

Denbighshire County Council Panel Performance Assessment (PPA)

Draft Action Plan

In response to the issued PPA Report, the council is required under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) to state in its response any actions it proposes to take to increase the extent to which it meets the performance requirements. The action plan that follows is provided to discharge that statutory requirement and responds to the Panel's 9 recommendations for improvement and 8 identified strengths and areas of innovation.

The Chief Executive Team will be accountable for the delivery of actions identified with a Senior Leadership Team lead identified to be responsible for the delivery. All action will be delivered during 2024/25 and 2025/26. Status updates will be provided to Committees every 6 months as part of the Council's performance self-assessment reporting.

9 Areas for Improvement

Report Reference	Recommendation detail	Action in response	Responsible Officer
8.11 (Rec.1)	<p><u>Continue to develop the narrative and vision the Council has set out for Denbighshire to ensure it can serve the county in the medium and long term.</u></p> <p>This should reflect the many advantages of the area, such as its fantastic cultural, natural and geographic assets. The Council should build on its approach to inclusive policy making to ensure that this vision is shared across the Council, its partners, and its residents.</p> <p>This vision should be aligned with its long-term transformation priorities and medium-term financial plan.</p>	<p>We will build on our work engaging residents and partners in our Closer to Communities and Placemaking Plans to develop our narrative and vision alongside developing our transformation priorities and financial plan.</p> <p>While we recognise and value the area's assets as identified in the report, we propose our narrative and vision is more strongly based in building community and council well-being and resilience for anticipated future challenges, than in the marketing of these assets as implied in the report. We will take this work forward through the following actions</p> <p><u>Action #1: Develop the narrative and long-term vision for the Council and Denbighshire; consider the value of creating aspirational marketing material to support our inward investment goals.</u></p>	<p>#1 - Head of Corporate Support Service- Performance, Digital and Assets</p>

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		<p>Action #2: Work through the Public Services Board to ensure the up-coming Well-being Plan is developed inclusively and reflects a financially-viable narrative and vision, in line with the corporate plan and transformation priorities.</p> <p>Action #3: We also acknowledge the need to communicate better within the council, with residents and partners to build ownership and understanding of the council vision and progress in delivery. To this end, we will review our communication of key performance indicators (KPIs) – (#3a), across key projects (#3b) and to those less able to access digital communications (see Action #13, below).</p>	<p>#2 - Head of Corporate Support Service- Performance, Digital and Assets</p> <p>#3 - Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p>
<p>8.11 (Rec.2)</p>	<p><u>Consider well-being and professional development support available to the Council’s Senior Leadership Team.</u></p> <p>The Corporate Executive Team and wider senior management team need to remain resilient and focussed in the face of ongoing and future challenges.</p>	<p>We will continue to provide a safe, stable and sustainable working environment for all staff. To enhance existing provision, we are developing an organisational Wellbeing Strategy for implementation during 2025/26.</p> <p>Our Wellbeing Strategy will prioritise the health, safety, and wellbeing of our workforce, further supporting conditions for them to be safe and well. While we accept that particular support to the Council’s Senior Leadership Team is essential for business continuity, we propose this resilience and focus must also be extended to wider middle management.</p> <p>Action #4: We will work with our Leadership Team (CET/SLT/Middle Managers) to ensure the Wellbeing Strategy specifically sets out how the Council can better support their wellbeing and resilience. Managers will also be supported to meet their own wellbeing needs as identified through on-going 1:1s.</p> <p>Action #5: We will work with our Leadership Team (CET/SLT/Middle Managers) to understand their professional development needs to include training, coaching, and mentoring. From this we will identify the corporate development required and produce a Corporate Professional Development Plan for implementation during 2025/26. Managers will also be supported on how best to</p>	<p>#4 - Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p> <p>#5 - Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p>

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		meet their own personal professional development needs identified through this exercise	
9.9 (Rec.3)	<p><u>Develop a clear prioritisation of the Council's transformation agenda.</u></p> <p>The Council should continue to pursue its transformation agenda. The Council will need to carefully consider which of its projects and initiatives will be prioritised and carried forward, and crucially which projects will not.</p> <p>These should reflect the longer-term vision and ambition of the Council and align to its medium-term financial strategy, workforce strategy and risk appetite.</p>	<p>A clear prioritisation of our Transformation Programme has now been completed. Consultation across senior managers has shown strong support for the transformation agenda, which we will continue to roll-out through the tranche approach to prioritisation of projects.</p> <p>As per Actions #2 and #3, above, we will continue to develop and communicate the narrative around that transformation, and ensure it is embedded in our Well-being Plan.</p>	See actions #2 and #3
9.9 (Rec.4)	<p><u>Align the Council's operating model and workforce strategy to its vision and transformation agenda.</u></p> <p>The Council will need to carefully consider how its vision translates into the operating model for the Council. This should include how the Council can support staff to meet the demands of a future vision for how the Council operates, and be aligned to its key strategies that enable transformational change</p>	<p>Service planning, design, policy and standards development will be taken on a case-by-case basis to make commissioning decisions (make/buy/borrow) and this activity will be prompted by annual service planning and contract management processes. It is expected a mixed economy model will continue in DCC as its operating model.</p> <p><u>Action #6: We will complete the latest iteration of a workforce planning exercise with services to identify their workforce needs and ensure they meet current and future demands of our transformation agenda, vision and financial pressures. This will include consideration of professional development for senior and middle management as per Action #5 above. We will use key actions collated from the workforce planning exercise to review the Council Workforce Strategy and ensure it aligns with the council's transformational programme.</u></p>	#6 - Head of Corporate Support Service- People
10.4 (Rec.5)	<p><u>Carefully consider the opportunities for further partnership working presented by the new Corporate Joint Committee as a new statutory regional body</u></p> <p>The Council recognises the important role partners will have to play in 'managing down' demand on key Council services. The</p>	<p>The Council is looking to build on its existing regional partnership work to explore and deliver continued efficiency gains and to reduce duplication of effort through greater collaborative working.</p> <p><u>Action #7: work closely with partners in the Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) to understand and develop proposals for greater collaborative working, reducing duplication and delivering</u></p>	#7 – Chief Executive

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	Council has an opportunity to build on and strengthen its approach to partnership working through proactive engagement with new statutory Corporate Joint Committees.	efficiency gains; communicating opportunities clearly to employees, members and residents.	
10.4 (Rec.6)	<p><u>Use the Council's convening power to strengthen partnership working with City, Town and Community Councils, and amplify collaboration for collective outcomes.</u></p> <p>The Panel established that the Council is working with its City, Town and Community Councils in some areas and recognises the key roles and support this relationship can bring. The Panel suggests that this work could be further strengthened through earlier and constructive conversations around the capacity and resource capability of those Councils to support the wider aspirations of the Council in delivering its transformational change priorities and being an integral part of the operating model for the Council in the future.</p>	<p>We accept we need to develop the relationship with City, Town and Community Councils, and see this as a gateway to extending our working with communities and the Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)</p> <p><u>Action #8:</u> We will build a more collegial relationship with city, town and community councils e.g. by restoring regular meetings with a dedicated liaison officer and annual meetings with the Chief Executive and Leader. We will gather and promote case studies of effective partnership working between county and local councils. Through the meetings above, we will engage City, Town and Community Councils in decision-making around shared areas of interest.</p> <p><u>Action- #9:</u> Building on placemaking plans, we will work with local councils to identify and engage community groups in shared areas of interest relevant to that group(s), including schools and young people.</p>	<p>#8 – Head of Housing and Communities</p> <p>#9 - Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside</p>
10.4 (Rec.7)	<p><u>Review and strengthen relationship with Trade Unions.</u></p> <p>In light of new Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, the Council's senior leadership should consider whether they can do more to meet the aims and principles of consensus-building and collaborative working set out in the act with Trade Unions.</p>	<p>We would value a closer relationship and deeper partnership with trade unions and will seek to build on the existing, regular engagement led predominantly by the Human Resources team.</p> <p><u>Action #10:</u> The council will conduct an analysis of potential value to the council's priorities from the new Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act and explore opportunities to build engagement. We will work with the Unions to increase awareness and understanding of the role of unions and the existing processes we have in place around trade union engagement</p> <p><u>Action #11:</u> We will seek to embed the aims and principles of consensus-building and collaborative working into council systems and processes through building this into Corporate Induction process and New Manager Training Course.</p>	<p>#10 – Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p> <p>#11 – Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p>

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<p>12.7 (Rec.8)</p>	<p><u>Review the Council’s approach to how it communicates and engages with its residents, staff and partners.</u></p> <p>The Council reviews its approach to ensure that it has the right tools and resources in place to engage with its staff, citizens and stakeholders in a meaningful two-way process.</p>	<p>The Council is clear it wants to improve communication and engagement residents, employees and partners, and has plans already underway to do so (e.g. see Action #2 above in particular). In addition, we will:</p> <p><u>Action #12:</u> We will develop a dedicated website for communicating with the general public. We will continue to ensure communication with residents is clear and in a format that is understandable and accessible.</p> <p><u>Action #13:</u> We will explore options for improving staff communications especially with for those staff who do not have access to council’s emails and intranet. This includes exploring the use of a dedicated app for Denbighshire staff.</p> <p><u>Action #14:</u> We will continue to develop our approach for partnership that supports the development and diversification of Council partnerships as it moves forward with its transformation programme.</p>	<p>#12 - Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p> <p>#13 - Head of Corporate Support Service- People</p> <p>#14 - Head of Corporate Support Service- Performance, Digital and Assets</p>
<p>13.9 (Rec.9)</p>	<p><u>Equalities</u></p> <p>In reviewing its Corporate Plan the Council needs to reflect on where the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 Wales Specific Duties (for example the Strategic Equality Plan) are best placed to ensure it has a robust and effective approach in place.</p>	<p>We have integrated our Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP) into our Corporate Plan. This was done to ensure equality considerations were mainstreamed to become everyone’s responsibility to improve (equalities also being a central consideration of the wellbeing impact assessment required for each project).</p> <p>We also have a dedicated Strategic Equalities and Delivery Board which oversees delivery of the equalities aspects of the integrated plan. Standalone equalities performance reports are being produced quarterly from October 2024, tracking progress in delivery.</p> <p><u>Action #15:</u> We will connect with the two other local authorities in Wales who have integrated their Strategic Equalities Plan to their Corporate Plan as we have so we can share practice and exchange experience of any challenges.</p>	<p>#15 - Head of Corporate Support Service- Performance, Digital and Assets</p>

8 Identified Strengths and Areas of Innovation

Report Reference	Identified Strengths and Areas of Innovation detail	Organisational response	Responsible Officer
6.1 (bullet pt.1)	A politically mature and stable coalition, capable of working collectively and collaboratively in the interests of the county and its residents.	The four values and five principles championed by the Council are key to continuing and developing the coalition and good working relationships at the heart of these observations. The leadership team has spent a lot of time engaging with and training Councillors and will seek to build on these relationships moving forward, particularly through the work of the “Well Run, High performing Council” board.	Chief Executive
6.1 (bullet pt.2)	Positive working relationships between officers and members who both understand their unique and complementary roles.		
6.1 (bullet pt.3)	An engaged and energetic Chief Executive, who has sought to bring additional clarity and accountability to the Council’s directorship structure, establishing a strong foundation for further change and continually promoting and living the ‘One Council and Denbighshire Way’.	See responses to recommendations 8.11 (Rec.1) and 8.11 (Rec.2) above about communicating change and supporting the wellbeing and personal development of all senior leaders / managers to ensure resilience.	See actions #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 above
6.1 (bullet pt.4)	Strong recognition amongst staff of the ‘Denbighshire Way’ and the ‘One Council’ approach.	We will continue to build on engagement and communication with employees around these priorities, particularly noting Action #13 above.	See action #13 above
6.1 (bullet pt.5)	A strong sense of pride and commitment from staff to making a difference to communities and a willingness to support Council staff from other service areas who require short term capacity e.g. responding to the customer facing issues around waste.	As set out in action #4 with regards recommendation 8.11 (Rec.2) above, we will continue to support all staff with well-being, particularly following particularly intense or difficult experiences.	See action #4 above
6.2 (bullet pt.1)	The Council has engaged well with its staff and members on its immediate budget pressures to date.	As set out above, we will further develop our approach to communication and engagement to support the Council’s transformation and budget agenda.	See actions #2, #3, #13 above
6.2 (bullet pt.2)	A high degree of integration across social services and education, evident in the management structure of the organisation, but also triangulated through the feedback of interviewees.	We will continue to build on this integration.	Corporate Director for Social Care and Education
6.2 (bullet pt.3)	The Member Area Groups (MAGs) whereby members and officers meet in designated wards across the County to discuss residents’ local priorities and local impact issues e.g. road resurfacing. In this example choice to which road is resurfaced was discussed and	We will consider how to build on the lessons learned from the MAGs function to further strengthen our engagement with and responsiveness to residents.	Corporate Director for Governance and Business

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	<p>proposed in terms of the local priority (excluding statutory requirements) within existing resources. This approach appeared innovative to the Panel and a real source of engagement with members and the community as a whole.</p>		