for opportunities where we can integrate and deliver greater benefits.

Although public bodies are not required to undertake response analysis, we will undertake this exercise as it will lead to better delivery. This will take the form of:

1. Consideration of what is already being done in support of each objective.
2. Consideration of good practice.
3. Consideration of 'gaps' in service provision to be addressed.
4. Consideration of overlaps with other organisational objectives, and opportunities to integrate.
5. Consideration of opportunities to innovate (through new technologies or otherwise).
6. Prioritisation of options for action according to a cost and benefit analysis.

Steps will be reviewed by our senior management, Cabinet, and Scrutiny. Our evaluation will assess the extent to which identified actions are being delivered; whether they are delivering their predicted benefits; and what (if any) corrective steps are required. These governance arrangements will be delivered within existing resources.

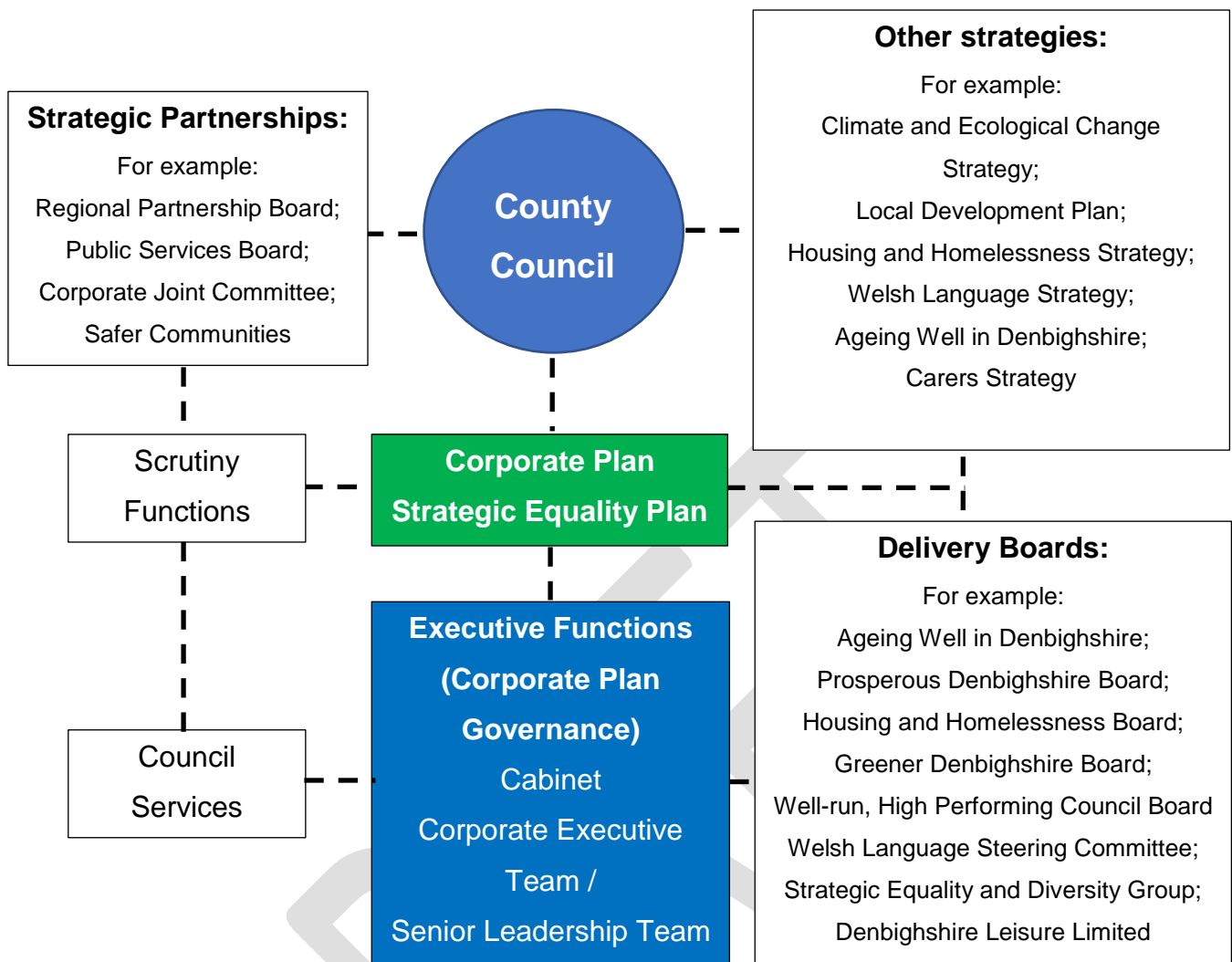
Details of our actions as they are developed, including timescales and progress, will be available on our [Corporate Plan and performance webpages](#).

Financial Strategy

Our Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2027 did warn that the council was entering a very uncertain financial environment due to inflationary and demand pressures far exceeding the projected level of funding. Our fears that this may impact the availability of funding have been realised. The reach of our Corporate Plan has therefore had to be pared back to reflect the difficult financial circumstances facing the council. A robust budget process has been established in response to worsening budgetary pressures, and the council remains committed to delivering essential services. Much of what is contained in the Corporate Plan has already started, and will therefore have resources already identified to support delivery. Large commitments include flooding schemes and school buildings, for example.

Monitoring progress

Although the Corporate Plan is owned by the County Council, responsibility for the ongoing governance of the Corporate Plan and driving its delivery will sit with our Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team. However, the plan cannot be delivered in isolation of other partnerships, strategies, delivery bodies, services, or scrutiny functions. The plan has of course been developed to take account of, and build upon other existing areas of delivery; and it is important that they all work together to guarantee its success.



The council has strong performance management arrangements in place, which we will apply to the monitoring and reporting of progress against this Corporate Plan. This will include a rigid performance framework, agreed by managers and councillors, that articulates indicators, performance measures and activities with clear targets and expectations that match the ambition that we have for our communities.

We will produce performance reports against this framework every six months, sharing it with our Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and Scrutiny to better inform their decisions on where improvement is needed and how resources are allocated. These reports, which form our Self-Assessment of Performance (required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021), are also shared with our Governance and Audit Committee and full Council annually, and published on our [performance webpages](#).

We will annually review our objectives and actions to make sure that they are still the right ones for our communities, which includes inviting feedback from our residents. We also accept that not everything that we hope to do may be possible as circumstances change. We will always be transparent about any changes that we make, and report on any adjustments and the rationale behind them.

What else we deliver

Our Corporate Plan captures a wide breadth of activities from across the council's many varied services; however, it does not detail everything that we do. Many other statutory obligations and important activities, which may or may not contribute to our objectives, take place within the council, and are captured and monitored through the business plans of our individual service areas. These service business plans are the backbone of the council's performance management arrangements. They are reviewed annually ahead of each financial year, and are signed off by the Head of Service and Lead Cabinet Member(s), with input from Scrutiny Link Members.

Performance against these plans are monitored on a quarterly basis by services. The council also carries out what it calls 'Service Performance Challenges', which is when senior managers, councillors, and our regulators (Audit Wales, Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales), perform a deep-dive annually into the achievements and pressures faced by our services.

What's different in this version of the Plan?

Broadly we have reduced the number of Corporate Plan Themes from nine to six. This has been achieved by merging themes as follows:

- **A better Connected Denbighshire:** Our pledges from this theme have largely been moved within the Prosperous Denbighshire Theme, mainly around supporting access to goods and services through a good road network and improved digital networks. Aspects to do with supporting social infrastructure and community networks are a natural fit within our Healthier and Happier, Caring Denbighshire Theme; and aspects around sustainable transport solutions and electric vehicles work well within our Greener Denbighshire Theme.
- **A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire:** Aspects of this theme are closely aligned within our social care agenda, which is well covered by our Healthier and Happier, Caring Denbighshire Theme, particularly around alleviating the impact of poverty, and the support we provide for refugees. There are also a number of pledges dedicated to tackling poverty and inequality within education that sit naturally with our Learning and Growing Denbighshire Theme. Ensuring the voices of those from seldom heard groups inform our decision-making sits best within the Well-run, High Performing Council Theme. Although dispersing this theme may feel like a step-back, in reality, having it as an overarching principle within the Corporate Plan should elevate this agenda to have greater influence on our work, and allow the Lead Member to be more prevalent in discussions shaping the other themes.
- **A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** Elements of this theme relating to promoting our cultural offer have been moved within our Prosperous Denbighshire Themes, as there are good synergies to be made there with our Economic Strategy. Our work to support the realisation of one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050 would also be better integrated within our Healthier and Happier, Caring Denbighshire Theme, our Learning and Growing Denbighshire Theme, but also within the Well-run, High Performing Council Theme. As above, although dispersing this theme may feel like a step-back, in reality, having it as an overarching principle within the Corporate Plan should elevate this

agenda to have greater influence on our work, and allow the Lead Member to be more prevalent in discussions shaping the other themes.

These changes alone, however, do not address the resource pressures that the council is facing. It has also been necessary for us to apply a more scrutinising eye to some of the pledges that we had agreed to take forward, to take stock of our progress so far, and to assess our ambition in light of reducing resources. This is not to say that we are cutting services as a result of these changes, but rather that we cannot take things as far as our ambition would have originally liked. Any reductions to service delivery will be considered in greater detail by managers and councillors as we take our budget planning forward in the months and years ahead.

The six themes that are outlined in the following pages should present less of an administrative burden for the council going forward, whilst still holding the authority to account as to things that it will deliver to improve the well-being of our residents.

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Welsh Language and Equalities – How we will work

It is important to be clear that the council remains committed to the promotion of the Welsh Language, equalities, and the Socio-Economic Duty – they are key principles to which we work across all our services, and run throughout the Corporate Plan.

Promoting the Welsh Language

The council has outlined its commitment to the Welsh language in its new [strategy for 2023 to 2028](#), which seeks to:

- Increase the use of Welsh within Denbighshire communities, not least among children and young people by giving access to Welsh-medium education and community activities and promoting opportunities for social interaction in Welsh.
- Recognise the importance of a prosperous economy to the future of the Welsh language, and the council can offer strong leadership in terms of developing the Welsh language and promoting the area's unique culture and identity.
- Enhance our bilingual culture and ethos as an organisation, giving staff the confidence to speak in Welsh.
- Ensure that our services are underpinned by the Welsh Language Standards, and that residents feel comfortable that they can access services naturally through the medium of Welsh.

These commitments run throughout the themes of our Corporate Plan, and our progress in delivering on the above will be monitored by our Welsh Language Steering Committee.

Our equalities commitment

Our Corporate Plan includes, under the Equality Act (Wales) Regulations 2011, our four-year Strategic Equality Objectives. Combined with the supporting information and addendum that explains how we developed our Corporate Plan Objectives, which is published on our [Equality, Diversity and Human Rights](#) webpage, this makes up our Strategic Equality Plan. This revision of our objectives in 2024 is timely and will help align the business planning cycles of both our Public Sector Equality Duty (which is on a four-year cycle) and the Well-being of Future Generations Act (five-year cycle) when we come to consider the next iteration of our Corporate Plan in 2027. In considering this revision,

we have again revisited the wealth of information that we gathered in our [Well-being Assessment](#); and in respect of the 2011 Engagement Provisions, through our annual Stakeholder Survey (most recently between September 2022 and February 2023) we have consulted widely with representative stakeholders in our communities on the content and relevance of our Corporate Plan objectives, particularly around the issue of equality and fairness.

During the lifetime of this Plan and beyond, we will ensure that in all areas of our work we:

- Engage with individuals and groups that represent people with protected characteristics or who are at a socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider the appropriateness of facilities, services, and information that we provide to those with protected characteristics, or those at a socio-economic disadvantage.
- Engage, challenge and, where possible, remove barriers to opportunities (including work) for those with protected characteristics, or those at a socio-economic disadvantage.
- Take action against all forms of hate crime, discrimination, bullying or harassment.

Our progress in delivering on the above commitments will be monitored by our Strategic Equality and Diversity Group.

Theme 1: A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

What we want

Ensure sufficient good quality housing is available, meeting the needs of all Denbighshire residents.

What we aim to do:

1. 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.
2. Prevent homelessness, and ensure that any instances of it are rare, brief, and unrepeatable. This includes young care leavers.*
3. Upgrade the council housing stock to ensure it is:
 - Safe, secure, and well-maintained.
 - Where possible, suitable for the needs of residents, for example, those with disabilities.*
 - Energy efficient and well-insulated.
4. Deliver more homes to meet local need and demand, including:
 - 300 affordable homes subject to the availability of Welsh Government funding
 - 35 specialist homes through Extra Care Schemes.
 - 170 council homes subject to the availability of Welsh Government funding
 - Working to minimise the number of empty homes in Denbighshire
5. 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. This includes engaging with those already living in council houses, and those on low incomes.

Theme 2: A prosperous Denbighshire

What we want

Support economic recovery, capitalising on opportunities to enable residents to access decent employment and income. This will mean having good access to goods and services, and the county will maximise its rich cultural heritage and natural assets to support economic prosperity. We want to use economic growth as a driver to reduce inequality and poverty.

What we aim to do:

1. Work collaboratively with communities and partners to deliver projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic growth, including:
 - Working with Ambition North Wales on North Wales Growth Deal projects.
 - The Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme.
 - The UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.
 - The new Queen's Market in Rhyl, which will provide employment and a mixed-use hall offering artisan eateries, retail, and events space.
 - The former North Wales Hospital in Denbigh, which will provide construction jobs and apprenticeship opportunities during the construction phase, and homes and community facilities in the long-run.
 - An improved and sustainable archive service for North Wales.

2. Develop an economic strategy that will:
 - Grow Denbighshire's green economy.
 - Support rural businesses.
 - Regenerate town centres.
 - Enhance our tourism offer.
 - Promoting Denbighshire's rich culture and heritage.
 - Making the best use of our great natural assets, including the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the newly proposed National Park.

3. 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.*

4. Support access to education, employment, services, goods, and activities by:
 - Maintaining a safe road network throughout the county.
 - Replace Llanerch Bridge, in partnership with Welsh Government.
 - Promoting options and solutions for improved internet connectivity where they are available.
 - Improve transport services in Denbighshire's communities, working through the regional body, and within the context of the Wales Transport Strategy.

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Theme 3: A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

What we want

Promote the safety, resilience and well-being of communities, and people of all ages, using strong community networks and social infrastructure that enables people to live safely, happily, independently, and receive support when needed. This includes promoting the diversity and cohesion of our communities and reducing inequality and deprivation. Everyone should also be able to access services naturally in Welsh.

What we aim to do:

1. Ensure that the council's social care offer is of a high standard, which includes:
 - Promoting a strong culture of safeguarding children, young people, and adults in the county.
 - Providing the best possible care and support through our Corporate Parenting role.
 - Supporting those with additional learning or complex needs.
 - Working with partners to enhance support and respite for carers of all ages.
 - Ensuring everyone can access services through the Welsh language naturally, and at all stages in their lives.
2. Support the well-being, mental-health, and resilience of individuals within communities by:
 - Ensuring access to the right information, advice, and assistance through our Single Point of Access (SPoA), Community Navigator, and Library Services.
 - Encouraging communities to be age-friendly, intergenerational, and inclusive, reducing isolation and loneliness.*
3. Promote personal and community well-being by:
 - Supporting volunteering and projects from grassroots organisations to develop community and personal skills in local places.
 - Investing in capacity building and support for community leadership and groups, such as to help with cost-of-living pressures.

- Developing community engagement schemes to support community involvement and decision-making in local regeneration.
 - Support the broader use of Welsh and the celebration of Welsh culture in the community, including workplace settings.
4. Foster community cohesion by ensuring people are protected from harm, abuse, and exploitation. This includes:
- Working to reduce domestic abuse.*
 - Tackling anti-social behaviour.
5. Continue to support and resettle refugees through the UK Global Resettlement Scheme, in support of Wales' declaration to be a Nation of Sanctuary.*

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Theme 4: A learning and growing Denbighshire

What we want

Support the provision of quality learning and training, including Welsh language skills development, that enables people of all ages to fulfil their potential, both personally and professionally, also addressing inequality and educational deprivation.

What we aim to do:

1. Promote the learning and development of our children and young people by:
 - Supporting early years child development.
 - Working with schools and GwE, our school improvement partner, to support high standards of education provision that removes barriers to learning and leads to good attainment.
 - Supporting Schools to deliver against new standards, such as the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, the new curriculum for Wales, and the Additional Learning Needs code.*
2. 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.
3. Work with partners (including colleges and universities) 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, supported by:
 - The right opportunities for work.
 - Access to quality volunteering, work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.*
 - Personal and professional learning (e.g. life skills or 'green skills').
4. Improving the well-being of children from low income and disadvantaged families. This includes expanding the free school meals offer to all primary school pupils, and working to reduce the attainment gap of children and young people through Equity in Education and the Price of Pupil Poverty project.*

Theme 5: A greener Denbighshire

What we want

Become a Net Zero Carbon organisation by 2030, and enhance, preserve, and improve our natural assets to support biodiversity. We must also mitigate and work with communities to cope with the impacts of climate change.

What we aim to do:

1. Deliver our Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030, including:
 - Increasing renewable energy capacity in buildings the council owns and operates.
 - Reducing carbon emissions from our supply chains.
 - Offsetting carbon emissions through tree planting and other measures.
 - Grow the amount of habitat available for pollinators and wildlife.
 - Increasing new native wildflower meadows across the county.
2. Improve recycling rates and reduce waste by:
 - Implementing a new waste service.
 - Reducing the use of single use plastics in schools.
 - Developing a food waste strategy for the county with our partners, helping to alleviate poverty.
3. Support communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change by:
 - Increasing allotments and community food growing opportunities.
 - Delivering schemes to reduce coastal and in-land flood risk. This includes support for the management of land adjacent to waterways.
 - Encouraging the management of moorland to reduce the risk of wildfires, working with landowners, farmers, communities, and statutory bodies.
4. Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan that makes travel and tourism within our county 'greener', including new Active Travel routes that encourage walking and cycling within

and between communities.

5. Support our county's green infrastructure by:

- Developing and installing a public network of electric vehicle charging points.
- Exploring ways in which the council can encourage new housing developments to allow for electric vehicle charging and green spaces.

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Theme 6: A well-run, high performing council

What we want

To be a council that is fair, transparent, performs well, represents value for money, and gives consistently good customer service. The council wants to be creative, brave, ambitious, outward-looking, and an excellent employer, backed by strong governance and assurance. The Welsh language will also be a living, thriving language within the council.

What we aim to do:

1. Embed a positive “one council” culture by:
 - Placing our values of integrity, respect, unity, and pride at the heart of everything that we do.
 - Being close to our communities, encouraging community leadership and resilience, and by ensuring we provide consistently good customer service.
 - Improve our services through meaningful promotion, engagement and communication with the public, City, Town and Community councils, and partners.*
 - Have clear performance expectations by promoting a strong culture around performance management, and by being accountable, realistic, open, and honest about how we are performing as a council.
 - Promoting good communication and close working relationships between elected members and officers.
 - Ensuring Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work.
2. 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.*
3. 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 by elected members and

council staff, providing training and social opportunities to improve their confidence in using the language.

4. Working collaboratively to alleviate problems with recruitment and retention.

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