

<b>Report to</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of meeting</b>	June 24, 2025
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Cllr Julie Matthews / Gary Williams
<b>Head of Service</b>	Helen Vaughan-Evans, Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets
<b>Report author</b>	Emma Horan, Strategic Planning and Performance Officer
<b>Title</b>	Council Performance Self-Assessment 2024 to 2025 and Performance Update Report October 2024 to March 2025

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. This report accompanies the council's Performance Self-Assessment for 2024 to 2025, providing our end of year analysis of achievements and challenges with our key performance objectives (i.e. our Corporate Plan themes), together with our October 2024 to March 2025 Performance Update Report. Please note an update on the [Panel Performance Assessment action plan](#), approved by Council in February, will be provided in our next report.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 Regular reporting reflects our [values and principles](#). It is an essential monitoring requirement of the council's performance management methodology and our statutory duties in relation to the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, the Equality Act 2010 and Wales Measure 2011, and our contributions to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We monitor our performance regularly, taking six monthly reports to Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings.
- 2.2 Feedback is sought on the content of the draft reports, attached as appendices I-IV, before we seek approval of the final documents by Council in July.

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<sup>1</sup> Our next report, for the period April to September 2025, will be presented in the autumn.

### 3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 Cabinet considers the reports, and agree any further actions required to respond to any performance issues highlighted within the reports (noting feedback from Committees summarised at Appendix V).<sup>2</sup>
- 3.2 Subject to any agreed changes, Cabinet confirms the content of Appendices I to IV prior to approval by Council in July.
- 3.3 Cabinet reflects on key messages arising from the Self-Assessment and the October to March Performance Update Report (particularly the improvement actions).

### 4. Report details

- 4.1 Appendix I presents our Executive Summary, which seeks to draw out the highlights of our performance against our objectives (i.e. our Corporate Plan themes that are also our Well-being and Equality Objectives) and the seven governance areas prescribed in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Executive Summary, we have summarised our five key achievements and four key challenges.
- 4.2 Appendix II is our six-monthly Performance Update Report (October 2024 to March 2025), which is our process for ongoing self-assessment and embodies all the evidence (internal and external) and analysis that seeks to answer the questions of 'How well are we doing', 'How do we know', and 'What and how can we do better'? It is the first performance report for our newly revised Corporate Plan performance management framework.<sup>3</sup>
- 4.3 Nine improvement actions have been identified through discussions about this report:
  - i. 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, noting the recent

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<sup>2</sup> The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 requires the Council to consider recommendations for change from Governance and Audit Committee in turn and decide on acceptance or otherwise. Where a recommendation for change is not accepted, a rationale for why must be provided. Appendix V provides a summary of Governance and Audit Committees recommendations for change (if any) and response taken / proposed to be taken for Cabinet feedback.

<sup>3</sup> Our performance management framework includes indicators that reflect the outcomes we aim to achieve. These often relate to long-term challenges - such as poverty, the economy, housing, or carbon emissions - where our influence is limited (e.g., housing waiting lists or business start-ups). Despite this, these outcomes remain central to our ambition to achieve the [Denbighshire We Want](#). Alongside this, we also monitor how effectively we deliver services that are within our control. For example, we track efforts to reduce poverty through homelessness prevention or to improve access to housing by building new council homes.

announcement of additional funding by Welsh Government<sup>4</sup>. 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.

- ii. Building on the communication briefings that took place at the start of 2025, the Council needs to continue to communicate internally and externally with staff, residents, elected members, partners and regulators about its Transformation work.
- iii. Ensure the mitigating actions in the cumulative impact assessment are delivered and provide an update to the Budget and Transformation Board on progress.
- iv. Review the improvement in completion of one-to-ones and identify the reasons for the remaining quarter of all eligible staff not having had a one-to-one over the last year. The focus of this improvement activity should be on encouraging more one-to-ones as an effective means to support staff and embed a positive culture that is focussed on valuing staff, diversity and promoting well-being.
- v. The whole Council, both elected members and officers, should consider how reduced or changing capacity will impact our commitments around service delivery and quality, especially where these may fall short of customer expectations, and agree mechanisms for communicating that to stakeholders.
- vi. Noting the £250k pressure to fund delivery of the Climate and Nature Strategy as per the budget approved in February, the Council's Greener Board should examine the gap between current performance and our Net Carbon Zero by 2030 target, assess viable pathways to securing funds and assess our appetite for escalating action.
- vii. In line with the additional £500,000 being pledged to education to help tackle learners' well-being, attendance issues, behaviour problems and poverty, the Council should evaluate the effectiveness of current interventions aimed at reducing the gap in attainment and exclusion rates (between those eligible and ineligible for free school meals) and consider whether more targeted efforts are needed.
- viii. Consider the Council's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards within our Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2024 to 2025.

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<sup>4</sup> In May, Welsh Government wrote to Denbighshire announcing an Award of Funding in relation to the Local Government Borrowing Initiative. Put simply, Welsh Government has committed to providing revenue funding of £639,542 to the Council to finance borrowing to fund capital spend on highways maintenance.

- ix. Assess and cost alternative arrangements for meeting our statutory duties in relation to seeking stakeholder feedback, currently met through the annual Stakeholder Survey, to improve confidence in data gathered.
- 4.4 Improvement activities identified through our six-monthly performance update reports are reported upon in subsequent reports. For ease, Appendix III brings together an update on all improvement activities generated since 2023.
- 4.5 Appendix IV presents a new Citizen Voice report, which attempts to triangulate a range of data to strengthen the Council's approach to performance management. Local authorities across Wales are being encouraged to incorporate more service user perspectives into decision-making, placing greater emphasis on outcomes of decisions on people's lives. This initiative follows a national report by Audit Wales, which calls for action in this area. While further work is needed to source appropriate data<sup>5</sup>, the report is a first attempt to bring together a range of different perspectives on our performance in addition to the annual Stakeholder Survey. Our intention is to publish this report [online](#) alongside our other performance reports. By bringing together responses to similar survey questions from different sources - such as tenant satisfaction surveys (positive) and stakeholder survey feedback (negative) on housing - we uncover a picture that is both interesting and complex. Our aim is to highlight stakeholder perspectives while contextualising them within actual performance data, some of which is benchmarked.
- 4.6 Appendices I to IV are live documents, which will be modified to incorporate any outstanding data and to reflect discussions that will be taking place over the coming weeks. Appendix V contains a summary of recommended changes by Governance and Audit Committee (see footnote 2). We will provide a verbal update to the Committee on discussions at Scrutiny.

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

- 5.1 The Performance Self-Assessment includes an evaluation of the council's success in delivering against its Corporate Plan themes.

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<sup>5</sup> An improvement activity in relation to this is proposed (see 4.3, ix) due to concerns raised by members that the survey approach used is not statistically reliable and findings may not represent majority opinions.

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

6.1 There is no additional cost associated with this report.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment and what changes have, or will be made to the project or approach as a result of the assessment?**

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) is not required for this report. A WIA was undertaken on the Corporate Plan itself, which has been updated as part of the revision of the Corporate Plan, approved by [County Council](#) in February 2024.

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

8.1. The reports have been developed by the Strategic Planning Team, in consultation with other council services. Discussion has already taken place at a Cabinet and SLT Tranche Review (May 21), Cabinet Briefing (June 2), Governance and Audit Committee (June 11). This is the final opportunity for these documents to be considered at committee prior to being submitted to Council for approval in July.

## **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 Failure to publish our Self-Assessment would likely result in statutory recommendations from Audit Wales, with reputational implications. There is a risk of poor performance being reported out of context. On this basis, we have already shared the draft reports with the Communications Team.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1 Part 6, Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (c.1, s. 89).

11.2. Part 2, Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (s. 13).

11.3. The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (s.16); and The Equality Act (Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty) (Wales) Regulations 2021.