

## **Improving services for our communities**

### **A guide to performance management**

This booklet is to help you understand how the council plans its work. It is a tool for anyone who works in the council, as well as a guide for those who receive our services.

This document is also available in Welsh, and may be available in other formats on request.

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## **For more information on anything in this booklet**

Please feel free to contact the Strategic Planning & Performance Team. We would be happy to provide any additional guidance and materials to help you.

Email: [strategicplanningteam@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:strategicplanningteam@denbighshire.gov.uk)

Phone: 01824 706291 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm). Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

Write to us: Strategic Planning & Performance Team, Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, Ruthin, LL15 9AZ.

# Improving services for our communities

## Introduction

This booklet describes what is known as our Performance Management Framework, in essence it is the structure that supports the planning of our work.

There is a chapter for every role. It is hoped that by breaking the guide down in this way it will help you to understand what you need to know to get the most out of your role. But don't feel restricted by that – It is sometimes interesting to know what other people are doing too, whether you are:

- **A member of the public**
- **An elected member**
  - A Cabinet Member
  - A Scrutiny Member
  - A Corporate Governance Member
- **A member of staff**
  - The Chief Executive / a Corporate Director
  - A Head of Service
  - A Middle-Manager
  - A Performance Officer within a service
  - A Strategic Planning & Performance Officer

Across all these roles there are some common things that it is useful to know:

- [Why is performance important?](#)
- [Where does the data go, and how do we report it?](#)
- [What does red, orange, yellow and green mean?](#)
- [What does the Well-being of Future Generations Act mean for how we plan our work?](#)

It's also recommended that you take a look at the section titled '[Something for everyone](#)'.

The [Glossary](#) too is full of helpful information!

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## **Why is performance important?**

We are always being told that performance management is important. But emphasis has tended to be on having strong monitoring systems, which have often led to complicated processes and large reports. This puts people off, and although good performance management systems are important, they do not need to be a burden.

What's more important than the systems in place is the energy that goes into them. Strong engagement throughout – the active and ongoing involvement and participation of users in development and production – is key to good performance management. If this is done well, then monitoring and reporting can be kept simple, and allow for greater focus on improving services for our customers.

The chapters in this guide show the variety of roles that are involved in performance management. With this many people there needs to be openness, trust and understanding. This places a focus on the council as a learning organisation, where we continuously encourage positive challenge to facilitate and support the development of staff so that the organisation itself also learns.

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## Where does the data go, and how do we record it?

There are a number of key documents that guide the delivery of our services in Denbighshire. They are all connected.

Our work is given direction by the Public Services Board. They are responsible under the Well-being of Future Generations Act to bring together a Well-being Plan for the region (responding to the Welsh Government's Well-being Goals). This is agreed by all partners on the board, and comes from extensive analysis of need and public / stakeholder engagement.

Public bodies on the PSB, which includes Denbighshire County Council, then need to consider how they will work towards the Well-being Plan. We call this our Corporate Plan. As well as including our contribution to the Well-being Plan, it will also cover other important areas of work for the council. Again, this is developed after extensive analysis of need and public / stakeholder engagement. The Corporate Plan is agreed by full Council and is monitored quarterly by Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and the Senior Leadership Team.

Service Plans for every service in the council sit beneath the Corporate Plan. These ensure that Services are working towards the well-being objectives and priorities that have been agreed by the Council and the PSB. Service plans should be developed with the involvement of staff and elected members to ensure that there is commitment and ownership. They are approved by the responsible Cabinet member and monitored quarterly by service managers and the corporate performance team.

Larger services may also have a level of operational plans for individual teams, but there should always be a link between staff appraisals and the Service Plan to enable teams and individuals working for the council to be clear in their understanding of what they do to contribute to the Corporate Plan and Well-being Plan.

In Denbighshire we use a cloud storage system called [Verto](#) to help us manage our performance and project information.

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Officers in services help to collect and input data, risk and project information into Verto for Service Plans. This information only needs to be submitted once and automatically feeds into the Corporate Plan / Well-being Plan, Corporate Risk Register, and Corporate Project Register. This keeps our reporting simple, and avoids any duplication. Services have one month after the end of the quarter to submit this.

Denbighshire also operates a programme of Service Performance Challenges, attended by senior managers, representatives of Scrutiny and Cabinet, as well as our regulators. Every Service in the council is seen once a year, a performance report on their Service Plan and Service Risk Register being submitted as part of the documentation.

The following is an outline of the reporting timetable. This may alter depending on the committee timetable.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Financial Planning</b>	<b>Service Planning</b>	<b>Political</b>
<b>April</b>	No reports scheduled	Service Plans become operational.  Quarter 4 Service Plan and Risk Register updates due.	No reports scheduled
<b>May</b>	No reports scheduled	No reports scheduled	No reports scheduled
<b>June</b>	No reports scheduled	No reports scheduled	Annual Performance Report (agenda item for discussion), which includes quarter 4 and the Annual Delivery

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Month	Financial Planning	Service Planning	Political
			Document, approved by Council.
<b>July</b>	No reports scheduled	Quarter 1 Service Plan and Risk Register updates due.	No reports scheduled
<b>August</b>	No reports scheduled	Corporate Risk Register updated	No reports scheduled
<b>September</b>	No reports scheduled	No reports scheduled	<p>Quarter 1 Quarterly Progress Report (circulated for information) to Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Corporate Risk Register (agenda item for discussion) to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Senior Leadership Team.</p>

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<b>Month</b>	<b>Financial Planning</b>	<b>Service Planning</b>	<b>Political</b>
<b>October</b>	Provisional Financial Settlement issued by Welsh Government.	Capital proposals to be submitted.  Quarter 2 Service Plan and Risk Register updates due.	No reports scheduled
<b>November</b>	No reports scheduled	No reports scheduled	No reports scheduled
<b>December</b>	Final Financial settlement issued by Welsh Government.	No reports scheduled	Quarter 2 Quarterly Progress Report (agenda item for discussion) to Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and Senior Leadership Team.
<b>January</b>	No reports scheduled	Drafting of Service Plans begin.  Quarter 3 Service Plan and Risk Register updates due.  Corporate Risk Register updated.	No reports scheduled

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Month	Financial Planning	Service Planning	Political
<b>February</b>	Budget and Medium Term Financial plan agreed.	Budget finalised.	Council agrees budget.  Corporate Risk Register (agenda item for discussion) to Cabinet, Scrutiny and Senior Leadership Team.
<b>March</b>	No reports scheduled	Service Plans finalised.	Quarter 3 Quarterly Progress Report (circulated for information) to Cabinet, Performance Scrutiny and Senior Leadership Team.

**Please note:** The collection, submission and validation of Statutory Returns is ongoing throughout the year. The times depend on the Service area. The Service Performance Challenge Programme also runs throughout the year. A separate schedule is available from Strategic Planning & Performance Team.

The aim of this whole process is to ensure that we are delivering what we said we would, and that we are doing it in a way that means better value services for our customers.

For this reason, we are open and transparent in everything that we do. Our plans and reports can be accessed online through the council's [website](#). For freedom of access we

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also try to ensure that hard copies of our key documents – the Well-being Plan and the Corporate Plan – are available in our libraries and receptions.

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## What does red, orange, yellow and green mean?

We do not use 'targets' to judge how well or badly we have performed. Instead we articulate our ambition using a four stage approach to assessing the performance status.

Our default approach to setting our performance status is to take the upper-quartile (best performing) as the point where performance is Excellent, and the median as the point at which performance is to be considered a Priority for Improvement. Our middle range (Good or Acceptable performance) fall either side of the middle value between these two points (the upper quartile value and the median value). For example

- 0 to 49 = Priority for Improvement threshold.
- 50 to 62.4 = Acceptable threshold.
- 62.5 to 74 = Good threshold.
- 75 to 100 = Excellent threshold.

Using this approach, in an example where 76% of roads meet an acceptable standard of cleanliness, we would judge our performance as Excellent. Conversely, if our standard of cleanliness was 24% we would judge this to be Priority for Improvement.

Please note, this approach differs slightly to the Welsh Government, who take the lower quartile (worst performing) as the point that determines a Priority for Improvement status. In Denbighshire we have decided to be more ambitious.

If no data is available that we can compare ourselves with (either nationally or by comparable grouping, for example, a family group) then we will take a local view on what we feel reasonably determines Excellent, and Priority for Improvement. This will represent our ambition to be a high performing council, an Excellent status only being achieved when we have met our ambition.

When setting local thresholds, this requires an honest appraisal of how we see our current performance and what our ambition is. We need, therefore, to have a good understanding of customer need. You can view our online needs assessment on the [Conwy and Denbighshire PSB website](#).

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## What does the Well-being of Future Generations Act mean for how we plan our work?

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

It will make us think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach with partners.

All decisions must be understood in the context of the Sustainable Development Principle; i.e. are the needs of the present being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?

There are five things we need to consider to be able to demonstrate that we have applied the Sustainable Development Principle:

### **1. Long-term**

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

### **2. Prevention**

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

### **3. Integration**

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

### **4. Collaboration**

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

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## 5. Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

For more information, take a look at the [Essentials Guide](#) online at [Future Generations Wales](#)

### What about other legislation?

There are many other important pieces of legislation that we must make sure that we comply with as a council, i.e. the Social Services & Well-being Act, Equality Act (Including Socio-economic duty), Housing Act, Planning Act, and Local Government Measures. These also support the guiding principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act by placing individual and community well-being and involvement at the core of everything that we do.

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## **Something for everyone**

### **We all expect:**

- That council services are delivered to a high standard, meeting customer need.
- Legislative duties to be met.
- Access to up-to-date information and data that tells us how the council is performing.
- To be listened to and our concerns acted upon.

### **We all have a responsibility to promote:**

- Consultation and engagement.
- The Welsh language.
- Access to services and respect of others, keeping in mind the nine protected characteristics and those in poverty.
- The Sustainable Development Principle and the five governance approaches.

### **How do we do this?**

Collectively we all have a role to play to make sure that these expectations are met. We do this naturally through our interaction with one another and the council. To understand the contribution that you can make as an individual, read through the roles below.

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## I am a Member of the Public

### As a member of the public I expect:

- High quality services that are well planned and meet my needs.
- Access to up-to-date information and data that is easy to understand.

### I am responsible for:

- Informing the council's service planning, and telling them what's important to me.
- Challenging the council's performance and letting them know where things can be done better. Please see '[Your Voice](#)' on our website.

### How do I do this?

- Our Annual Performance Report is published on our [Performance](#) page online.
- For a more up-to-date picture of our performance, you can view our quarterly performance reports through the committee agendas for [Cabinet](#) or [Performance Scrutiny](#). Alternatively, you can search for [Corporate Plan Performance Report](#) on our website.
- Like Council meetings, Cabinet and Scrutiny are public and you are welcome to attend. You can also view some meetings online through [Denbighshire County Council Webcasts](#).
- You can let the council know what you think at any time in any number of ways:

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- **Visit us:** [Find a council office or One-Stop-Shop on our website.](#)
- **Online:** [General Enquiries Form on our website.](#)
- [Complaints, compliments and feedback](#)
- Find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!
- **Phone:** 01824 706101 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 5pm). Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.
- **Write to us:** Denbighshire County Council, PO Box 62, Ruthin, LL15 9AZ.
- **Talk to your councillor:** [Find your councillor](#) - [www.denbighshire.gov.uk](http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk)

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## **I am an Elected Member**

### **As an Elected Member I expect:**

- Reliable information, advice and support from council officers to help me make decisions and carry out my role.
- To be kept informed of issues affecting my ward.

### **I am responsible for:**

- Determining the strategic vision of the council and informing the council's service planning, representing the community and giving voice to what's important to residents.
- Challenging the council's performance and risk management, seeking improvement where possible.

### **How do I do this?**

- Participate in meetings, representing the voice of the citizen.
- Raise issues / concerns with relevant managers.
- Engage with, and scrutinise the information available in Verto and in Performance Reports to help inform decisions and identify ways to make improvements.

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## I am a Cabinet Member

### As a cabinet member I expect:

Accurate and timely performance and risk reports to help inform decisions and identify areas for improvement.

### I am responsible for:

- Informing and signing-off service plans in my portfolio (by March 31st).
- Monitoring the delivery of service plans and the management of Service Risk Registers with Heads of Service on a quarterly basis.
- Monitoring and driving forward the delivery of our corporate priorities.
- Monitoring and managing risks on the Corporate Risk Register.

### Have I:

- Met with the relevant Head of Service in my portfolio to give input and agree the content of the Service Plan?
- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge process?
- Reviewed performance and risk information for the council and the services I represent on a quarterly basis?

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## **I am a Scrutiny Member**

### **As a Scrutiny Member I expect:**

Accurate and timely performance and risk reports to aid the scrutiny of service delivery and identify areas for improvement.

### **I am responsible for:**

- Scrutinising the delivery of service plans and the management of Service Risk Registers.
- Scrutinising the delivery of the council's priorities.
- Scrutinising the management of our Corporate Risk Register.

### **Have I:**

- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge process?
- Reviewed performance and risk information for the council on a quarterly basis?

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## **I am a Corporate Governance member**

### **As a member of Corporate Governance I expect:**

Assurance that our performance and risk processes are robust and being consistently applied across the council.

### **I am responsible for:**

Monitoring the application of our performance and risk management processes.

### **Have I:**

- Reviewed performance and risk information in Verto and reports taken to Cabinet and Scrutiny?
- Read Service Performance Challenge papers?

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## I am a member of staff

### As a member of staff I expect:

- To understand the council's priorities and the contribution my work makes towards them.
- Tools and systems in place that support the development, communication and monitoring of our performance and risk information, helping me to understand how the council and its services are performing.

### I am responsible for:

- Supporting the delivery of the Service Plan.
- Improving services.

### How do I do this?

- Ask questions, contribute ideas and challenge the way we do things.
- Raise any risks or concerns with managers.
- Get involved in the Service Planning process and give your input to the Service Plan.
- Engage with the Service's Self-Assessment process and read Service Challenge papers.
- Stay up-to-date on council performance by viewing service challenge papers, our quarterly performance reports through the committee agendas for [Cabinet](#) or [Performance Scrutiny](#). Alternatively, you can search for [Corporate Plan Performance Report](#) on our website.
- Provide honest and easy to understand updates on the progress of work.

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## **I am the Chief Executive / a Corporate Director**

### **As the Chief Executive / a Corporate Director I expect:**

Staff to be engaged with our Corporate Plan and understand their contribution.

### **I am responsible for:**

- Communicating the strategic vision of the council.
- Monitoring the Corporate Risk Register.
- Challenging poor performance and supporting improvement in services.
- Keeping elected members informed of issues relevant to them.
- Applying long-term planning and risk assessment to service delivery.

### **Have I:**

- Provided input to Service Plans?
- Reviewed service performance and risk data on at least a quarterly basis with Heads of Service?
- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge programme?
- Provided ongoing input to the council's Needs Assessment and used its intelligence to shape service planning and delivery?

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## I am a Head of Service

### As a Head of Service I expect:

- Guidance from Corporate Directors, Cabinet Members, and the Strategic Planning & Performance Team on Service Planning.
- Scrutiny members and Staff to also be engaged in the development and delivery of the Service.

### I am responsible for:

- The development, communication and delivery of the Service Plan with key stakeholders, which includes keeping elected members informed of issues relevant to them.
- Managing service risk, with input from staff.
- Involving staff in the development of, and sharing with them the Service Self-assessment.
- Understanding the performance of the service and ensuring that performance expectations are met.

### Have I:

- Consulted and engaged with key stakeholders during the development of the Service Plan, including managers, staff, and Lead Cabinet members?
- Taken customer need into account and covered any legislative duties that might apply?
- Considered the implications of the plan and provided an assessment of any financial, support service and workforce requirements?
- Set performance thresholds and start and end dates for projects / activities realistic?
- Given input to the Service Performance Challenge paperwork, with staff giving input to the service's self-assessment?

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- Reviewed performance and risk data on a quarterly basis with my Cabinet Member(s) and management team and identified opportunities to improve?
- Communicated key performance messages to staff (good and bad)?
- Provided input to the council's Needs Assessment and used its intelligence to shape service planning and delivery?

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## I am a Middle Manager

### As a Middle Manager I expect:

- Clear direction from the Council and senior leaders.
- Staff to be engaged in the delivery of the Service Plan and understand their contribution towards it and the Corporate Plan.

### I am responsible for:

- Helping Heads of Service communicate the strategic vision of the council and involving staff in the development and delivery of the Service Plan, which includes keeping elected members informed of issues relevant to them.
- Ensure staff engage and commit to activity within the Service Plan.
- Supporting the Head of Service with the monitoring of the service risk register, also engaging with team members.
- Providing accurate and timely performance updates, monitoring whether or not our performance expectations have been met.

### Have I?

- Consulted and engaged with key stakeholders during the development of the Service Plan?
- Addressed any new legislative duties in the Service Plan?
- Evaluated the implications of the plan, to include an assessment of any financial, support service and workforce requirements?
- Set realistic performance thresholds and start and end dates for projects / activities?
- Engaged with the Service's annual Service Performance Challenge and ensured that staff have had an input to the service's self-assessment?
- Reviewed performance and risk data on a quarterly basis to inform the Service's own improvement?

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- Communicated key performance messages to staff (good and bad)?
- Provided ongoing input to the council's Needs Assessment and use its intelligence to shape service planning and delivery?

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## **I am a Performance Officer within a Service**

### **As a Lead Performance Officer I expect:**

- To have a clear understanding of council and partnership commitments.
- Service Plans to have input and ongoing challenge from stakeholders, including the Corporate Directors, Lead Cabinet Members, staff, and the public.

### **I am responsible for:**

- Supporting the Head of Service in the completion and communication of a clear and easy to follow Service Plan (by March 31st), ensuring the involvement of the right people in its development, and making sure that staff understand their commitments within it. The focus of the Service Plan should be on key improvement activity for the year ahead, not day-to-day work (this may be captured in operational plans if necessary).
- Supporting the Head of Service in the preparation of Service Challenge papers.
- Keeping the Service Plan up-to-date (the Service Plan is a live document and should be updated with any new activity during the year).
- Ensuring that accurate and easy to understand quarterly performance updates have been provided in Verto within one month of the end of the quarter. Any comments provided should be in plain English and avoid acronyms.

### **Have I:**

- Coordinated Service Planning meetings between the Head of Service, staff, Lead Cabinet members, and managers? It is recommended that these begin in January.
- Consulted with and involved the relevant Strategic Planning & Performance Officer to ensure that there is consistency in the approach you take and no conflict with work elsewhere?
- Ensured that customer needs are taken into account, as well as any legislative duties that apply?

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- Analysed the implications of the plan, to include an assessment of any financial, support service and workforce requirements?
- Set realistic performance thresholds and start and end dates for projects / activities?
- Used Verto to help collate the detail of the Service Plan and maintain the Service Risk Register?
- Helped prepare the service's paperwork for its Performance Challenge, which may include the coordination of the service's self-assessment work?

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## **I am a Strategic Planning & Performance Officer**

### **As a Strategic Planning & Performance Officer I expect:**

- Services to engage in the Service Planning Process, Service Plans being complete in Verto (by March 31st).
- Service Risk Registers to be maintained and up-to-date.
- Accurate quarterly updates to be submitted within one month of the end of a quarter, with clear and understandable comments where applicable.
- Reports to be challenged by stakeholders, in particular by Cabinet, Scrutiny and the public.
- Accurate Service Challenge documentation completed within timescales.
- Services to use the data they collect to inform their own improvement.

### **I am responsible for:**

- Maintaining the integrity of the data collection, monitoring and reporting process within the council.
- Supporting services in their service planning and risk management, ensuring consistency of approach, and giving due regard to important considerations such as the Equality Act, the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Social Services & Well-being Act, and other council and partnership commitments.
- Producing accurate performance reports as required by Senior Leaders, the Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Corporate Governance and the Service Performance Challenge Process.

### **Have I?**

- Facilitated Service Planning meetings with key stakeholders, ensuring that services are on track to meet the deadline (March 31st)?
- Monitored quarterly performance and risk updates from services, producing performance reports as required?

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- Supported services in the preparation of their paperwork for the Service Performance Challenge?

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## Glossary

### Plans

#### Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is the overarching strategic plan for the council, and responds to the Public Services Board's Well-being Plan. It sets out our main priorities for the term of council. This sits above Service Plans.

#### Delivery Document

To reaffirm our commitment to the Corporate Plan, the council produces an annual delivery document, which outlines what activity we will deliver to support our priorities and Well-being Objectives. This is informed by **service planning**, which begins end of January. The Annual Delivery Document is usually published in June as part of our **Annual Performance Review**.

#### Medium Term Financial Plan

It is important for the council to look at its finances for more than one year ahead. Denbighshire County Council does this through its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which looks at the coming three years and estimates what might happen to the council during that time, and what it might mean for its finances. The MTFP closely follows the plans put forward by services during the service planning process.

#### Service Plan

The Service Plan is really the basis of the Council's Performance Management Framework. It contains all indicators / performance measures and improvement activity relating to the key outcomes that services consider important. Service Plans feed up into the council's Corporate Plan and the Public Services Board's Well-being Plan, and are signed off by the relevant Cabinet Lead Member. Some services also have operational plans beneath their service plans, but these are not monitored corporately.

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## Strategic Equality Plan

The **Equality Act 2010** requires public bodies to have a plan in place to address inequalities. This has previously been a separate document to the council's **Corporate Plan**, but is now incorporated. One of the Well-being Goals set by the Welsh Government is for a More Equal Wales. It makes sense, therefore, to incorporate this into our core business. There are nine protected characteristics when we talk about equalities: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

## Technical Document

There is a Corporate Plan Technical Document that provides a full definition of all **Indicators** and **Performance Measures** within the **Corporate Plan**.

## The Well-being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It will make us think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach with partners. All decisions must be understood in the context of the Sustainable Development Principle. For more information, take a look at the [Essentials Guide on the Future Generation's Wales website](#).

## Well-being Plan

The Wellbeing Plan is the strategic plan agreed between partners on the Public Services Board (PSB) in response to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and seeks to deliver on key outcomes that are shared across different organisations.

## Reports

### Annual Performance Review

The Annual Performance Review is a statutory requirement for all local authorities and must be published by October 31. This is the overall analysis of the council's performance

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against its Strategic Plans – primarily the **Corporate Plan** – for the preceding financial year. Denbighshire aims to publish this report in June each year, and it includes our quarter 4 performance update, and our annual **delivery document**.

### Impact Assessments

Impact Assessments are an evaluation of the potential impact of decisions made in the council, which includes changes to, or new policy, guidelines, plans and strategies. All Council / Cabinet or executive decisions should be made with due regard to positive or negative impacts.

### QPR (Quarterly Performance Report)

The Strategic Planning & Performance Team produce a Quarterly Performance Report to Performance Scrutiny, Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team that demonstrated the council's progress against the delivery of the Corporate Plan. Our quarter 4 report can be found in our **Annual Performance Review**.

### Self-Assessment

Services conduct a self-assessment exercise in preparation for the **Service Performance Challenge**, to help the council understand its strengths and weaknesses in relation to its key processes, such as strategic planning, performance management, workforce planning and financial management.

### Service Performance Report

A Service Performance Report is produced by the Strategic Planning & Performance Team ahead of a **Service Performance Challenge** and examines performance against its **Service Plan**. This is produced one month before the Challenge.

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## Performance Management

### Excellence Threshold

The Excellence Threshold is the point at which performance for an **indicator** or **performance measure** may be considered to have met our ambition. Excellence Thresholds are therefore by their nature challenging and aspirational. The council's default position for is usually the upper quartile, if a national comparison is available.

### Improvement activity

Improvement Activity are key programmes, projects or actions that have been identified to support the **outcome**. This includes actions arising from the staff survey or **risk registers**.

### Indicator

An indicator is a measure that we do not have full control over and usually captures the 'effect' of what we do. There are other factors outside of the council's control that determine an indicator's performance. The template at the back of this booklet should be used to define indicators.

### Intervention

The Intervention, or Improvement Threshold is the point at which performance for an **indicator** or **performance measure** may be considered a Priority for Improvement. The council's default position for this is the Wales Median, if a national comparison is available.

### Outcome

The council uses Results Based Accountability (RBA) to monitor the delivery of its plans. An outcome is a benefit experienced by a customer (usually the public) or community (such as businesses, for example). For support services the customer may be internal. An example of an outcome is 'Students achieve their potential'.

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## **Performance Management System**

The council uses a cloud management system called Verto to monitor service performance and project management information.

## **Performance Measure**

A Performance Measure is entirely in the council's control, and usually counts activity that we deliver ('effort'). The template at the back of this booklet should be used to define measures.

## **Project register**

The Project Register is a record of current projects being delivered by the council.

## **Public Accountability Measures (PAMs)**

Public Accountability Measures are a small set of outcome focused indicators, which reflect those aspects of local authority work that local authorities agree are considered to be important in terms of public accountability. Data Cymru collate the data from local authority data returns submitted between May and June. They are then published from July onwards.

## **Service Performance Challenge**

The Service Performance Challenge (or Service Challenge) is an annual process that looks at the overall performance of a Service. Generally, one is held per month. The panel is usually chaired by the Chief Executive, and attended by the relevant lead Cabinet Member(s), scrutiny representatives, Corporate Directors, Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation and Head of Finance & Assets. Our regulators also attend.

## **Service Planning**

Service Planning is activity that usually takes place between January and March to agree the content of service plans for the following financial year. Strategic Planning & Performance Officers work with Performance Lead Officers and Heads of Service to develop these in Verto by March 31st, though they are live documents that should be kept

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up-to-date throughout the year. The activity in Service Plans will inform the council's annual delivery document, which is published in June as part of the Annual Performance Review. The template for Service Plans is in Verto, and is based on the Results Based Accountability (RBA) approach. For further guidance on how to build a service plan, speak to the Strategic Planning & Performance Team.

### Thresholds

In Denbighshire we avoid the term 'target'. Instead we prefer to work within a range that represents what it means to be Excellent, Good, Acceptable, or a Priority for Improvement. To determine that range we set an Excellence and Intervention (Priority for Improvement) threshold for all indicators and performance measures, usually as part of our service planning activity. Acceptable and Good thresholds are calculated by taking the half-way point between Excellence and Intervention. Denbighshire works to the same four stage assessment approach within - Performance, Project and Risk Management.

### Risk Management

#### Corporate Risk Register

The Corporate Risk Register is owned by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Cabinet. It is monitored by them and Performance Scrutiny on a six-monthly basis. It takes the most severe and common risks from Service Risk Registers and Corporate Director portfolios. Like the **Service Risk Registers**, it is stored on Verto.

#### Issue

An issue refers to the consequences of an event that has already occurred and management mitigation actions are underway or planned. Please see the council's risk management guidance for more detailed information.

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## Risk

A risk is an event that, should it occur, would impact our ability to successfully achieve our priorities. Risk is a measure used to describe the uncertainty surrounding an event and its potential impact.

## Risk Appetite

Risk Appetite is the level of risk we are prepared to tolerate or accept in the pursuit of our long term, strategic objectives. For example, the council may decide that it will tolerate no risks to its reputation, but is willing to be more open to financial risk. Read about risk management and our appetite on our [website](#).

## Service Risk Register

The Service Risk Register captures risks within a Head of Service's portfolio. Like the **Corporate Risk Register**, these are monitored through Verto.

## Regulators

### WAO Annual Improvement Report

Annual Improvement Reports are published for all local authorities, which includes local councils, national parks, and fire and rescue services in Wales. The reports look at how well the organisations are planning for improvement and delivering their services.

### WAO Corporate Assessment

The Corporate Assessment is an in-depth assessment of governance arrangements within the council, seeking to ensure that the Council is capable of delivering its priorities and improved outcomes for citizens. A Corporate Assessment usually takes place every 5 years.

### WAO Improvement Assessment Letter

The Improvement Assessment letter is an annual update to the more in-depth **corporate assessment**. It considers the audit and assessment work undertaken at the council by the

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Wales Audit Office, and provides assurance as to whether the council has discharged its duties and met its legislative requirements.

## Measure Template

The following is a useful guide for defining indicators and performance measures. Using this will ensure that data is captured in a consistent way from one year to the next. If you need any advice on what makes a good indicator or performance measure, please contact the Strategic Planning & Performance Team.

### Domain

This identifies what outcome this measure relates to. If it does not relate to an outcome, use an appropriate descriptor.

### Reference

This is the identification number of the indicator.

### Title

The wording of the actual measure.

### Well-being Plan

Detailed guidance covering: clarification of definitions, information on what to include/exclude when collecting the data for the indicator, etc.

### Calculation

These are the data items that need to be collected to calculate the indicator along with the formula to use when doing so.

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## **Data Source**

A cross-reference to other instances of this data, for example, StatsWales, WasteDataFlow, PARIS, etc.

## **Frequency**

Identify the frequency of data collection for the measure.

## **Excellence Threshold**

The identified excellence threshold according to the corporate methodology.

## **Intervention**

The identified intervention levels associated with the excellence threshold according to the corporate methodology.