



Revised Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 (fourth iteration of the Well-being Assessment): Well-being Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number: 913

Brief description: The Strategic Planning team is responsible for the development and performance management of the council's Corporate Plan (and also supports the development of the PSB's Well-being Plan). The Corporate Plan also forms our Strategic Equality Plan. The Corporate Plan was developed as part of a collaborative approach with partners across North Wales, and in particular Conwy County Borough Council. Version three was completed following our workshops with staff, Denbighshire's new Cabinet and following a joint workshop between Cabinet and SLT, during which the findings of the well-being assessment (research, including engagement) were discussed. This fourth version was undertaken by the Strategic Planning Team during January 2024 as part of a revision exercise.

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Responsible Service: Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? Residents, communities, businesses, visitors, public sector partners (regional and local), including children and young people and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage as well as people with protected characteristics (Equality Act).

Was this impact assessment completed as a group? Yes

Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Score for the sustainability of the approach

3 out of 4 stars

Actual score : 31 / 36.

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

Projects and activities have mostly started and embedding those as business as usual is a core component of our thinking. The council will need to consider, through its budget process, how its objectives will be impacted. As this Corporate Plan reaches the end of its term further consideration will need to be given to the legacy of our objectives (this usually forms part of the planning process for the subsequent Corporate Plan).

Prevention

Moving forward, as the budget process develops, there will be an opportunity for the council to actively consider and pursue alternative delivery approaches to ensure services can be sustained. In terms of the environment, it features strongly in the Corporate Plan to reflect the programme we have in place already and also because climate change adaptation was a key feature of engagement feedback and research.

Integration

Whilst the Corporate Plan themes have been revised, there remains a strong commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations Act; ensuring equality and fairness, a thriving Welsh language and culture, and well-connected communities. As stated previously, following the completion of the well-being assessment, housing and building new housing, has emerged as a priority for our residents.

There are many actions relating to the LDP in the Net Carbon Zero strategy.

Collaboration

The PSB's Well-being Plan is closely aligned to our Corporate Plan, with a focus on poverty and deprivation ("Conwy and Denbighshire will be more equal with less deprivation"). Within the current Corporate Plan there are good examples of partnership working taking place, e.g. in the housing and prosperous themes. Going forward, there may be more opportunities to explore where partnership working could sustain or enhance services.

Involvement

Our well-being assessment engaged with seldom heard groups. Our annual Stakeholder Survey is a key part of performance management. Meaningful engagement with communities is challenging, as experienced by the wider public sector. Cabinet Members are actively involved in the governance of each theme. All Councillors have an opportunity to scrutinise and give input through our regular reports to Committee (once annually to Council), and to support delivery of our Well-Run theme.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Positive
A healthier Denbighshire	Positive
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Positive

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Positive

Main conclusions

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.

We should continue to revisit the impact assessment on a regular basis and review our findings to inform the approach to further development engagement and consultation on the Plan. Engagement with seldom heard groups (serving and ex-armed forces, offenders and ex-offenders, in addition to people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and people with protected characteristics (Equality Act)), across the region, should continue. We should also use the impact assessment as an aide memoir, using the topics and the tooltips to inform our engagement and well-being assessment. The opportunities highlighted at the end of each sustainable development principle and each of the seven well-being goals should be noted and considered thoroughly.

Individual projects or activities identified within the Corporate Plan should be individually impact assessed as they are developed.

It is also important to note that our level of influence and control varies across some of the themes and this will affect our ability to bring about positive impacts in some areas. For example, digital infrastructure.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

We are estimating a positive impact because the Corporate Plan actively supports the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and a Prosperous Denbighshire, both of which have robust governance arrangements in place.

Further actions required

We will need to work with businesses, farmers and Trade Unions more closely, and link into regional work via the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB). There is the potential to maximise skills development around low carbon housing in particular, which could form part of the focus of the learning theme.

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Supporting a green economy is a core part of the Corporate Plan. Individual projects will need to be assessed in their own right. Following leadership set by NWEAB should lead to positive outcomes.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

Active travel, roads and bridges maintenance, electric vehicle charging, public transport and broadband for rural communities feature in the Plan.

Economic development

Tourism, green economy, social economy, Levelling Up funding and Growth Deal funding feature in the Corporate Plan.

Quality skills for the long term

Interventions by Working Denbighshire feature in the Corporate Plan and these are already showing positive results.

Curriculum development and delivery of 21st Century Schools are proposed alongside equality objectives to address social deprivation and disadvantage faced by some people with protected characteristics. However, it is worth noting that our powers are limited. Schools are their own public bodies, and it is their governing bodies, not the local authority, that determine how the curriculum is taught in schools. Our School Improvement Arm is also delegated to GwE.

Quality jobs for the long term

The 'Learning and growing Denbighshire' theme prioritises a range of pledges to support people to find decent work, including support for young people to access work experience, income-maximising opportunities for those in low paid work and education, training and employment for all young people, including those in care.

Childcare

Support for early years and childcare provision features in the Plan. We have already delivered new enhanced childcare facilities at the Oaktree Centre for example.

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

There may be some activity that result in increased carbon emissions in the development stages. These are sometimes difficult to calculate over the life time of a building for example, but our procurement team is exploring how this can be determined alongside partners across Wales.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed). Disruption caused by the loss of Llannerch Bridge continues to impact the community. Discussions with Welsh Government to secure funding to deliver the most viable option to replace Llannerch Bridge are ongoing.

Any future dis-investment in road maintenance as a result of the budget process will be impact assessed separately.

Economic development

There are risks associated with us being unable to achieve the desired changes and these are captured within the Prosperous Denbighshire Board's Risk Register and the Corporate Risk Register.

Quality skills for the long term

There is widespread recognition, which has been highlighted in our well-being assessment, that women and people with protected characteristics and people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage are less likely to benefit from opportunities from the green sector.

Quality jobs for the long term

The Well-Run theme aims to embed the council's values and principles, whilst also considering the impact of a reduced workforce (as budget reductions occur) on existing staff as well as prospective employees. There may be new opportunities for staff who no longer work for the council (perhaps linked to new ways of delivering services) and the council will need to consider how it can facilitate and support those transitions.

The well-being assessment still lacks sufficient analysis about local jobs.

Childcare

Whilst we have been unable to identify any specific negative or unintended consequences for childcare, it is worth noting that any new childcare provision brings with it questions around sustainability, for carbon and for overall provision across the sector. These should be assessed in more detail within each individual well-being impact assessment.

Also, the well-being assessment includes some analysis of how childcare - whilst enabling work - can be a barrier in other ways, for women in particular, who may disproportionately arrange and ferry children to and from school, nursery, and other childcare provision. This could impact the opportunities women have to travel sustainably (on foot, by bicycle, bus etc) and can also result in them having less visibility in the workplace.

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

Denbighshire County Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and a strategy (2021-2030) to become net carbon zero and ecologically positive has been approved. Environmental well-being is a key feature of our well-being assessment and engagement feedback.

Further actions required

The Climate Change Programme will soon be able to assess the results achieved by our current effort and allocated budgets to determine the extent to which we are on track to achieve our targets in 2030.

We may need to adjust our thinking around climate risk resilience to include being resilient to extremes in weather (hotter, drier summers, wetter winters).

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

The Corporate Plan has made a commitment to the continued delivery of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan, aiming to be a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030.

Biodiversity in the built environment

The Corporate Plan has made a commitment to the continued delivery of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy and Action Plan, aiming to be a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030. The well-being assessment demonstrates that the planet needs flourishing eco-systems for it to survive.

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

This is a feature of the Corporate Plan.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Energy efficient housing, alleviating fuel poverty, electric vehicle charging infrastructure and choosing active travel over private car is currently delivered through a combination of business as usual (where activity takes place and is primarily managed at a Service Plan level) or the Corporate Plan.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

From our engagement, we have found that people feel strongly about being empowered to tackle climate change, and were particularly vocal about active travel.

Flood risk management

Continued delivery of flood defence schemes to reduce the risk of flooding features in the well-being assessment and the Corporate Plan. There is also more detailed consideration now of how climate risk resilience (e.g. from flooding), intersects with deprivation and other characteristics.

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

There may be some activity that results in increased carbon emissions that could be damaging to biodiversity. These will need to be considered, with negative impacts removed, reduced or mitigated on a case by case basis.

Biodiversity in the built environment

There may be some activity that result in increased carbon emissions, particularly in the development stages, that could be damaging to biodiversity. These will need to be considered, with negative impacts removed, reduced or mitigated on a case by case basis.

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed). The new waste service project is managing any negative impacts identified through its own detailed well-being impact assessment and project documentation.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Our well-being assessment shows that some people, particularly those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, may be less likely to benefit from schemes to reduce their carbon footprint and reduce their energy bills. EV cars are likely to remain within the reach of those with a sizeable disposable income for a while yet.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Some people are vocal about wildflower meadows and see these as an eyesore. The council continues to do a lot of work in terms of communication and through community engagement on this.

Flood risk management

There are project teams and Boards in place to manage delivery of the schemes. There have been some challenges associated with the construction phase of the projects, with some local concern around their delivery. The Flood Strategy is currently being updated.

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The Corporate Plan makes a commitment for the county to be healthier, happy and caring.

Further actions required

The well-being assessment references the North Wales Collaborative's population health needs assessment. Topics such as mental-well-being should be kept under review.

We had previously raised a concern that the draft Corporate Plan did not adequately address the findings of the well-being assessment to attempt to resolve issues of food supply and poverty, and these issues are likely to have exacerbated as the cost of living has increased. We will continue to consider this, with the Corporate Plan placing a focus on free school meals under the "learning and

growing" theme, food waste under the "Greener" theme and a food strategy under the "healthier" theme.

Positive impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

The revised Corporate Plan continues to include a range of activity/equality objectives that aim to secure better health and well-being outcomes for disadvantaged or marginalised groups.

Access to good quality, healthy food

The Corporate Plan includes delivery of free school meals under our 'Learning and Growing Theme', food waste is a consideration under our 'greener Denbighshire' theme. We have a Food Waste Strategy, and also an activity to 'Develop and deliver the county wide Food Partnership Network (including social supermarket project Cogog) around Denbighshire'.

People's emotional and mental well-being

The themes of health and a learning and growing Denbighshire are very much focussed on securing better well-being outcomes.

Access to healthcare

Our signposting to health services and initiatives through the Single Point of Access and community navigators continues.

The digital inclusion agenda also supports, or can support, access to healthcare.

The council continues to have a statutory duty to repair damaged roads and pavements, which can impact both access to healthcare from a travel perspective and from a health and safety perspective of pedestrians and road users.

Waiting lists, and the impact these have on service delivery, staff well-being, in addition to the health and well-being of patients is likely to be subject to further analysis.

Participation in leisure opportunities

Active travel features strongly in the Plan. Opportunities to engage in leisure remain unchanged.

Negative impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Some activities, particularly where there is a construction phase, may cause interim negative impacts for communities.

Access to good quality, healthy food

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed).

People's emotional and mental well-being

Some interventions are already becoming more targeted to be deliverable (within the budget). This could result in higher thresholds for accessing support.

Access to healthcare

The council's budget for road and pavement repair will be under pressure going forward.

Participation in leisure opportunities

Some people may be less likely to participate either because of access issues (cost, transport, living in a rural area) or perhaps due to accessibility barriers for people with protected characteristics.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

Overall there is a greater focus in this Corporate Plan on growing our economy as a route out of poverty. However, it is not clear currently how any proposed areas of focus will truly reduce poverty (increase household incomes) given the turbulence of geopolitics and the global economy. It is

certainly hoped though that poverty and disadvantage will not get worse.

Although dispersing this theme throughout our Corporate Plan 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.

Further actions required

Alongside this reduction in the Corporate Plan, the council will undertake impact assessments of proposals that could result in a reduction to services to consider the impact on people with protected characteristics, or people or places experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

Positive impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

The revised Corporate Plan continues to make a strong commitment in support of improving the well-being of those with protected characteristics. Activity that was included in the 'A fairer and more equal Denbighshire' now features in other Corporate Plan themes or continues to be delivered via Service Plans. Such as a range of activities to: reduce harms, exploitation and abuse experienced by people, to ensure people's voices are heard; and to alleviate socio-economic deprivation.

A range of equality objectives are highlighted with an Asterix (*) throughout the Corporate Plan. These identify our commitment to our Strategic Equality Plan.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

The Corporate Plan includes proposals to support marginalised groups, such as refugees. The well-being assessment includes analyses to consider the well-being of (some) marginalised groups, such as refugees. There is also, while limited, a little more understanding of the long term resilience of people who suffer discrimination and disadvantage to climate change for example.

Our equalities commitment in the revised Corporate Plan states that we will take action against all forms of hate crime, discrimination, bullying or harassment.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

Deprivation and tackling poverty features strongly in the Corporate Plan, with a particular focus on reducing the impacts of poverty (e.g. hunger) and improving opportunities for skills development.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

The Corporate Plan enables a focus on all areas of deprivation, including in rural communities.

Negative impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

The well-being assessment specifically highlighted disabled people as having poorer well-being. In all of its work, the council should examine how and whether activities can and will enhance equality of opportunity or whether there could be disproportionately negative impacts for people with protected characteristics.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

The well-being assessment includes analyses to consider the well-being of (some) marginalised groups, such as refugees. However, this is limited and reflects, in part, challenges we faced with engagement. There is also, while limited, a little more understanding of the long term resilience of people who suffer discrimination and disadvantage to climate change for example. Some of the pledges may not be able to partly, let alone, fully alleviate poverty and disadvantage given the turbulence in the wider global economy.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

As already stated, the impacts of the pledges may not be able to partly, let alone, fully alleviate poverty and disadvantage given the turbulence in the wider global economy.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

As stated elsewhere, some interventions will need to be targeted to ensure the benefits are felt by the people/places needing them most.

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The impact continues to be positive overall as a result of the themes and pledges in the Corporate Plan that focus on community well-being and community building. There are a number of projects and activities across a number of themes in the Plan that will have a positive impact on rural communities.

Further actions required

Future budget reductions should consider the impact on cohesive communities and rural communities. It is expected that efforts will be focused on the Council's role in supporting the longer term resilience of communities and rural areas.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

The Corporate Plan emphasises the council's ongoing commitment to safeguarding vulnerable children, young people and adults, to ensuring the best possible care of children looked after and carers. Homelessness, and good housing features strongly, alongside activity that focuses on bringing communities together.

Community participation and resilience

This continues to feature in the context of activity around skills development and opportunities for intergenerational community building, and social isolation and loneliness is included. Being close to our communities is a core part of our ambition around being a Well-Run, High Performing Council and this is centred on the council's role supporting resilient communities.

The attractiveness of the area

Our Prosperous theme includes many activities and projects (including Levelling Up and SPF-funded

initiatives) that are designed to improve the attractiveness of areas.

Connected communities

The revised Corporate Plan still focuses on the importance of a good road and digital infrastructure, with support for people to be digitally included.

Rural resilience

The Close to Communities strand of work, the prosperous theme and the healthier theme all include activities or projects that will have a positive impact on rural communities.

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed).

Community participation and resilience

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed).

The attractiveness of the area

Wildflower meadows remain contentious with some residents regarding them as an eyesore. The new Plan could take the opportunity to bring people along with the climate and ecological change programme.

Connected communities

Our control in securing better phone signal and broadband is limited, as demonstrated by the previous Corporate Plan. Reducing budgets could affect road conditions, and this will be considered separately within its own impact assessment.

Rural resilience

There is a risk that any future budget reductions compound existing challenges affecting rural communities.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The overall impact is expected to be positive, given the contribution we intend to make to collectively supporting the national agenda around Welsh language (through our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan or Welsh Language Strategy and Policy) as well as considering cultural opportunities as part of economic development. 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 culture and Welsh language to be more prevalent in discussions shaping the other themes.

Further actions required

Arrangements are in place to monitor delivery of the Corporate Plan, and this will include monitoring delivery of our commitments around Welsh language and culture. Impact on the Welsh language will be assessed as we take forward budget proposals.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

The revised Corporate Plan has taken the approach of embedding our Welsh language commitment across all of our themes. Our work to support the realisation of one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050 will 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.

Promoting the Welsh language

The Corporate Plan remains committed to the council playing its 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.

Culture and heritage

Elements of this theme relating to promoting our cultural offer have been moved to sit within our Prosperous Denbighshire theme, as there are good synergies to be made there with our Economic Strategy.

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

The targets associated with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan are challenging. Progress is reported and monitored regularly by the Welsh in Education Strategic Group, Welsh Language Steering Committee, Scrutiny Committee and so on.

Promoting the Welsh language

Impact on the Welsh language will be assessed as we take forward budget proposals.

Culture and heritage

The council may need to be 'refocussed' in some way to deliver cultural regeneration in a cohesive way. Agriculture could feature more strongly in the thinking.

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

Denbighshire County Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and a strategy (2021-

2030) to become net carbon zero and ecologically positive has been approved. Socially responsible procurement features heavily in the action plan to deliver the strategy and for these reasons the anticipated impact is positive.

Further actions required

The revised Corporate Plan retains a broader commitment to health and well-being and is in alignment with the PSB's Well-being Plan.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

In line with the Social Partnerships and Public Protection Act, the Corporate Plan makes specific commitments around procurement and securing community benefits. We will need to work seamlessly with partners and Welsh Government to support small and medium sized businesses to ensure they are prepared and well-positioned for the changes. This will also include the third sector.

Human rights

Safeguarding and protecting human rights is a core part of procurement and HR policies currently and we are taking action against poverty, child hunger (free school meals), and homelessness. Our Equalities Objectives include ongoing support as part of Wales's declaration as a Nation of Sanctuary, and these are monitored at a service level.

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

The Corporate Plan attempts to create more focus around tackling poverty and deprivation, and is in alignment with the PSB's Well-being Plan.

Reducing climate change

Reducing climate change is a core part of our Greener theme.

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

There is a risk that the local supply chain will not be sufficiently prepared and ready to take

advantage of the opportunities afforded by new Wales/UK procurement legislation. For this reason we are planning a range of communications and learning opportunities for local businesses, including as part of the 2024 March for Business campaign.

Human rights

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed).

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

There is a risk that reducing budgets across the public sector affect service provision (thresholds for support could increase), partnership working and demand.

Reducing climate change

None identified at present (this should continue to be reviewed).