

Executive Summary: Self-Assessment of Performance, 2024 to 2025

Together with our six-monthly update reports for 2024 to 2025 that have functioned as our ongoing assessment throughout the year, this document makes up our Self-Assessment of Performance required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. It presents an accessible end-of-year summary of our performance against key functions, specifically our Well-Being Objectives (otherwise referred to as our Corporate Plan themes), the seven governance areas, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (which includes the new Socio-Economic Duty). To review the evidence behind the conclusions in this document, please refer to the Performance Update Reports, published on our [website](#).

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Our approach to self-assessment

This Executive Summary brings together our Performance Update Reports, published [online](#), alongside analysis of the extent to which our performance is driving positive outcomes and how well our governance is supporting continuous improvement. This summary also looks ahead to key opportunities and challenges.

It is a requirement that the Council identify improvement actions through its self-assessment process, and that it provides an update on progress delivering those actions in subsequent self-assessment reports. We have achieved this through our Performance Update reports (supporting the principle of on-going assessment), which have identified improvement actions during their production.

Overall, how well are we doing?

Key Achievements

- **Governance and Leadership:** An independent Panel Performance Assessment confirmed that Denbighshire is a well-run, self-aware Council with strong staff commitment and effective governance structures.
- **Financial Management:** We delivered a balanced budget and maintained prudent reserves of £5.53 million, despite ongoing financial pressures.
- **Transformation Progress:** Our Transformation Programme is beginning to yield results.¹
- **Equality and Inclusion:** We made progress on our Equality Objectives, including recognition for refugee support initiatives and improved engagement with underrepresented communities.
- **Staff Engagement:** Our Staff Survey showed good levels of satisfaction and pride in working for the Council, even amid workforce challenges.

Key Challenges

- **Financial Pressures:** Medium-term financial forecasts show financial pressures of between £14m and £26 million for 2026 to 2027.
- **Service Demand:** Rising demand in social care and housing continues to stretch capacity.
- **Unequal Outcomes:** Poverty and inequality persist, with a disparity in outcomes for children and young people in poverty or leaving care.
- **Climate Goals:** Meeting our 2030 net carbon zero and ecological targets remains challenging, increasing the risk of high future costs from insufficient action now.
- **Public Perception:** Public trust and satisfaction in democracy and services is declining, emphasising the need for improved communication and engagement.²

¹ For example, reducing costs while also reducing unsuitable emergency accommodation for homeless households.

² Our latest Stakeholder Survey reflects decreased satisfaction with the Council, despite positive external assessments. This aligns with a broader UK trend, as reported by the [National Centre for Social Research](#) (2024).

Governance functions and corporate health

This section explains in more detail how we've managed our governance responsibilities, focusing on what went well and where we have faced challenges.

Our peers say we are a well-run Council that exercises its functions well and is self-aware of the challenges we're facing

Our belief that we are a well-run Council has been evidenced by the external Panel Performance Assessment held in September 2024, the first to be carried out in Wales. Discussed in detail in our October 2024 to March 2025 Performance Update Report, the [report](#) of the external Panel concluded that overall, the Council is well run and exercises its functions effectively - while also acknowledging challenges it has recently faced (in relation to the roll out of the new waste and recycling model). The report also said the Council has clear process in place to manage resources economically and efficiently and has navigated a decade of local government austerity well while protecting front line services where possible. It found there are positive working relationships between staff and elected members and recognition among staff of the Council's ethos. Staff also demonstrated a strong sense of pride in working for the Council and showed a real commitment to making a difference to communities and a willingness to support Council staff from other service areas when needed. The Panel noted areas of good practice and innovation, including a high degree of integration across social services and education; good engagement with staff and elected members; and the Member Area Groups whereby elected members and officers meet in designated wards across the County to discuss residents' local priorities and local impact issues. The Panel's recommendations for areas for the Council to continually improve on were all accepted and an [action plan](#) has been put in place and is being delivered. Effective communication and engagement underpin everything the council does, and this is reflected in the action plan, our [Well-run, high performing Council theme](#) and the improvement actions for the year.

We continue to deliver a balanced budget

In addition to continuing to deliver a balanced budget, we have sustained Council Reserves at £5,531,000 (the level considered to be prudent to cover unforeseen financial pressures), with 89% of forecast savings for the year having been achieved.

While this year's settlement (2025 to 2026)³ has been more favourable than expected, relieving the urgency associated with making service reductions or cuts, service changes and reductions have still been necessary and more will need to be explored to address the gap between funding and the pressures described in more detail below.⁴ This has involved close working between officers and elected members to develop proposals and take very difficult decisions. For each decision, officers and elected members carefully consider the impact of proposed actions on current and future generations. Elected members have responded to the challenge and considered what are often undesirable but pragmatic steps in ensuring we can deliver a balanced budget while trying to minimise, as far as possible, negative impacts for community and environmental well-being. All of these require careful monitoring of individual and cumulative well-being impacts to ensure differential and negative impacts can be reduced. A core principle of our approach continues to be balancing the impact on individuals (i.e. rate payers) against safeguarding as many core Council services upon which many vulnerable residents depend. The challenge to ensure backbenchers continue to feel a part of the decision-making process around budget and in terms of the delivery of the Corporate Plan over the next few years remains and is expected to continue. For example, the Council will start implementing Public Conveniences savings, resulting in closures for some wards and refurbishment in others. Looking ahead, the Council will continue to face significant financial challenges in setting budgets in the medium term as the forecast increases in funding from Welsh Government (working assumption) are highly unlikely to keep pace with increases in demand for – and complexity of needs – for services and the continued impact of inflation. We refer to these as 'pressures'. The scale of the financial challenge facing the Council should not be underestimated. This is discussed in greater detail in an update report about our [Medium Term Financial Plan](#), presented to Cabinet in April.

³ Council set the 2025 to 2026 budget and Council Tax in February 2025 based on the Provisional Local Government Settlement, which resulted in a cash increase of £14.427m or 7% when compared with the level of funding received at the start of 2024 to 2025. The Final Local Government Settlement for 2025 to 2026 has since been received and has resulted in a very small increase in funding of £29,659. This sum has been added to the contingency budget within the corporate budget.

⁴ The update report about our [Medium Term Financial Plan](#), presented to Cabinet in April, states our pressures are difficult to forecast but are ranging from £14m to £26m in 2026 to 2027 with a mid-range of £21m. Similar ranges are forecast for 2027 to 2028 and 2028 to 2029.

Our transformation programme is maturing and we are seeing some good outcomes already

The scale of change needed to meet increased demand and increasingly complex needs for social care is significant.

- In 2024 to 2025, demand for children's services and adult social care increased by 14 percent.⁵
- Contacts to the Single Point of Access also rose.⁶
- More adult carers received an assessment of need.

Managing people's expectations around what Councils should deliver, together with the risks associated with an aging workforce and an unpredictable and challenging financial environment are common to all councils. At the same time, we are striving to mitigate and adapt to the growing impacts of the climate and nature crises. We must continue to respond to these pressures, acting as 'One Council', being close and responsive to our elected members and communities, being clear about our performance and what we can deliver and supporting staff. Another way we are responding to these challenges is through our Transformation Programme. We need to see pace and effective delivery of transformation projects, learning important lessons from others, such as the waste rollout. The success we are starting to see following the transformation of our homelessness service to reduce unsuitable emergency accommodation demonstrates that service change can drive expenditure down and yield positive results for people in Denbighshire, our partners, communities and the Council alike.⁷ While we continue to proactively engage elected members around the budget there is a need to ensure greater clarity, transparency about and ownership of the Transformation Programme building on communication briefings that took place at the start of 2025.⁸ The Council needs to continue to communicate internally and externally with staff, residents, elected members and partners

⁵ During this financial year alone, we have seen the demand for children's services and adult social care increase evidenced by a 14 percent increase in referrals and enquiries recorded on our Children and Family Support Gateway (the number of referrals and enquiries during 2023 to 2024 was 5,056 increasing to 5,743 during 2024 to 2025) and with more adult carers receiving an assessment of need during the same period (from 370 to 447).

⁶ From 4,259 contacts as of March 2024 to 4,773 in March 2025 (a 12 percent increase).

⁷ The number of households that are temporarily accommodated in hotels and bed and breakfasts has nearly halved. It should be noted though that whilst we have seen an improvement in the figures for households successfully prevented from, successfully relieved from and positively discharged from homelessness, all three remain a 'Priority for Improvement'.

⁸ This is reported in more detail in our October 2024 to March 2025 Performance Update Report.

about its Transformation work. This will provide context for the development of a long-term vision for Denbighshire which was a recommendation from the Panel Performance Assessment referenced above. The Transformation Programme will need to respond to that visioning work in terms of supporting the delivery of any changes needed to achieve it - considering our culture, our people, processes and technology- along with future Medium Term Financial Plans.

We are not on track to become a net carbon zero, ecologically positive Council by 2030

The pace of reductions in carbon emissions indicates that the challenge remains to meet the 2030 goal of being a net carbon zero, ecologically positive Council, as supported unanimously by elected members. The financial pressures all local authorities are facing now and in the coming years will continue to impact on that pace, yet not delivering on the targets and strategy will incur high costs into the future. The Council needs to assess the gap between our current performance and the 2030 target. We must assess viable pathways to securing funds and assess our appetite for escalating action. This work will be informed by the North Wales Climate Risk Assessment the Council is supporting through the [Public Services Board](#). Consideration should also be given to our Transformation Programme and the extent to which that is responding to the [Climate Change and Ecological Emergency](#) declared by the Council in July 2019.

Staff are our most important asset

During the year we have seen the impact of reduced capacity across the Council with a smaller workforce. Recruitment and retention of staff continued to be particularly challenging in social services, though has eased elsewhere. Where possible we have reallocated our resources and worked creatively to manage these challenges. For example, more detail can be found in the [Director of Social Services annual report](#) for 2023 to 2024. A formal workforce planning exercise has started and will conclude in May 2025. This exercise involves working with all services to identify their workforce needs and challenges over the short to medium term and contributes to a Corporate Workforce Plan for the whole Council. Furthermore, our response to the Panel Performance Assessment emphasises our commitment to continuing our efforts to develop our workforce plan and support the resilience of our leadership team. The launch of our new Staff Survey has shown that generally – of those that responded - staff are happy and feel recognised, supported and valued for their work. This is at a time of unprecedented challenge. We

need to improve our engagement with staff and build trust around the Survey to increase future response rates, particularly from our more front-facing services.

The disconnect: reputation versus performance

Not unique to our Council is declining trust and satisfaction with democracy and public services generally. We have again received feedback from stakeholders via our Stakeholder Survey that shows a deterioration in satisfaction with the Council. The results of this year's Stakeholder Survey come at a time when public trust in government at all levels is described as being at an all-time low across the UK, according to the [National Centre for Social Research](#) (2024). Furthermore, the Auditor General ([Audit Wales](#), 2024) has described the financial position for all local authorities in Wales as fragile and sensitive. The reality is that local authorities, including Denbighshire County Council, are balancing significant financial pressures against the expectations of their communities, and this can be challenging, not least as most of those pressures are in services areas that the public don't necessarily associate with local government provision such as education and social services. As a Council, our commitment is to consistently strive to serve the people of Denbighshire to the best of our ability. We innovate to improve our communication with our citizens about all the positive work we do, but gaining traction on positive messaging is increasingly difficult with the expansion of social media. This is demonstrated when we consider our Stakeholder Survey results alongside feedback from other stakeholder sources - such as residents feedback about specific services we deliver, our Staff Survey, regulatory reports and the Panel Performance Assessment. Data from these sources tends to be more positive, underscoring the challenges described by the National Centre for Social Research and the Auditor General.

Our new Citizens Voice report is our first attempt at triangulating these sources of evidence. Consistent across all Citizen Voice evidence is the need for engagement and communication. We want to improve our communications and relationships with our communities as evidenced by the action plan we have put in place following the Panel Performance Assessment and the work of the Closer to Communities Task and Finish Group for the Well-run, High Performing Council Board. As a Council, we are committed to rebuilding trust, where it has been lost, and to articulating our successes and challenges more effectively. Our new news website will help in this respect. We are also already thinking about our next corporate plan and how we can engage better with residents through its development in 2026 to 2027, such they feel better heard and engaged. Our [values and principles](#) will hold us in good stead.

We continue to strive for high performance standards, but meeting public expectations remains challenging in the context of the climate and nature crisis, an aging workforce, and the financial pressures facing all councils

Overall, performance across indicators and measures varies. In some areas, we have seen improvements; in others - even where performance is considered Acceptable, Good or Excellent - performance is worse than the preceding period. Where performance is already a Priority for Improvement, performance has either stayed the same and, in some cases, declined. Currently, 20 percent of all measures within the Corporate Plan are considered a Priority for Improvement. While none of our projects or activities fall into this category, 7.2 percent are considered 'At Risk'. It is encouraging that, despite ongoing resource constraints, we have been able to sustain projects and uphold our Corporate Plan commitments. The variability in performance though does reflect the challenges associated with running public services in the context of the current climate.

Some of the indicators we monitor—such as in-work and child poverty⁹—remain poor. There are links between attainment, attendance and poverty.¹⁰ We are also concerned that in our own organisation, despite women being well represented among senior management, 79 percent of the lowest paid salaries are women's salaries.¹¹ These reflect the challenging economic issues affecting the UK and beyond, as well as the need to better target economic development towards our communities. While these outcomes are largely beyond our direct control, they remain central to our ambition of achieving our [Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want](#). We must strive to be agile in recognising and resolving barriers to progress and ensure we remain resilient as our capacity reduces.¹² For example, some of our improvement actions¹³ take longer than expected to be delivered. To address this we are reviewing our Tranche Review and performance processes (including the presentation of these reports) to strengthen accountability for delivering these actions. We have not yet identified in full what the

⁹ The Strategic Equality and Diversity Group is establishing a Task and Finish Group in summer 2025 to explore indicators and measures of child poverty.

¹⁰ Our Education Service is working closely across the council, with partners and elected members to take a 'one council' approach to improving attainment and attendance.

¹¹ It is important to note that 71 percent of the upper quartile of salaries were women's.

¹² Workforce planning and our new draft People Strategy are important in terms of workforce and individual well-being and resilience.

¹³ Our improvement actions are currently published as part of our six-[monthly Corporate Plan Performance Update reports, available online](#).

impact of reduced capacity means for our commitments around service quality or delivery. We must not shy away from this.

Equality and diversity

This section explains in more detail how we've delivered on our equality and diversity commitments, focusing on what went well and where we have faced challenges.

Whilst there were no specific concerns flagged up in the Panel Performance Assessment (PPA), the Panel recommended we review the effectiveness of our Strategic Equalities Plan (SEP), which is integrated within our Corporate Plan. That review has taken place, and we are satisfied that the integration of our SEP into our Corporate Plan is an effective way to ensure equality considerations are mainstreamed to become everyone's responsibility to improve. It also ensures equalities are front and centre in significant reports such as this one. Equalities is also a central consideration of the Council's well-being impact assessment. Our dedicated Strategic Equalities and Diversity Group (SEDG) oversees delivery of the equalities aspects of the integrated plan and is looking at the approaches of other local authorities to share practice and exchange experience. For example, in January this year, SEDG welcomed colleagues from Conwy County Borough Council to learn from their anti-racism work to deliver the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021 to 2026 (which aims for Wales to be anti-racist and anti-discriminatory of all types in Wales by 2030).

A summary of performance against our Equality Objectives

At its meetings SEDG considers a standalone performance report on equality and diversity (linked to our Corporate Plan) and all our equality objectives are noted in the tables below. These track delivery and governance around equality and diversity, some of which relate to equality and diversity in our community in terms of well-being outcomes and others relate to our workforce and organisational culture. Some highlights in relation to our Equality Objectives include:

- Homelessness outcomes have improved but our performance remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. During the year, 18 percent of care leavers experienced homelessness (17 of 99 young people), which is also considered a 'Priority for Improvement'.
- We have seen a slight decrease in the reported rates of repeat domestic abuse.

- During this financial year alone, we have seen the demand for children's services and adult social care increase, evidenced by a 14 percent increase in referrals and enquiries recorded on our Children and Family Support Gateway, as well as increasing contacts made to the Single Point of Access and with more adult carers receiving an assessment of need during the same period.¹⁴
- The attainment gap between pupils eligible and ineligible for free school meals remains (but has reduced in the past year).
- The rate per 1,000 pupils of fixed term exclusions for Denbighshire pupils eligible for free school meals during 2023 to 2024 was more than three times the figure for ineligible pupils.

78 percent of staff that responded to our Staff Survey felt that Denbighshire supports equality in the workplace (5 percent disagreed; 15 percent were neutral, and 2 percent said they did not know).¹⁵ We need to continually keep testing our culture to ensure unhealthy or discriminatory habits do not creep in. This applies to the whole Council; to officers and elected members. We have a whistle-blowing policy, we are proactively trying to improve completion of one-to-ones (to embed a positive culture and ensure staff feel seen and supported), and we look outside of our organisation to learn from the experiences of others. An area we could perhaps delve more deeply into, and learn from, is the experiences of staff and elected members who, whether due to race, religion, sex or other characteristic for example, are a minority in their service area or their ward. This could be women working in frontline manual roles or men in social services.

In terms of our Equality Objectives relating to organisational culture and performance:

- 79 percent of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) are women's salaries, reflecting the greater proportion of women that work for the Council and the higher proportion of women that work in part time roles that tend to be lower paid.¹⁶ Whilst our internal culture seems healthy this is a concern and the Well-run, High

¹⁴ During this financial year alone, we have seen the demand for children's services and adult social care increase evidenced by a 14 percent increase in referrals and enquiries recorded on our Children and Family Support Gateway (the number of referrals and enquiries during 2023 to 2024 was 5,056 increasing to 5,743 during 2024 to 2025) and with more adult carers receiving an assessment of need during the same period (from 370 to 447). Contacts to the Single Point of Access increased from 4,259 contacts as of March 2024 to 4,773 in March 2025 (a 12 percent increase).

¹⁵ The Well-run Board has tasked HR to undertake further work on staff survey results (including examining neutral responses) to increase engagement and the response rate in the future.

¹⁶ It is important to note that 71 percent of the upper quartile of salaries were women's.

Performing Council Board will consider whether more deliberate action is needed to support our current and future female workforce into better paid positions.

- 12 per cent of new appointees were from applications where it was disclosed that they are either from a racial or religious minority group, have a disability, are gay or bi-sexual, or had their gender reassigned, compared to 16 percent of applications where no protected characteristics had been disclosed. This is a complicated measure, which is discussed in detail in our October 2024 to March 2025 Performance Update Report.

SEDG also has a role to examine and contribute to our Public Sector Equality Duty and Gender Pay reports, which are required statutorily. SEDG also contributed to developing the Council's response to the Welsh Government about tackling racism within the social care workforce. During the year, SEDG cemented its 'critical friend' role in relation to impact assessment by discussing the cumulative impact of budget proposals; their impact from an equality and diversity perspective, both in terms of community impact and impact on staff. The Group will review the cumulative impact assessment of budget proposals again in May 2025.

We have some positive news to report in relation to equality and diversity.

- [Rhyl Library](#) has won the All Stories national competition, which grants a fully funded writing workshop, aimed at encouraging and supporting aspiring writers from underrepresented backgrounds of any kind. Following the success of the competition, a writing group will also be established at Rhyl Library.
- [Denbighshire County Council](#) was included in the national shortlist for the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2025 in the 'Diversity and Inclusion' category, along with nine other local authorities, for the 'Leading with Pride: Belonging for Refugees and All' scheme and the UK Resettlement scheme. The Award ceremony will take place in London in June.
- In March 2025, [Cabinet](#) was asked to approve and adopt the new Sexual Harassment Policy, which has been created in line with new Equality legislation under the Worker Protection Act (amendment of Equality Act 2010) which came into force on 26 October 2024.
- Our Senior Leadership Team consists of seven females to six males and demonstrates the gender diversity of our senior leadership team.

- One of our proudest achievements this year is the rapport built and the regular dialogue established between our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Officer and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community here in Denbighshire- a strong relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

Case study: Iryna's story, one carer's journey from Ukraine to Denbighshire

Over the past few months Denbighshire Care and Support services have been highlighting the stories of Ukrainian refugees who now work in the care and support services within the Council. With support from a small and dedicated team over the past two years, work experience placements have been offered across the county, leading to individuals developing the skills and confidence needed to apply for permanent positions.

One of those people who now works within the Council's Care and Support Service is [Iryna](#), who came to the UK from Ukraine, escaping the dangers of a war-torn country. After working at a factory for a while, she was backed by a support staff member to find a 6-week paid work experience post at an extra care facility in Rhyl. After the placement came to an end, Iryna was successful in her application for a permanent contract.

Speaking about her journey, Iryna said: "I came to the UK with my daughter last summer. At first, it was a bit difficult, as I didn't know what to do and how to live here. The language barrier became a big problem. There was help with language courses at Rhyl College, which made life and socialization in society much easier. The next step was to find a job. With the help of the team, and after passing all the checks, I got a job at a Care Facility in Rhyl. This is my first experience of working with elderly people and I have been working for more than six months, and I think that I am succeeding in the role. I am enjoying the experience, there are very good conditions for both residents and employees and the team I work with is wonderful, and always ready to help and give me advice."

Performance Objectives – Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027

Overall performance across Corporate Plan themes

Given the challenges facing all councils in Wales, it is positive we have been able to sustain projects and continue to deliver on our Corporate Plan commitments. Some outcomes remain poor (in work and child poverty for example) and reflect wider economic issues affecting the UK and beyond, as well as the need to better target economic development towards our communities. The following table demonstrates that, overall (at a theme level), performance has improved or stayed the same. It should be noted that where overall performance has been determined as the same, this in some cases also includes aspects of performance that are a Priority for Improvement and/or with a deteriorating trend. Performance across each of our indicators and measures, as stated above, varies. In some cases, performance has improved; in others - even where performance is considered Acceptable, Good or Excellent - performance is worse than the preceding period. This information is presented within the tables for each theme within this Self-Assessment and in more detail in our Corporate Plan Performance Update: October 2024 to March 2025. Across the entire Corporate Plan, one fifth (20 percent) of our measures are a Priority for Improvement. While none of our projects or activities are considered a Priority for Improvement, 7.2 percent are 'At Risk'.

Corporate Plan theme	Measures status ¹⁷	Project status ¹⁸
A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs	Acceptable Same	On Target Better
A prosperous Denbighshire	Priority for Improvement Same	Experiencing Obstacles Same
A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire	Good Better	On Target Same
A learning and growing Denbighshire	Acceptable Same	Experiencing Obstacles Same
A greener Denbighshire	Acceptable	Experiencing Obstacles

¹⁷ Measures statuses are identified as 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Acceptable', 'Priority to Improvement'.

¹⁸ Project and activity statuses are identified as 'On Target', 'Experiencing Obstacles', 'At Risk' or 'Compromised'.

	Same	Same
A well-run, high performing Council	Good Better	Experiencing Obstacles Same

Benchmarking our performance against others

Where possible we use nationally comparable information to determine the point at which performance is considered 'Excellent' or a 'Priority for Improvement'. We explain this in more detail in our Performance Update Reports published [online](#). Whilst not exhaustive, this section provides some highlights about where our performance compares favourably or not; using both nationally comparable information and other data published by other bodies for the latter part of 2024 to 2025.

- According to Welsh Government statistics, Denbighshire is ranked second highest in North Wales for the number of additional affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households between 2023 to 2024 and ranked in the top five in Wales overall.
- At 2.1 percent, the proportion of Denbighshire's Year 11 Leavers from schools known Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is below the Welsh average of 2.28 percent.
- Figures published by the Welsh Government Energy Service show that the Council has the second highest figure in Wales for the proportion of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) as a percentage of their fleet, at 19.2 percent.
- Our sickness rate at 9.2 working days / shifts lost per full time equivalent is the third lowest absence rate for all councils in Wales.
- The Capped 9 score of Year 11 pupils' best nine results from the qualifications available in Wales has worsened to 330 and the Capped 9 score for those eligible for free school meals has stayed the same at 276. Both measures are relatively new and performance falls below the Welsh average in both instances (448 and 296 respectively).
- Attendance of pupils aged 5 to 15 in maintained schools has improved to 88.3 percent but remains just below the national average of Wales of 89 percent.

Corporate Plan Themes

This section explains in more detail how we've delivered on our Corporate Plan objectives, focusing on what went well and where we have faced challenges.

Following a decision at the Corporate Plan Tranche Review¹⁹ that took place in October 2024, we are now tracking a smaller set of key performance indicators for most themes. This section of the report now gives a summary of latest performance. The measures data has been truncated and does not include the period of the data, which includes a mixture of annual and quarterly data, latest data for the year or the last published data point for, in particular, national data. The trend refers to the preceding data point (not the previous year for example). Detailed trend and analysis of our performance in relation to our Corporate Plan can be found in our [Performance Update Reports](#).

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: On Target

Completion of new housing in Prestatyn ([Llys Llên](#)) contributes to the Council's commitment to tackling waiting times for accommodation by addressing the need for more local housing provision. A new [Police Station is also accommodated at Llys Llên](#), responding to the community's calls for a base for response officers and the Neighbourhood Policing Team in Prestatyn. Work continues on Passivhaus Council homes in Denbigh, with internal works starting this period and works commenced on eight terraced homes in Rhyl. According to Welsh Government statistics, Denbighshire is ranked second highest in North Wales for the number of additional affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households between 2023 to 2024 and ranks in the top five in Wales overall. During 2024, 154 affordable housing units were delivered within the county, a 7.7 percent increase on the previous year and 79 percent of those homes were new builds (147). The number of people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) register has significantly reduced by 26.22 percent due to the proactive work of completing thorough reviews of all applications. However, the demand for social housing has grown over the last year meaning that the number of applications awaiting assessment has increased. While we still have a considerable number of households in hotel and bed and breakfasts (120), the number has reduced by half due to the [transformation in homelessness services](#) and a 'One Council' approach to Rapid Rehousing being adopted. While still a 'Priority for

¹⁹ The purpose of a Tranche Review is to review and evaluate performance and delivery, with an opportunity to both reflect and look ahead to consider progress towards achieving the ambitions set out in our Corporate Plan. Tranche Reviews take place every six months and are attended by Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.

Improvement', we have therefore seen an improvement in the percentage of households successfully prevented from, successfully relieved from and positively discharged from homelessness.

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The number of people on the SARTH waiting list (live applications only) - Benchmarked Locally	1,359 Good Better
The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	123 Excellent Better
The percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (section 66) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	44.44% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (section 73) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	16.81% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of households positively discharged from homelessness (section 75) - Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	64.85% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) - Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	18% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of existing and acquired Council housing stock achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above - Benchmarked Locally	47% Acceptable Better
The additional supply of Council Homes provided - Benchmarked Locally	15 Acceptable Worse
The total number of (new) homes completed during the year in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	147

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The number of empty private properties brought back into use in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	269 Excellent Better

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The measures status for this theme has been summarised overall as a 'Priority for Improvement'. However, it should be noted that these include broad and long-term indicators such as those from the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation. As stated above, some of the indicators we monitor—such as in-work and child poverty²⁰—remain poor. These reflect the challenging economic issues affecting the UK and beyond, as well as the need to better target economic development towards our communities. While these outcomes are largely beyond our direct control, they remain central to our ambition of achieving our [Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want](#), and therefore continue to be included in our performance framework. The £20m grant from the UK Government's Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme has enabled the establishment of a new Rhyl Town Board to guide how that funding should be invested over the next ten years. The Board, which is separate from the Council and must have an independent Chair, will now develop a ten-year vision and a three-year delivery plan during 2025. Funding and delivery will commence during 2026-27, and this investment will contribute significantly to Rhyl regeneration. The total visitor numbers for Denbighshire in 2023 reached 6.39 million, an increase of almost 6 percent in comparison to 2022. The total economic impact of tourism was £736.05 million, a significant and very welcome increase of 17.1 percent on the previous year. A key development for the year ahead will be Denbighshire's Economic Strategy, which will be presented for approval over the coming months. Our performance in relation to the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) worsened

²⁰ The Strategic Equality and Diversity Group is establishing a Task and Finish Group in summer 2025 to explore indicators and measures of child poverty.

to 32.7 percent at end of March 2025. This is explained in more detail in this report and continues to be a 'Priority for Improvement'.

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The percentage of working age people who are claiming Out of Work Benefits - Benchmarked Nationally	3.9% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	28.9% Acceptable Better
The cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent Better
Year to date average for the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) Benchmarked Locally	32.70% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	Data pending
Average gross annual pay for people who live in the area and work full time (£) - Benchmarked Nationally	Data pending
STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) - Benchmarked Locally	£736.05 Excellent Better
Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	52 Priority to Improve Worse
Deaths of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	54 Acceptable Better
The percentage of premises in Denbighshire that receive less than 30Mbps – Count only	2.7%
The percentage of premises in Denbighshire that receive less than 10Mbps – Count only	2.1%
The percentage of properties within Denbighshire that have access to full fibre to their premises – Count only	83.4%

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Good

Projects: On Target

The rising demand for social care is evident from the growing number of inquiries into both Children's and Adult's Services. The staffing challenges in Children's Services continue to impact performance in certain areas, such as new assessments completed in statutory timeframes. Teams are therefore prioritising time spent seeing children and families rather than ensuring assessments are recorded on the system within certain timeframes. In support of well-being, performance measures for Community Navigator and Library Services continue to show 'Excellent' results, and schools measures in support of emotional well-being are 'Acceptable' and improving. There have been significant increases in the number of groups and engagement activities in support of community well-being and resilience. The Community Safety Partnership has reported positive progress, and there are slight decreases in the reported rates of repeat domestic abuse and repeat locations of anti-social behaviour. The rate of reoffending within a two-year period for young people is a concern at 59 percent, though the figure is lower for individuals that received Out-of-Court Disposals. The percentage of young people in Denbighshire reached by Youth Services has decreased but is still considered 'Good'.

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Locally	62% Priority to Improve Worse
Number of children on the child protection register – Count Only	64
The number of children looked after in Denbighshire – Count Only	184
The number of children and young people who are currently in need of a placement where there is no placement secured – Count Only	8
The percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse - Benchmarked Locally	99% Excellent Same

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The number of Single Point of Access contacts for information, advice and assistance – Count Only	4,773
The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care - Benchmarked Locally	94% Excellent Worse
The percentage of schools in the county using the Public Health Wales Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Tool – Benchmarked Locally	69% Acceptable Better
The number of projects or groups supported by the Community Resilience Team - Benchmarked Locally	153 Excellent Better
The cumulative number of community engagement activities – Benchmarked Locally	76 Excellent Better
The cumulative number of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse reported including non-crime occurrences (3 or more in 12 months) - Count Only (Equality Objective)	449
Of the four priority areas in the Community Safety Partnership plan, the number that have a ROYG status of yellow or green – Benchmarked Locally	4 Excellent Same
Number of repeat locations of Anti-Social Behaviour in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	53 Good Worse
The percentage of young people in Denbighshire reached by Youth Services – Benchmarked Locally	14% Good Worse
The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) looked after by Denbighshire – Count Only	6
The number of referrals and enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway - Count Only	5,743
The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided - Count Only	1,123

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year (cumulative) – Count Only (Equality Objective)	447
The number of people receiving reablement support from Adult Social Care – Baseline Year	183
The percentage of adults who say their library is an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place – Benchmarked Locally	93% Excellent Same
The percentage reach of Summer Reading Challenge in the primary age population (against Welsh average and Wales rank) - Benchmarked Nationally	13% Acceptable Worse
The average improvement in young people's core score for children and young people who received school based counselling – Benchmarked Locally	6% Acceptable Better
The estimated number of volunteer hours supporting community resilience and development activity (including Edge of care volunteering and Countryside Services volunteering) – Baseline Year	24,962
Percentage of Denbighshire children who reoffended within a two-year period after receiving a Court disposal - Count Only	59%
The cumulative number of families resettled within Denbighshire – Count Only (Equality Objective)	70

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Out of 55 schools, the number considered by Estyn to be of concern, following inspection, has now reduced to three. Attainment data for Year 11 pupils from 2023 to 2024 is categorised as a 'Priority for Improvement,' falling below the Wales average. School attendance data falls below the national average for Wales but shows a positive increase during 2023 to 2024 when compared with the previous academic year. Results from the survey of Pupil Attitudes to Self and School show an increase in the percentage of pupils responding positively to feelings about school, to 84 percent. It is encouraging to see an improvement in the performance indicator of Denbighshire's Year 11 Leavers from schools

known Not to be in Education, Employment or Training – to 2.1 percent, which is below the Welsh average. Delays continue in the progression of Sustainable Communities for Learning projects, meaning that the Modernising Education Programme continues to be 'At Risk.' During this period, we have started to report fixed term exclusion rates per 1,000 pupils. Data shows the rate for Denbighshire pupils eligible for free school meals was 415 in 2023 to 2024, which is more than three times the figure for ineligible pupils (126). There is also an attainment gap with pupils eligible for free school meals averaging lower Year 11 examination points scores in 2023 to 2024. The attainment gap has narrowed though compared to the previous year's data, indicating positive progress is being made. Uptake of Flying Start, a programme providing enhanced services to families with young children in disadvantaged areas of Wales, is 'Excellent'.

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The percentage of Families First participant parents with improved ability to support their child's learning and development needs – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent Same
The percentage take-up of fully funded Flying Start (antenatal-4 years old) 12.5 hours childcare offers – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	85% Excellent Worse
The percentage of carers of children accessing Flying Start targeted Speech Language and Communication (SLC) intervention who show an improvement in confidence in supporting SLC development – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	78% Good Same
The number of children taking part in the childcare offer – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	781 Excellent Better
The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures – Benchmarked Locally	3 Acceptable Better
The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – Benchmarked Locally	84% Good Better

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
The percentage attendance of pupils aged 5-15 in maintained schools – Benchmarked Nationally	88.3% Priority to Improve Better
The Capped 9 points score ²¹ of Year 11 pupils' best nine results from the qualifications available in Wales – Benchmarked Nationally	330.4 Priority to Improve Worse
The Capped 9 points score of Year 11 pupils' (eligible for free school meals) best nine results from the qualifications available in Wales – Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	276.2 Priority to Improve Same
The percentage of reception pupils receiving Welsh medium education - Count Only (Welsh Language and Culture)	28.5%
The percentage of year 6 learners in Welsh-medium schools who go to a Welsh-medium stream in secondary school – Count Only (Welsh Language and Culture)	85.3%
The number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D – Benchmarked Locally	28 Good Worse
The percentage of Year 11 Leavers from schools know Not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), at the preceding 31 August in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally (Equality Objective)	2.1% Acceptable Better
The percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the collection year – Benchmarked Locally	60% Good Worse
School exclusion rate (fixed term) per 1,000 pupils – Baseline Year	185
School exclusion rate (fixed term) per 1,000 for pupils eligible for Free School Meals – Baseline Year (Equality Objective)	415
The percentage of school pupils assessed as eligible for Free School Meals (Denbighshire) – Count Only (Equality Objective)	22%

²¹ The Capped 9 points score is a measure used in Wales that adds up a pupil's nine best examination results, including specific subjects like English or Welsh, Mathematics, and Science GCSEs

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Reducing carbon emissions is a significant challenge for all public bodies. There are a number of key performance indicators that are being used to judge the performance of the Council in achieving its Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive 2030 goals, including: reducing carbon emissions the Council emits from various sources, increasing carbon sequestration of land the Council owns/leases and manages and increasing the species richness of the land the Council owns/leases and manages. Annual data for the year 2024 to 2025 will be available in September 2025. Recent figures published by the Welsh Government Energy Service show that Denbighshire County Council has the second highest figure in Wales for the proportion of zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) as a percentage of their fleet, at 19.2 percent. A key project for this theme is the new waste and recycling service to be launched to improve recycling rates and reduce waste. Following commencement of the new recycling rounds in June 2024, it soon became apparent that some of the assumptions used to plan the rounds were not correct resulting in an unacceptable number of missed collections. The months that followed were extremely difficult – with officers across the Council stepping out of their day jobs to support the waste and recycling service to get back on track, and due to pressures such as a rapid increase in the volume of customer service calls relating to the new service. Elected members were also placed under pressure while they tried to work with officers and residents facing problems to resolve missed collections. Additional resources were allocated to the service by Cabinet in October, and has been examined twice by Communities Scrutiny Committee in October 2024 and February 2025, with a further report requested in May. Performance Scrutiny Committee in January 2025 considered the proposed arrangements for establishing a Task and Finish Group to undertake a review of the roll out. By February 2025, the Remodelling Waste Service Operations project improved from being 'At Risk' to 'Experiencing Obstacles' as new rounds were rolled out and issues continued to be addressed and resolved. Reputationally, the problems associated with roll out have been, and continue to be, damaging for the Council.

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the Council (excluding supply chains) – Benchmarked Locally	12,653 Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness – Benchmarked Locally	42.50% Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through fleet – Benchmarked Locally	2,166 Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through buildings – Benchmarked Locally	9,502 Priority to Improve Worse
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains– Benchmarked Locally	50,233 Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted - Benchmarked Nationally	67.59% Excellent Better

A well-run, high performing Council

Measures: Good

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The revision of the performance management framework for this theme into a tighter more relevant and nationally benchmarked set of measures has meant that the status has improved from a 'Priority for Improvement' to 'Good', which is more consistent with our qualitative assessments of our governance and performance as a Council and in line with external feedback from, for example, the Panel Peer Assessment. Notwithstanding this more positive overall assessment, there remains a dichotomy between what staff, our regulators and external peers think about the performance and governance of the Council and what the public responding to our Stakeholder Survey (for example) think. Following the challenges of the waste roll out and its impact on customer contact, it is important that we demonstrate improvement in these areas and respond to the expectations of our

customers. We are looking to build on the positive findings from the recent 'Closer to Communities' programme, which seeks to build stronger and more responsive relationships with communities.

Measures	Latest performance [Data; Status; Trend]
Corporate and Service Budget Variance (£k) – Benchmarked Locally	Data expected in July
The rolling average number of working days / shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence – Benchmarked Nationally	9.2 Excellent Better
The percentage of staff who are eligible for one or three one-to-ones and who have had at least one or three one-to-ones in the last 12 months (by person) – Benchmarked Locally	74% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of new appointees from applications where it was disclosed that they are either from a racial or religious minority group, have a disability, are gay or bi-sexual, or had their gender reassigned – Count Only (Equality Objective)	12%
The percentage of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) that are women – Benchmarked Locally (Equality Objective)	79% Priority to Improve Better
Number of complaints received by the Ombudsman per 1,000 residents – Benchmarked Nationally	0.32 Excellent Better
Percentage of staff that say they know the Council has five principles and four values – Benchmarked Locally	80.5% Excellent
The percentage of staff that say the Council supports and encourages the use of the Welsh language in the workplace – Benchmarked Locally (Welsh Language and Culture)	84% Excellent
The percentage of staff that say I am proud to work for Denbighshire County Council – Benchmarked Locally	69% Acceptable