

Corporate Plan Performance Update: July to September 2023

This document presents the council's performance against its Corporate Plan themes and governance areas between July to September 2023, including our application of the Sustainable Development principle, the Public Sector Equality Duty, and Socio-Economic Duty.

Contents

Contents	2
Contact details and more information	3
Summary position	4
A Note on Measuring Performance.....	9
A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs	10
A prosperous Denbighshire	22
A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire	34
A learning and growing Denbighshire	46
A better connected Denbighshire.....	60
A Greener Denbighshire	69
A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire.....	78
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.....	89
A well-run, high performing council.....	100

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. There will be no delay in responding to correspondence received in Welsh.

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Summary position

The chapters below provide a summary of activity that has taken place during the last period beneath our Corporate Plan themes, with a round-up of contributing news and committee items. There will be aspects still in need of development and some gaps to fill; some of these will be confirmed in subsequent reports, others are more complex and will require further scoping – and often form part of the forward work plans for the new Corporate Plan Boards. Detailed comments for annual measures previously reported may be found in our [performance self-assessment update reports January to March and April to June 2023 to 2024](#).

Corporate Plan theme summary

The measures evaluation for each theme below has been determined through the performance management framework that we have in place. The projects evaluation has been determined by the status of our projects.

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Our [Housing](#) theme continues to show positive progress in relation to projects supporting this theme. As reported previously, we are aware and already responding to address weaknesses in our performance, especially in relation to homelessness where outcomes for our communities are not as positive as we want and aspire them to be. We are starting to see more people supported by My Home Denbighshire (the homelessness early intervention service), with a greater proportion of those supported not requiring a referral into the homelessness prevention service. The energy efficiency of council homes project is 'At Risk', affected by a number of factors. Affordable and extra care housing projects continue and are 'On Target' and the number of people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list, whilst remaining a concern, shows some improvement with fewer people on the waiting list this period.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Shared Prosperity and Levelling Up funded projects are progressing in support of our [Prosperous Denbighshire](#) theme. However, we are facing some challenges regarding the Former North Wales Hospital project, whilst we await the section 106 agreement and funding. Some of our Rhyl-based projects are also experiencing delays (the Queen's Building) or funding shortages (project to reconnect Rhyl High Street with the beach). The Rhyl Business Improvement Districts, it is hoped, will contribute to further regeneration of the town. The latest tourism figures show some significant improvement in terms of visitor numbers and the economic impact of tourism. However, some of the critical measures (about incomes and employment) for this theme are a 'Priority for Improvement'. The new economic strategy for Denbighshire, which will, it is hoped, stimulate positive change for businesses, our economy and residents will be developed with support from the Well-being for Future Generations Commissioner's Office.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In terms of a [healthier, happier and caring Denbighshire](#), this report refers to the findings of the Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report, which notes that the demand on social care services had increased, and that performance had not progressed as well as the services would have liked due to national challenges and budgetary constraints. We are concerned about the increase in referrals made under Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (allegations about practitioners and those in a position of trust). However, the safeguarding report has highlighted the high level of safeguarding enquiries completed for adults within 7 days. Embedding the 'Whole School Approach' to mental health and well-being remains a priority. While the figure is lower this period compared to last, the distribution of specialist equipment that might enable single handed care means that some individuals are now receiving full or partial single-handed care, with potential cost savings of £1,500 per week.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Attainment measures in support of our [Learning and Growing](#) theme are still to be confirmed as we wait for Welsh Government to publish comparable core data sets around

school standards. The Modernising Education Programme continues to experience delays for several reasons, but particularly due to issues with the feasibility of preferred sites. Early Years support, Llwybrau and Working Denbighshire are achieving some positive outcomes with individuals accessing childcare and parenting support, work and volunteering experience, and support into employment. We need to continue to work with schools in relation to community focussed activities.

A better connected Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In support of a [better connected Denbighshire](#) we have completed our annual Surface Dressing programme on a number of high priority roads and our annual Resurfacing Programme - on a number of roads across the county where the life has expired - is ongoing. The percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) remains a 'Priority for Improvement'. Discussions with Welsh Government to secure funding to deliver the most viable option to replace Llannerch Bridge are ongoing. We have also been making preparations for the upcoming 20mph speed limit coming into force from September 17. Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Projects will support this theme in terms of electric vehicle charging, public realm, active travel, and investment in community hub facilities, with an expected delivery date of March 2025.

A greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Ensuring that we meet our [net carbon zero commitment](#) as an organisation by 2030 continues to be a challenge and will not be easily achieved. Becoming an Ecologically Positive Council by 2030 is looking more promising. We have robust governance in place to test our progress and the plans we have in place. The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy will be carried out this year, 2023 to 2024. Delivery of the strategy does not stop whilst this review is taking place; work continues at pace concurrently with the review to deliver a Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council and reduction in supply chain emissions. Data for reducing carbon tonnage from

our supply chains is currently pending (as are previous years), whilst we revisit the data collation methodology.

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Our overall judgement about our measures for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#) reflects the fact that the majority of critical measures in this theme are a 'Priority for Improvement' and have been for some time. The obstacles and challenges in relation to poverty are perennial in some cases. Provision of Free School Meals continues to expand however, and it is hoped this will alleviate some of the effects of poverty on children. The number of repeat victims of domestic abuse has increased, so too the number of repeat offenders of domestic abuse. The significant spike in volumes is also evident for the rest of North Wales. Further work is required to understand the significant increase, but it is likely to reflect improvements in recording standards. Staff completion of key equality e-learning modules are a 'Priority for Improvement'; however, some modules may be more pertinent to certain job roles than others.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

In terms of our [vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) theme, the reduction of learners receiving Welsh medium education in September 2020 makes the ambitious targets of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), very far-reaching. Support and investment are in place to deliver the WESP, bolstered by the county's Welsh Language Strategy. A workshop is being planned for all elected members to brief them on what the council is doing to promote Welsh in the county. Our pledge to 'Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events' remains on hold. Despite this, the council continues to support and promote a wide range of cultural projects and events.

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

The new [Well-Run, High Performing Council](#) Board, providing governance for this theme, will be established in October 2023. At the time of writing this update, the Board had met and agreed a way forward to progress the theme's five pledges, which are aligned to our council's five principles. Some changes to this theme's pledges have been requested, which offer an expansion and clarification on each pledge. Approval for these wording changes will be sought from County Council as part of our Self-Assessment Report for the year in spring 2024.

Our [self-assessment against the seven key governance areas](#) paints a largely positive picture of how well the council is performing. We have also provided an update on the significant funding gaps the council is facing. The council's Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet are working closely to deliver a balanced budget so that the council is financially stable now and in the future.

A Note on Measuring Performance

In Denbighshire, our default approach to setting performance thresholds is to take the upper-quartile (best performing) from nationally comparable information as the point where performance is considered 'Excellent'. The 'Priority for Improvement' threshold is usually the median. Midway between these two values determines the threshold between 'Acceptable' and 'Good' performance.

If no data is available that we can compare ourselves with (either nationally or by comparable grouping), then we will take a local view on what we feel reasonably determines 'Excellent' and 'Priority for Improvement' performance. This should represent our ambition.

Our data tables use this same language, except for 'Priority for Improvement', which is truncated to 'Priority to Improve'. Our data tables also show information about trend. Trend is identified as 'Better', 'Worse', or 'Same', and is based on a comparison with the previous period for which we have data. Where possible, we also show trend for projects and activities, which is determined by comparing the overall status of the project or activity with its status in the previous period. Project and activity statuses are identified as 'On Target', 'Experiencing Obstacles', 'At Risk' or 'Compromised'.

For more information on how we manage performance, view the [Performance Management Guide on our website](#).

A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Ensure that there is quality housing that meets the needs of vulnerable people, assisting them to lead independent lives in appropriate accommodation for as long as possible

Delivering the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan is an important programme of work for the council and one that integrates a number of actions from across many services. The project continues to make good progress against its aims and is considered to be 'On Target'. In September, Performance Scrutiny reviewed the [Housing and Homelessness Strategy](#), noting its progress. The Strategy and Action Plan will be scrutinised again in 12 months.

The Ruthin Extra Care Housing project continues to progress 'On Target' and will contribute towards meeting the specialist housing needs of vulnerable people in Denbighshire. The Corwen Extra Care project is at business case stage and will enhance this provision further.

Prevent homelessness, and ensure that any instances of it are rare, brief, and unrepeated

Preventing homelessness is a priority for the council, and a number of measures have started to be monitored to inform this service area. The number of referrals received into the homelessness Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) service increased from 43 at the end of June, to 64 at the end of September. During the period, there was also an increase from 69.77% to 92.18% in the percentage of Early Intervention and Prevention referrals that were prevented from presenting to the homelessness prevention service. The council is taking steps to ensure early engagement with people at risk of homelessness, and we can report that 39 people were supported by the Citizens Advice Denbighshire Homelessness Prevention Team link officer by the end of September.

The council will continue to focus on early intervention and prevention, working in collaboration with partners such as the Salvation Army. A project to reduce the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens is progressing with plans in place for assessing further sites for suitability.

In August, it was reported that after listening to public feedback, plans to create temporary homeless accommodation at [Maes Emlyn in Rhyl](#) were no longer being pursued. The council now plans to redevelop the site to achieve the long-term goal of providing more social housing to meet demand. This is evidence of the council's commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. By ensuring citizens are involved in decision making, the council hopes to foster good long-term relationships, prevent future problems from occurring and benefit those at a socio-economic disadvantage. A pre-planning consultation for the new development will be published where residents will have another opportunity to be involved and share their views on the new plans.

Upgrade the council housing stock

Since the last reporting period, one project remains 'At Risk' and that is to improve energy efficiency in council houses. It is believed that the new and soon to be implemented Welsh Housing Quality Standard will create an extra financial pressure on the service as additional measures will be required to comply with the new standard. Inflated costs and the lack of qualified trades in the sector are also contributory factors to the status of the project. There is progress, however, in that the average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating across the council's housing stock continues to rise.

In July, a project to improve the energy efficiency of the [Aberadda council flats](#) in Llangollen was reported to be near completion. Denbighshire Housing has replaced the roof, improved insulation and increased the energy efficiency of the building. Similar projects are planned across Denbighshire in the near future.

As well as pledging to upgrade the energy efficiency of council houses, the council has a duty to ensure they are maintained, safe and suitable for the needs of residents. The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time for the period has remained at an 'Acceptable' rate of 96.90%. Also, a further 56 disabled adaptations have been carried out for council house tenants between July and September.

There has been a review of some performance thresholds which required updating in this theme. These relate to the Denbighshire [Housing Tenant Survey](#), which is launched every two years to inform service provision.

Signpost residents to opportunities to improve the efficiency of their homes

A clearer picture of how people may be supported to improve the energy efficiency of their homes is emerging as new measures start to be monitored. We know that between July and September 2023, 143 households were signposted and helped through the ECO4 scheme - a government scheme providing funding for eligible homeowners to make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. The number of recorded page views of the energy efficiency page on our website reached 357 up until September. This number is likely to be higher as we can only record visits to the webpage where browser cookies have been accepted. Discussions are taking place to overcome capacity issues relating to promoting the energy efficiency page on our website through social media channels. We are 'On Target' to signpost residents to the Welsh Government's Nest scheme for energy efficiency support, with the awareness campaign complete and a mail out scheduled during the next few months.

Deliver more homes to meet local need and demand

Several projects aimed at delivering more affordable, specialist and council homes are running 'On Target'. This includes the project to provide affordable housing at Edward Henry Street and the Additional Council Housing Developments Project, which has an improved delivery confidence.

An activity to 'Work with the Rhyl Regeneration Programme Board to Contribute to Progressing the Rhyl Residential Strategy' has been renamed to 'Progress the Rhyl Residential Strategy'. The project is awaiting the publication of Welsh Government guidance to be able to complete a Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment, and as such is still 'Experiencing Obstacles'.

The percentage of empty private properties brought back in to use through direct action by the council has increased from 2% during the last quarterly period to 7% for the period between July and September 2023, and performance is now considered 'Excellent'.

Also during the period, a public consultation on whether to increase the council tax premium charges for both [long term empty and second homes](#) has taken place, with the

majority of respondents agreeing with proposals for additional charges. The proposals align with the council's long-term aims to encourage home owners not to leave their properties empty and bring them back into use to meet local need and demand. In July, Cabinet met to discuss the findings of the consultation and consider the [council tax premium proposals](#) to these homes, agreeing to progress the matter by seeking County Council approval. In September, County Council discussed the [proposals to increase council tax premium](#) charges and agreed by majority vote to accept the recommendations, with one additional amendment. The recommendations were to retain the 50% premium charge for April 2023, increase to 100% from April 2024, and to 150% from April 2025. Also that properties unoccupied and unfurnished for 5 years or more pay a higher premium at 50% more than the standard premium and that there be parity between the standard second home and long-term empty premium, to minimise avoidance by taxpayers. The additional recommendation was that any extra funding generated by the proposals would be allocated for use by local communities and to tackle homelessness.

Ensure that our residents are informed about available housing options and routes to housing, seeking also to reduce the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list.

The development of a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing is 'On Target' with a plan in place to inform tenants about housing matters and deliver a range of activities.

As at the end of September 2023, there were 1,760 people on the Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) waiting list. The figure is yet to reach an 'Acceptable' threshold; however, it represents good progress when compared to the same period for the previous year (2,190).

The project to bring Denbighshire's SARTH system in-house has now been completed. The in-house system has been operational for five months and during that time, many obstacles have been successfully overcome by the programme team. The activity to develop performance and reporting systems following the implementation of the SARTH continues to be 'Experiencing Obstacles'. Work is now progressing with a planned system upgrade with full reporting expected to be available by the end of December 2023.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity related to the support offered to those experiencing homelessness please see our [learning and growing theme](#) and for connections between energy efficiency and fuel poverty, please see our theme for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of emergency housing repairs completed within target time - Benchmarked Locally	95.85% Acceptable Better	94.72% Priority to Improve Worse	97.22% Acceptable Better	97.06% Acceptable Worse	96.90% Acceptable Worse
The number of disabled adaptations carried out for council house tenants – Count Only	66	64	56	53	56
The number of households helped through the ECO4 scheme – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	85	143
The number of page views of the energy efficiency page on our website – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	319	357
The percentage of empty private properties brought back into use through direct action by the local authority - Benchmarked Locally	8.5% Excellent Better	6.4% Excellent Worse	6.1% Excellent Worse	2% Acceptable Worse	7% Excellent Better

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of people on the SARTH waiting list - Benchmarked Locally	2,190 Priority to Improve Worse	2,235 Priority to Improve Worse	1,734 Priority to Improve Better	1,785 Priority to Improve Worse	1,760 Priority to Improve Better
The number of referrals received into Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	80	43	64
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that have been prevented from presenting to homelessness prevention service - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	89.36% Excellent	69.77% Acceptable Worse	92.18% Excellent Better
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are for people in employment – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	22.5%	13.04%	7.81%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are a) Privately Rented – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	63.75%	53.49%	64.06%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are b) Local Authority – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	11.25%	6.98%	1.56%

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are c) Housing Association – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	2.5%	0%	3.12%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are d) Owner occupied – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	5%	4.65%	6.25%
The percentage of referrals Early Intervention and Prevention (My Home Denbighshire) that are e) Unknown – Count Only	No data. New to January 2023	No data. New to January 2023	17.5%	34.88%	25.01%
The number of people at risk of homelessness supported by the CAD-HPT (Citizens Advice Denbighshire-Homelessness Prevention Team) link officer – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	28	39
Of those people at risk of homelessness supported by the CAD-HPT (Citizens Advice Denbighshire-Homelessness Prevention Team) link officer, the % that are in employment – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	7%	29%

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of dwellings improved with a disabled facilities grant - Benchmarked Nationally	106 Priority to Improve Better	66 Priority to Improve Worse
The number of people who were on the Complex Disabilities Specialist Housing Needs Register for whom supported housing has been secured - Benchmarked Locally	13 Excellent Better	16 Excellent Better
The percentage of households successfully prevented from homelessness (section 66) - Benchmarked Nationally	41.97% Priority to Improve Worse	38.35% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households successfully relieved from homelessness (section 73) - Benchmarked Nationally	21.55% Priority to Improve Worse	15.96% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of households positively discharged from homelessness (section 75) - Benchmarked Nationally	44.75% Priority to Improve Worse	50.22% Priority to Improve Better
The total number of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) within 12 months of leaving care - Benchmarked Locally	9 Good Better	3 Excellent Better
The percentage of council properties compliant with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard - Benchmarked Nationally	100% Excellent Same	100% Excellent Same
The percentage of Council House tenants that were satisfied with the quality of their home - Benchmarked Locally	84% Good Better	No data: does not apply
The percentage of tenants that were satisfied with the way Denbighshire Housing deals with repairs and maintenance - Benchmarked Locally	77% Acceptable Worse	No data: does not apply

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of existing and acquired Council housing stock achieving an EPC (Energy) rating of C or above - Benchmarked Locally	35.44% Priority to Improve Better	41.89% Acceptable Better
The additional supply of affordable housing, including social housing, provided during the year - Benchmarked Locally	271 Excellent Better	139 Excellent Worse
The additional supply of Council Houses provided - Benchmarked Locally	13 Acceptable Better	15 Acceptable Better

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is sufficient, good quality housing in Denbighshire, which meets people’s needs - Benchmarked Locally	31%	47%	22%	40% Priority to Improve

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Housing (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Better	16% Priority to Improve Worse

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are seventeen projects listed within this theme in the Corporate Plan. The number of these that are running 'On Target' has increased to eleven since our last report. One is complete, three are 'Experiencing Obstacles', one is 'At Risk', and one is at business case stage.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Deliver and monitor the Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	On Target Same	No exception
Ruthin Extra Care Housing (Phase 2)	On Target Same	No exception
Corwen Extra Care	At business case stage	No exception
Reduce the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation by establishing some in-house emergency housing facilities for homeless citizens	On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Improving Energy Efficiency in Council Houses	At Risk Same	The average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating across our housing stock continues to rise. However, it is expected that the new and soon to be implemented Welsh Housing Quality Standard will create an extra financial pressure on the service as additional measures will be required to comply with the new standard. Inflated costs, limited funding for the Optimised Retrofit Programme, and the lack of qualified trades in the sector are all issues contributing to the 'At Risk' status of this project.
Work collaboratively with Flintshire County Council providing contact information and signposting on our website regarding homes' energy efficiency	On Target Same	No exception
Promote Energy Efficiency page on our website through our social media channels	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Discussions are taking place to establish which teams are best suited and have capacity to deliver this activity.
Signpost to Welsh Government's NEST scheme through the post	On Target Same	No exception
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	On Target Better	No exception
Denbighshire replacement Local Development Plan	On Target Same	No exception
Edward Henry Street	On Target Same	No exception
Additional Council Housing Developments	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Explore how we can protect housing through new Welsh Government legislation to regulate the impact of second homes	On Target Same	No exception
Progress the Rhyl Residential Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The team continue to await the publication of Welsh Government revised Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15 to enable completion of the Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment. The TAN15 is due to be published late 2023 or early 2024.
Develop performance and reporting systems following the implementation of SARTH and current Single Point of Access (SPoA) triage service to further understand citizens accessing housing information and SARTH	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There have continued to be system issues and full reports have been unavailable. Individuals have not been affected as the team have used manual processes and have been in regular contact with registered social landlords. Work is now progressing with a view to complete the system upgrade with full reporting available by the end of December 2023.
Develop a tenant involvement framework for Denbighshire Housing	On Target Same	No exception
SARTH: Bring in-house	Complete	As this has been operational now for five months with the large majority of issues resolved, the project is complete.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Work collaboratively with communities and partners to deliver projects and initiatives that will stimulate economic growth

The council is focused on delivering a number of initiatives to stimulate economic growth. The first of these to mention is the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). The overall programme is running 'On Target'. This was highlighted in news detailing that [20 Denbighshire projects](#) were awarded grants from the county's allocation of the funding. Nine projects that made the shortlist are regional or sub-regional projects and will proceed to the next stage of the application process when all North Wales local authorities have finalised their investment decisions. Information about the projects approved so far can be found at www.denbighshire.gov.uk/UKSPF-projects.

The council is also engaged with the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and has two overall programmes overseeing a number of sub-projects across service areas. The first programme is LUF Clwyd South, which is designed to improve connectivity and maximise the visitor economy resulting from the offer found at unique heritage and cultural assets in the areas around the Dee Valley. We report in this theme the progress of the programme overall, as well as that of a sub-project to regenerate Corwen High Street. The programme overall is 'Experiencing Obstacles'. A Project Amendment Request has been submitted to UK Government, which includes an extension of time, corrections to some output targets and a change to the prioritisation of the phasing of the Active Travel Route project. An outcome is imminent and once approved would change the delivery status to being 'On Target'. The detail of several sub-projects can be found in other themes relating to [better connected](#) and [culture](#). Regarding the project to improve [Corwen High Street](#), the work on the town centre's infrastructure has begun and is 'On Target'. The second round LUF programme has oversight of Clwyd West projects which are intended to protect the unique heritage of the areas in and around Ruthin, and the wellbeing of its citizens, as well as for its surrounding rural communities. The programme overall is 'Experiencing Obstacles'. At the request of UK Government, projects have undertaken a full review of their delivery and financial profiles. This has identified some projects which would benefit

from an extension of time. The LUF Programme Board is working with UK Government to formalise the changes. The detail of a number of sub-projects can be found in our [better connected](#), [greener](#), and [culture](#) themes. An [information event](#) was held at Ruthin Gaol in July to provide information to residents about the projects that have been successful in obtaining funding through the Clwyd West Levelling Up programme. In addition to the existing programmes of work, the council is actively developing funding bids for economic initiatives wherever possible. We await an update on a third round of Levelling Up funding.

Meeting in July, Partnerships Scrutiny considered the work and [progress of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board \(NWEAB\)](#) during the financial year 2022 to 2023.

Representatives from the Board presented their Quarter 4 and Annual Report and answered members' questions. It was reported that the NWEAB, formed in 2016, had secured £240 million investment into North Wales and had a total investment target of £1 billion over a 15 year period, creating 4,200 new jobs. Some of the challenges the Board had faced over the previous 12 months were explained, including the withdrawal and rescopeing of three projects and the overall impact of cost inflation. The activity to enable and support North Wales Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales is therefore deemed to be 'Experiencing Obstacles'. A portion of funds released has been redirected to progress other Growth Deal funded projects, such as the Former North Wales Hospital in Denbigh. Some progress has also been seen in other projects, with the approval of three outline business cases, including the "Last Few %" project to provide minimum superfast broadband to poorly connected communities across North Wales.

The Former North Wales Hospital project remains 'At Risk' until the section 106 legal agreement is obtained, and the full funding is achieved. The project team continue to meet regularly to progress matters relating to planning and viability funding.

The Queen's Buildings Rhyl project continues to be 'Experiencing Obstacles'. There is a delay in the sub-station work being carried out which has pushed back the handover date for construction. However, this is not expected to impact on future operation. The development will provide a mixed-use hall offering a collection of artisan eateries, retail, and events space.

As part of the Welsh Government's Transforming Towns Programme, the council is co-ordinating funding streams and developing town regeneration summaries (formerly referred to as Town Centre Place Making Plans). Both of these activities are 'On Target'.

As an indicator of economic activity, the percentage of out-of-work benefits claimants has shown marginal improvement up until August 2023 (September data is not yet published), though this remains higher than the Wales average and is a 'Priority for Improvement' at 3.5%.

Develop an economic strategy

We previously reported that a significant activity for the future within this theme will be to develop the council's new Economic Strategy. It is encouraging to see that this activity is 'On Target', with a specification being developed for procuring a consultant. The Strategy will focus on areas such as growing the green economy, supporting rural businesses, regenerating town centres, and enhancing tourism.

The development of Rhyl's town centre is an ongoing programme of work for the council, and a number of projects are being managed in this area. Plans to redevelop the Victorian Post Office are 'On Target'. The project to reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach remains 'At Risk' due to a funding shortage following the unsuccessful Vale of Clwyd Levelling Up Fund bid. We will ensure future proposals are well-developed in readiness for Levelling Up Fund 3 and that there is continued communication with the Rhyl Member Area Group. Two further projects to progress the Rhyl Public Realm Strategy and improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. The obstacles facing the former relate to a shortage of funding, and regarding the latter, recruitment issues have resulted in delays. Two projects are in the process of being developed and are at project brief or business case stage, as seen in the tables below.

County Council was presented with a Notice of Motion in July, in respect of the potential reinstatement of [Rhyl Promenade kiosks](#), which are due to be demolished as part of the central Rhyl Flood Defence Scheme. It was agreed that the report would be taken to Scrutiny Committee in spring 2025 to consider an updated masterplan for the Rhyl Promenade including the option of creating new kiosks.

The tourism offer in Denbighshire is an important aspect of its economy. The delivery of Denbighshire's Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is 'On Target', as is the development of the AONB Sustainable Tourism Plan, which has been drafted. [STEAM](#) (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) data evaluating the economic impact of tourism for Denbighshire has been published showing that £628 million was generated in 2022, which is considered 'Excellent' and is a significant increase from the £432 million in 2021.

Figures shown in July regarding [Rhyl's town centre footfall figures](#) indicated an improvement in visitor numbers to the town's shops. An increase of over 110,000 visits were recorded for 2022, compared with figures for 2021. Rhyl's total figure for 2022 was 850,663 with the busiest period being between July and September.

Provide advice and support

The council supports business growth in Denbighshire in a number of ways. Through its Working Denbighshire service, the council runs a project working with employers to identify hard to recruit jobs and develop sector routeways to fill the gaps. The project has been 'Experiencing Obstacles' though it is expected that from October, the team will be in a strong position to implement sector routeways, especially as the training co-ordinator vacancy has now been filled. The number of paid and unpaid work experience placements offered through Working Denbighshire for the quarter is 33, which is an increase from the last period, and represents 'Excellent' performance.

In September, the Working Denbighshire [employability service](#) offered free support and help to high school and sixth form leavers. Services included well-being activities and support to improve confidence and skills, as well as career development guidance such as CV writing. This is evidence of the council's commitment to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Sustainable Development Principle. By supporting young people to plan for their futures, the council is taking action to benefit its citizens in the long-term, preventing future problems from occurring and benefitting those at a socio-economic disadvantage.

Denbighshire's business community receives regular advice and support through the council's Economic and Business Development newsletter. The council is also 'On Target' towards taking action to raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for adults who work in the business community.

We continue to await national data that will give an indication of the rates of business births and deaths in Denbighshire for 2022 to 2023. As soon as those figures are published, they will be reported under this theme.

In September, the [Rhyl Business Improvement Districts](#) (BID) Business Plan was approved by Cabinet. The BID second-term proposals were thoroughly [scrutinised by the Partnerships Scrutiny](#) Committee in July. [Backing the Rhyl BID](#), Cabinet confirmed it would

be using a single vote in the ballot to support a second term. The reason for supporting the Rhyl BID is that it is hoped it will contribute to the regeneration of the town.

The council strives to secure local community benefits wherever possible. The activity to develop a Community Benefits Framework has been upgraded in status and is now 'On Target'. The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire has decreased from 33% to 15.9% (a 'Priority for Improvement') during this period. The percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits has also fallen from 66% to 53.3%, which is now considered 'Good'.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment please see our [learning and growing theme](#); for community development and benefits, see our theme for a [better connected Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further themes connected to the local economy, see [A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language](#) and [A well-run, high performing council](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of working age people who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit - Benchmarked Nationally	3.5% Priority to Improve Same	3.7% Priority to Improve Worse	3.8% Priority to Improve Worse	3.6% Priority to Improve Better	3.5% Priority to Improve Better
The number of paid and unpaid work experience placements offered through Working Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	19 Acceptable Better	38 Excellent Better	16 Priority to Improve Worse	26 Good Better	33 Excellent Better
The percentage of spend with suppliers based within Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	35% Good Worse	35% Good Same	35% Good Same	33% Good Worse	15.9% Priority to Improve Worse
The cumulative percentage of Denbighshire contracts over £25k and under £1m containing community benefits – Benchmarked Locally	64% Excellent Worse	64% Excellent Same	66 % Excellent Better	66 % Excellent Same	53.3% Good Worse

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Average gross annual pay for people who live in the area and work full time (£) - Benchmarked Nationally	26,780 Priority to Improve Better	27,121 Priority to Improve Better
External funding (in pounds) secured for economic development – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of available funding awarded by Economic Business Development (EBD) for commercial property grants - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
STEAM - Total Economic Impact of Tourism (£ million) - Benchmarked Locally	£432m Priority to Improve Better	£628m Excellent Better
The number of businesses taking part in training events - Benchmarked Locally	No data. Suspended due to the pandemic	390 Excellent Better
Births of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	78 Good Better	National data pending
Deaths of businesses per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64 - Benchmarked Nationally	89 Priority to Improve Worse	National data pending

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has a prosperous economy that provides access to the right skills, jobs, and income - Benchmarked Locally	32%	49%	19%	40% Priority to Improve

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as

they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government's next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Income (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Same	12% Priority to Improve Better

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Overall, good progress has been made with the twenty-three projects and activities identified in support of this theme. Twelve are 'On Target' and seven projects are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. Two projects are in development: one is at business case stage, and one is at project brief stage. Two projects are 'At Risk'.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Programme: Shared Prosperity Fund	On Target Same	No exception
Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd South	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Overall, the Denbighshire Round 1 Clwyd South LUF projects are making good progress. There have been some challenges to delivery identified by the 3 partners (Wrexham County Borough Council as lead applicant and the Canal and Rivers Trust) which has led to an invitation from UK Government to submit a Project Amendment Request (PAR). This includes an extension of time, correction to some output targets and a change to the prioritisation of the phasing of the Active Travel Route project. An outcome is imminent and

Title	Status	Exception
		once approved would change the delivery status to 'On Target'.
Corwen High Street Project (Clwyd South LUF)	On Target Same	No exception
Programme: Levelling Up Fund – Clwyd West	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Overall, round 2 Clwyd West LUF projects are making good progress. Following a formal request from UK Government, all projects have been required to undertake a full review of their delivery and financial profiles. This has identified some projects which would benefit from an extension of time. The LUF Programme Board is working with the UK Government to formalise the changes. No other issues to delivery are identified at this stage.
Develop funding bids for future rounds of Levelling Up and Growth Deal funding	On Target Same	No exception
Enabling and supporting North Wales Growth Deal projects in partnership with Ambition North Wales	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Issues faced include the withdrawal and rescoping of three projects and the overall impact of cost inflation. A portion of funds released has been redirected to progress the Former North Wales Hospital project in Denbigh. Approval was obtained for three outline business cases, including the "Last Few %" project to provide minimum superfast broadband to poorly connected communities across North Wales.
Former North Wales Hospital	At Risk Same	Until the section 106 agreement is obtained, the project remains 'At Risk'.

Title	Status	Exception
		The Project Delivery Group continue to meet regularly to progress matters relating to planning and viability funding.
Queen's Buildings Rhyl	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There is a delay in the sub-station work being carried out which has pushed back the handover date for construction. However, this is not expected to impact on future operation.
Coordinating Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding programme streams	On Target Same	No exception
Develop Town Regeneration Summaries	On Target Same	No exception
Develop the council's new Economic Strategy	On Target Same	No exception
Victorian Post Office (Rhyl)	On Target Same	No exception
Progress the Rhyl Public Realm Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Discussions continue to take place with the relevant Programme Board to agree a way forward in view of the unsuccessful LUF bid.
Reconnect the top of Rhyl High Street with the beach (Rhyl promenade)	At Risk Worse	Progress has halted and the team is considering how to fund pre-construction works which would have been funded through the LUF bid.
Seeking to improve the appearance of poorly maintained Rhyl Town Centre properties	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There have been delays to this project resulting from recruitment issues. New temporary posts have been approved and await funding. Two main sites are the focus of

Title	Status	Exception
		improvement works in the meantime.
Rhyl Gateway	At project brief stage	No exception
Co-Relocation of Rhyl Tourist Information Centre and Rhyl Museum	At business case stage	No exception
Develop the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Tourism Plan and integrate into Local Tourism Plans	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver the Denbighshire Tourism Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2027	On Target Same	No exception
Work with employers to identify hard to recruit jobs and develop sector routeways to fill the gaps	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Employment co-ordinators have been working with employers to ensure that we are on target for work start placements. New sector routeways have not been developed due to the vacancy for the Training Co-ordinator and the late confirmation of funding from SPF for Years 2 and 3. The work with employers places us in a strong position to implement sector routeways from October 2023, now that the Training Co-ordinator has been recruited and started work.
Raise awareness of the provision of Welsh training for adults who work in the business community	On Target Same	No exception
Complete feasibility report for move-on accommodation at St Asaph Business Park	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a Community Benefits Framework to align with the Social Partnership and Procurement (Wales) Bill	On Target Better	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In July of this year, the council announced it was prepared for the [increase of visitors](#) into the county during the summer holidays, with extra park rangers and increased street cleaning provision at key tourism areas and events. In August, the council reminded [bank holiday visitors](#) to respect the countryside and act responsibly. A series of measures was introduced by the council to reduce congestion at popular sites such as Moel Famau and Horseshoe Falls.

A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Ensure that the council's social care offer is of a high standard

At its meeting in July, Partnerships Scrutiny received the [Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report](#) which reviewed the effectiveness of the authority's social care services for both children and adults during the financial year 2022 to 2023. It was noted that the demand on social care services had increased, and that performance had not progressed as well as the services would have liked due to national challenges and budgetary constraints. Recruitment and retention continued to be a challenge within the social care sector.

The council aims to promote a strong culture of safeguarding children, young people and adults in the county. In July, Partnerships Scrutiny were presented with Denbighshire's [annual performance report for safeguarding adults](#) for the financial year 2022 to 2023. Highlighted in the report was the high level of safeguarding enquiries completed within 7 days. The quarterly figure for the period from July to September 2023 was 99% and is considered 'Excellent'. An area of concern in the report was the increase in referrals made under Section 5 of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (allegations about practitioners and those in a position of trust). Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications also increased (by 11%) from the previous year. Court proceedings had continued to increase and were noted to be impacting the capacity of operational teams as well as the legal team.

A project to undertake a review of independent professional advocacy for all service provision continues and remains 'On Target'. The percentage of young people offered the active option of advocacy from Education and Children's Services during the period is a measure we are in the process of developing, and data for this reporting period is unavailable at present.

Providing care and support through its corporate parenting role is an important area of work for the council. At the end of September, there were 206 children looked after in Denbighshire. The percentage of those children experiencing three or more placements

during the year remained at a low rate of 1.94% which falls within the 'Excellent' threshold. Progress continues 'On Target' with implementing the requirements of Foster Wales, the national network of Local Authority fostering services.

The council plans to work with partners to develop a joint assessment centre for children in the region with complex needs. We also have a number of projects designed for supporting those with additional learning or complex needs, and updates on these are provided in the table below.

Recognising the importance of supporting unpaid carers, the council is working with its partners to provide enhanced respite opportunities and general advice and support. An activity in support of this aim is 'Experiencing Obstacles'. The total number of carers needs assessments for young carers undertaken during the period is data provided by a third party and we await up to date information. The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the period was 203.

From our Community Equipment Store records, we can report that from July to September 2023, 31 individuals were issued with specialist equipment that might enable single handed care. We have confirmed from cost of care records available that 11 of these individuals are now receiving full or partial single handed care, with potential cost savings of £1,500 per week. It is possible that care packages for some of these individuals are still in transition or under review.

Support the well-being, mental-health and resilience of individuals within communities

In August, Denbighshire County Council's [Play Ranger service organised a free event](#) as part of National Play Day. Rhyl's Oak Tree centre hosted the event, which was attended by over 2,800 people. The Play Rangers are running two projects designed to enhance child well-being and access to play. The projects remain 'At Risk' due to a shortage of funding, though efforts are being made to source alternative funding. The percentage of schools in the county embedding the 'Whole School Approach' to mental health and well-being for April to June 2023 was a 'Priority for Improvement' at 27%. An update for this measure for this reporting period is not yet available and will be reported in the next performance update report.

The council provides well-being support to all citizens in Denbighshire. The number of Single Point of Access (SPoA) contacts for information, advice and assistance decreased

slightly during this period to 4,911. The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care remained at a high rate of 87%. For enquiries relating to children, the number of referrals and enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway during the period is being calculated and will be reported in the next performance update report.

In July, the council hosted a drop in event at Denbigh Town Hall to promote the broad range of [support services on offer](#) to all its citizens, from mental health support to drug and alcohol well-being. Many projects and activities in support of this pledge - such as work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire; delivery of intergenerational activities through the Story Pals project; and the Nature for Health Programme for example - are all 'On Target'.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of housing and homelessness, please see our [Housing](#) and [Prosperous](#) themes respectively. For information about equality and deprivation, and safe environments, see our theme a [Fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further detail around our work to support education and well-being, see our [Learning and Growing](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of safeguarding enquiries from adults completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse - Benchmarked Locally	98.85% Excellent Better	98.84% Excellent Worse	98.8% Excellent Worse	100% Excellent Better	99% Excellent Worse
The percentage of young people offered the active option of advocacy from Education and Children's Services - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending	Data pending

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of children looked after in Denbighshire – Count Only	Data pending	Data pending	200	203	206
The percentage of children looked after on who have had three or more placements during the year – Benchmarked Locally	3% Excellent Better	4% Excellent Worse	1% Excellent Better	2.46% Excellent Worse	1.94% Excellent Better
The total number of carers needs assessments for young carers undertaken during the year – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending	Data pending
The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year (cumulative) - Count Only	197	303	401	92	203
The number of care and support packages that have been right sized to single handed care with the right type of specialist equipment – Baseline Year	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	48	11
The number of potential entrepreneurs provided assistance to be business ready for citizen care and support needs – Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	20	22	25

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of schools in the county using the Public Health Wales Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Well-being Tool – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	27% Priority to Improve	Data pending
The number of referrals / enquiries recorded on Children and Family Support Gateway - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	4,350	Data pending
The number of Single Point of Access contacts for information, advice and assistance – Count Only	4,988	4,586	5,134	5,307	4,911
The number of Talking Point contacts for information, advice and assistance (libraries, One Stop Shops and hosted by Community Navigators etc) - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	231	218
The percentage of citizens receiving information, advice and assistance from Talking Points who did not need to be referred into Adult Social Care - Baseline Year	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	87.5%	87%
The number of sport and recreation related projects / groups supported by the Community Resilience Team – Baseline Year	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	42	34

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally	76.59% Priority to Improve	76.7% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of child protection conferences held within statutory timescales - Benchmarked Nationally	90.63% Priority to Improve	95% Good Better
The percentage of adults where independent professional advocacy was provided after assessment of need – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	72.5% Good
The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided - Count Only	1,037	1,159
The cumulative number of new micro-provider businesses created for citizen care and support needs – Benchmarked Locally	No Data. New to 2022 to 2023	30 Excellent
The number of schools that have achieved Trauma Informed School status by 2027 - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	1 Excellent
The number of young people who receive school-based counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Locally	330 Acceptable	338 Acceptable Better
The average improvement in young people’s core score for children and young people who received school-based counselling in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	8.5 Excellent
The number of projects supported by the Community Development Team, and funded, offering a positive impact upon loneliness and isolation - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The number of County Community Groups using in scope facilities Denbighshire Leisure Limited - Benchmarked Locally	137 Excellent	134 Excellent Worse
The number of alternative (out of scope) facilities/venues used for the delivery of services to DCC residents - Benchmarked Locally	107 Excellent	96 Excellent Worse

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that they can live safely, happily, and independently, in Denbighshire and also receive good support when needed to promote resilience and well-being - Benchmarked Locally	48%	39%	13%	55% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Health (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) - Benchmarked Nationally	10% Priority to Improve Same	17% Priority to Improve Worse

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Of the twenty-one projects and activities listed under this theme, fifteen are 'On Target', three are 'Experiencing Obstacles', two are 'At Risk', and one is at project brief stage.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures into all aspects of Children's and Adults Services	On Target Same	No exception
Work with partners to deliver the annual joint strategic plan for the North Wales Safeguarding Board	On Target Same	No exception
Undertake a review of independent professional advocacy for all service provision.	On Target Same	No exception
Monitor and implement requirements of Foster Wales and monitor effectiveness of national approach.	On Target Same	No exception
Implement Post 16 of Additional Learning Needs work	Experiencing Obstacles	Work has started with this activity. Regional and national discussions are ongoing to progress the implementation of the Act regarding Additional Learning Needs and young people who are post-16.
Develop an in-county residential short breaks and emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire	Update pending	No exception
County Residential Break Review	At project brief stage	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Implement and embed the Autism Code of Practice requirements at local authority level across Children's Services.	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The Autism Code of Practice is still in progress. The lead manager is working closely with partners to support the action plan. There is a North Wales Regional Working Group, of which the Denbighshire team is a member.
Bwthyn y Ddol Phase 2 (Activity) Develop and implement, including staffing, a new Children's Assessment Centre jointly with Conwy County Borough Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	On Target Same	No exception
Ysgol Tir Morfa - Hydrotherapy pool	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the intervention work at Plas Brondyffryn and Tir Morfa in terms of play opportunities from Play Rangers.	On Target Same	No exception
Work with local unpaid carers to identify the respite opportunities they need, and how barriers are overcome to enable this.	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The Carers Think Tank meetings have taken place every 6 weeks and have enabled a wide range of professionals to consider solutions. There have been examples of volunteers successfully supporting carers and Micro Providers providing respite breaks to carers.
Work in partnership regionally to embed the All Wales Dementia Pathway of Standards.	On Target Same	No exception
Embed the work of the Independent Living Team to support individuals through direct payments or Pre-Paid Cards, to increase efficiency	On Target Better	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Work to enhance and extend the Access to Play project throughout the county.	At Risk Same	A significant funding shortage continues to put this project at risk. Further external grants are being explored as demand for the service continues to grow.
Expand the Play Rangers offer Let's Play Out Programme throughout the county	At Risk Same	A significant funding shortage continues to put this project at risk. Further external grants are being explored as demand for the service continues to grow.
Work to reduce the Youth Services waiting list for support in Denbighshire.	On target Same	No exception
Work towards becoming an age-friendly Denbighshire, with World Health Organisation, in partnership with Ageing Well in Denbighshire multi-agency group.	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the Story Pals Project and Arts programme to deliver intergenerational activities (delivered through the Denbighshire Arts Strategy).	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver a programme of activities and events to encourage children and adults to re-engage with their local library, to support engagement and wellbeing and to combat social isolation and loneliness.	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the Nature for Health Programme within Denbighshire which offers multiple benefit – reducing isolation, improve health, rural skills, health and nature walks, arts and crafts)	On Target Same	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

The national [NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day](#) took place on July 5, and the council marked the occasion by raising a flag at County Hall in Ruthin in honour of the staff involved.

This summer, Denbigh's Dolwen Care Home residents created a [memorial garden to honour the memory of residents lost](#) during the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the summer holidays, Denbighshire County Council's libraries launched the [free equipment loan programme](#) with a range of sports equipment provided by Denbighshire Leisure Limited.

At its September meeting, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee received a verbal report to update members on the progress of the [North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project](#). A representative from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board informed the Committee that the Royal Alexander Hospital redevelopment was a priority project which had an approved business case that was unchanged since its development. Approval for 20% funding via the Welsh Government's Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) was to be sought from the Regional Partnership Board before being submitted to Welsh Government as part of their Capital Plans in October 2023. There was no timescale available for receiving a response from Welsh Government.

The [North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Report](#) for 2022 to 2023 was also presented at September's Partnerships Scrutiny meeting, and in September, Cabinet approved the [North Wales Regional Partnership Board 10 Year Strategic Capital Plan](#) and agreed Denbighshire's capital priorities for improved integrated health and social care to meet future needs.

Meeting in September, Communities Scrutiny received an update from the Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service on their [engagement with Care Forum Wales](#) (CFW) and Care Providers in Denbighshire. The report provided an account of efforts that had made to promote a positive dialogue and encourage the reengagement of CFW with the regional fee setting process. The Service is planning a programme of visits to care homes to proactively engage them in the care fee setting process for 2024 to 2025.

In September, an event was held at Ruthin Market Hall to encourage the public to come and talk to [Denbighshire County Council's Community Resource Team](#). The team includes health, social care and third sector staff.

In September, the Council, in partnership with DVSC and Denbighshire Age Friendly Communities, hosted a free performance of 'Over the Garden Fence' at Denbigh's Twm o'r Nant Theatre. The event was designed to raise [dementia awareness](#) and promote understanding.

A learning and growing Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Promote the learning and development of our children and young people

Our Corporate Plan places a clear focus on support for early years development with a number of key measures in this area of work. The number of children taking part in the Childcare Offer in Denbighshire has continued to increase to 624. A new childcare facility was opened at [Ysgol Penmorfa](#), Prestatyn, in September. The extension has been funded by the Welsh Government Flying Start Capital Grant and has increased capacity of provision in the area, allowing more local families to benefit from high quality childcare.

Family Link workers continue their work to support families throughout the county, delivering language and play sessions and providing guidance to parents. The number of parents reporting a positive difference after working with the team has unfortunately fallen from 96% to 86% this quarter, but this is due to activities only taking place during term-time and not during the six-week summer holidays.

The number of Schools in Estyn review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures remains unchanged from the previous period (two schools). Following an Estyn monitoring visit in June, [Denbigh High School](#) has now been confirmed as having been removed from Special Measures, having made sufficient progress against the recommendations. Highlights of the [report](#) include the school having successfully refreshed its approach to rewarding and celebrating positive behaviour; teachers forming positive working relationships with their class; and a strengthened strategy to improve literacy skills. In September, [Performance Scrutiny](#) considered a report on progress made by Christ the Word School since being placed in Special Measures, following an Estyn inspection in May 2022. The committee resolved to be kept updated on progress.

At its meeting in [July](#) and [September](#), Performance Scrutiny also received a number of reports from the Head of Education Services concerning key pieces of work that seek to remove barriers to learning.

- The Curriculum for Wales – an update was provided on the progress made by schools on implementing the new curriculum since it became statutory in September 2022.
- Additional Learning Needs – a report providing information regarding the actions taken to ensure that schools were ready to meet statutory requirements under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.
- Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Well-Being – An overview into the way in which schools are implementing the Welsh Government statutory framework.

Having considered and accepted these reports, members requested that updates be provided in the latter half of 2024.

As previously reported, there is one project within our Learning and Growing theme currently 'At Risk'. The Modernising Education Programme is experiencing delays for several reasons, but particularly due to issues with site feasibility (as described in more detail in the table below). A site for a new build of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn was approved by Cabinet members in their [September meeting](#), with members agreeing to support the project's progression through the planning process.

In August, the council congratulated pupils across Denbighshire on their [GCSE](#) and [A Level](#) results.

Support schools to transition to being Community-Focussed Schools, providing a range of services and activities to help meet the needs of pupils, their families, and the wider community

A survey was undertaken during the summer to ascertain the number of schools within the estate that can provide community focussed spaces for events. Of the 25 schools that responded, 15 stated they were able to host activities. Further work will be done with those schools that did not respond to ensure a fuller picture emerges in relation to community focussed activities.

In the meantime, the Prestatyn High Pilot for Community Focussed Schools is 'On Target' and meetings to continue this progress are taking place each term. A growing number of projects have taken place during the pilot, including environmental projects to develop

green and eco spaces, adult mental health support groups, and summer holiday provision to provide free activities for over 12s in Prestatyn.

Several schools in Denbighshire are also part of a Wales-based research project, which includes developing an international partnership with the Centre for Community Schools in Florida. Funding has been secured to deliver future projects to support community engagement on school sites and work will continue throughout the school year.

Work with partners (including colleges and universities) to ensure that people of all ages, including those who are vulnerable or in our care, are resilient and prepared for employment, further education, or training

We are starting to receive encouraging data now as our new Llwybrau project gathers pace. Volunteering / work experience opportunities offered in this last reporting period increased to 13, which is excellent for this point in the academic year. Positive feedback has been received from learners and work is ongoing to secure future funding for the provision. However, only three opportunities have been offered by the council through its corporate website; and no employment opportunities were secured or jobs protected through our Community Benefits Policy during this period on the basis of there being no valid contracts. The percentage of businesses that have committed to work with Careers Wales to the benefit of our local schools and colleges also remains at none on the basis of there being no applicable contracts i.e. none over £1m.

The number of people with learning disabilities that have achieved a positive outcome as a result of support provided through the council's Work Opportunities services has fallen slightly from 43 to 40 during July to September. One person has also been supported into paid sustainable employment in this period as a result of the council's Work Opportunities Job Finding Service.

90% of people that are being supported through Working Denbighshire have travelled a positive distance on their journey towards or into employment during July to September, up from 82% in the last period. The team has been hosting a series of [free weekly drop-in sessions](#) across the county, to offer employment support and guidance. Support included CV skills, interview preparation, basic IT skills and support to fill in applications. A [free job fair](#) showcasing a wide variety of job opportunities was also held in September at 1891 Bar and Restaurant, following the success of three prior events

earlier in the year. Over 40 employers exhibited at the venue, including North Wales Police, Clwyd Alyn, Wynne Construction and the Armed Forces.

The cumulative percentage of young people reached by youth service interventions has increased to 4.4% during this period, down slightly on 5.1% for the same period the previous year.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring theme](#); for equity in education, including free school meal support, see our theme for a [fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire](#). Finally, for further detail around our work to support volunteering and employment, see [better connected](#) and [prosperous](#) themes respectively.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of children taking part in the childcare offer – Benchmarked Locally	477 Acceptable Worse	521 Acceptable Better	570 Acceptable Better	570 Acceptable Same	624 Good Better
The percentage of parents supported through the work of the Family Link Service that report a positive difference – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	95% Excellent	96% Excellent Better	86% Excellent Worse
The number of schools in either Estyn Review, Significant Improvement or Special Measures – Benchmarked Locally	2 Good Same	3 Acceptable Worse	3 Acceptable Same	2 Good Better	2 Good Same

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of pupils (using Pupil Attitudes to Self and School - PASS) who respond positively against pupils' feelings about school – Benchmarked Locally	No data. No Survey	81.8% Good Worse	No data. No Survey	82% Good Better	No data. No Survey
The number of voluntary / work experience placements offered through Llwybrau – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	1 Priority to Improve	13 Excellent Better
The number of volunteering opportunities offered by the council through its corporate website – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	8	9	3
The percentage of young people in Denbighshire reached by Youth Services (Cumulative) – Benchmarked Locally	5.12% Priority to Improve Better	6.39% Priority to Improve Better	20.93% Acceptable Better	2.82% Priority to Improve Worse	4.36% Priority to Improve Better
The number of people with learning disabilities that have achieved a positive outcome as a result of support provided through the council's Work Opportunities services (Y Bont, Popty, Meifod, Garden Control, and Golden Group) – Count Only	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	34	43	40

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The number of people with learning disabilities in paid sustainable employment as a result of the council's Work Opportunities Job Finding Service – Count Only	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	3	2	1
The percentage of businesses contracted over £1m that have committed to work with Careers Wales to the benefit of our local schools and colleges (through our Community Benefits Policy) – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	100% Excellent	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m
The number of employment opportunities secured / jobs protected through our Community Benefits Policy on projects over £1m – Count Only	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	No data. New 2023 to 2024	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m	Does not apply: no contracts over £1m
The percentage of people that, through Working Denbighshire, have travelled a positive distance on their journey towards or into employment – Benchmarked Locally	81% Good Worse	82% Good Better	82% Good Same	82% Good Same	90% Excellent Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of children entering nursery that have been provided with a 'Me in a Nutshell' profile by Family Link Workers, supporting their effective transition – Benchmarked Locally	81% Excellent	82% Excellent Better
The percentage of parents that have reported a positive impact through attending Bookstart / Rhyme-time – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	99% Excellent
The percentage of parents that travel a positive distance by attending structured learning events through Families First and Flying Start – Benchmarked Locally	53% Acceptable	58% Good Better
<i>Attainment measure(s) to be determined</i>	<i>No data</i>	<i>No data</i>
The percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools – Benchmarked Locally	No data. Covid-19	90.8% Priority to Improve Worse (than 2019)
The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools – Benchmarked Locally	No data. Covid-19	86% Priority to Improve Worse (than 2019)
The percentage of pupils engaged through Llwybrau that achieve a positive outcome, including level 1 or 2 qualifications – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	88% Acceptable
The number of schools providing education through suitability and condition categories C and D – Benchmarked Locally	27 Excellent Same	27 Excellent Same
The percentage of schools able to host community focussed activities – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Data pending
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	1.7% Priority to Improve Same	2.3% Priority to Improve Worse

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of Year 11 pupils that do not have an identified Post-16 pathway in place – Benchmarked Locally	4.14% Priority to Improve	10.50% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of children or young people who are looked after that have a Personal Education Plan in place – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent	96% Good Worse
The percentage of initial Care Leaver Pathway Plans completed during the year that were within the statutory timescales, where the young person has care leaver status – Benchmarked Locally	20% Priority to Improve	71% Priority to Improve Better
The total number of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 13 -24 months since leaving care – Count Only	5	7

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that good quality learning and training is available in Denbighshire, allowing people of all ages to reach their personal and professional potential – Benchmarked Locally	48%	30%	22%	62% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as

they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government's next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Education (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	9% Priority to Improve Better	9% Acceptable Same
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Employment (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	12% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are sixteen projects and activities within this theme, eight of which are 'On Target', and five are 'Experiencing Obstacles'. As reported previously, the Modernising Education Programme remains 'At Risk'. The new Working Denbighshire Strategic Programme (a UK Shared Prosperity Fund project) is currently at the project brief stage.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implementation of the Childcare Offer for Wales Digital Platform	Complete	No exception
Flying Start Expansion	On Target Same	No exception
Recommissioning of Families First	On Target Same	No exception
Support the regional project on Emotional Health, Well-being and Resilience Framework, which will provide resources for parents	Experiencing Obstacles	Capacity issue – to be discussed with new principal education manager.
Review Early Years provision in the context of WG Early Years Transformation funding and the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) agenda	Experiencing Obstacles Same	There continues to be no progress due to current demand and a shortage of staff capacity.

Title	Status	Exception
Embed new posts in the Flying Start Childcare and Early Language Development Teams from January 2023 to support the Flying Start Childcare Expansion	On Target Same	No exception
In partnership with GwE, Support schools and non-maintained settings to deliver the new curriculum for Wales to ensure our learners become capable, ambitious, enterprising, ethical, healthy and confident adults.	On Target Same	No exception
Implement requirements of the of ALN Reform Act within Education and Children's Services to ensure compliance	On Target Same	No exception
Implement School Improvement Guidance: Framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability	On Target Same	No exception
Support schools in developing digital competency through educational leadership of the EdTech project	On Target Same	No exception

<p>Modernising Education Programme</p>	<p>At Risk Same</p>	<p>A number of delays have affected the progression of Band B projects. Extensive feasibility work has continued on sites for Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn (which has also delayed the Denbigh High School project) and for Ysgol Pendref. Discussions on preferred sites have now progressed to allow these projects to move forward. The Ysgol Bryn Collen and Ysgol Gwernant scheme was shortlisted but ultimately unsuccessful in its application to Welsh Government as part of the Sustainable Schools Challenge. A revised design brief based on a reduced capacity has been prepared and will be developed during the autumn.</p> <p>The internal section of the Oaktree Centre is now complete with the external work due for completion by the end of September.</p> <p>The approval for a virement to enable the Twm o'r Nant project to progress has been received, and a contractor has been appointed, with work starting in the autumn.</p> <p>The project at Ysgol Dewi Sant remains stalled over drainage issues. The timescale for completing the drainage work is around 30 months, meaning the project is unable to be progressed within the next funding round.</p> <p>Business cases are being prepared for three new</p>
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Title	Status	Exception
		childcare projects (Ysgol y Llys, Clawdd Offa, Ruthin) and five Welsh Medium Capital projects.
Community Focussed Schools: Prestatyn High Pilot	On Target Same	No exception
Engage with the North Wales Ambition Board and the Regional Skills Partnership to ensure that skills and training secured through our Community Benefits Policy is fit for the future and / or transferrable	Experiencing obstacles Same	This is subject to some delays as statutory guidance and social clauses are not yet in place. We are working with Welsh Government to develop the statutory guidance that will inform the Statutory Instrument that will support the new Act. The new Procurement Strategy has though been approved and plans are in place for procurement to feature in the 2024 March for Business campaign.
Through our Community Benefits Policy, secure business led strategy workshops for the benefit of residents seeking to upskill	Experiencing obstacles Same	This is also impacted by statutory guidance and social clauses not yet being place. Balfour Beatty though has committed to deliver workshops. A full update can be found in our governance section on procurement .

Title	Status	Exception
Develop performance and monitoring systems for the Temporary Emergency Accommodation support contract as it develops, which will include various life, recreational and employability skills and benefits	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Statistics are reviewed though some key performance indicators are not possible to measure. We are working closely with the project to ensure we can monitor the performance through steering groups and operational groups. The Homelessness Prevention Team performance dashboard continues to monitor statistics across the service to ensure we can understand where projects are having an impact and where more focus is needed in line with Rapid Rehousing.
New: Working Denbighshire Strategic Programme (UK Shared Prosperity Fund Delivery)	At project brief stage	This has been affected by the delay in SPF funds being cleared. This has meant that for the first 2 quarters of the year staff were not in place and budgets were not available, so delivery was compromised. In the next reporting period, we will be able to give an assessment as to whether it is still possible to deliver this project given that the full funding will only have been available for roughly half the time it was originally planned for.

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

In September, Denbighshire County Council reassured school staff, parents and governors that it had taken steps to ascertain the structural integrity of its buildings in the face of

nationwide concern about the use of [Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete \(RAAC\) in public buildings](#). Surveys had previously been completed in 2021 in response to the issue being raised by the Local Government Association. After reviewing these, the only school site identified as having RAAC planks was [Ysgol Trefnant](#). However, surveyors have reported that they do appear to be in a stable and acceptable condition. The school was closed for one day in September whilst further investigations were carried out. Denbighshire County Council will be undertaking a review of the information it currently holds to determine whether further surveys are required and to better inform any processes put in place by Welsh Government. Please also refer to our [governance section about assets](#).

A campaign was launched in July to encourage more people to apply for the role of [school governor](#). Schools across the county are looking for volunteers to become part of the governor team with successful applicants having the opportunity to use their skills and experience to make a positive difference to the lives of young people. Free online induction and training will be provided. Further information and guidance on how to apply to become a school governor can be found on the council's [website](#).

Over the Summer, Denbighshire County Council's [Working Denbighshire Team](#) created a new short film celebrating the people they support and the work of the organisation. Professional filming and editing equipment was provided during the shoot by arts and media charity, TAPE. The project gave aspiring filmmakers a chance to share their ideas and be involved in an exciting opportunity to experience working in the creative industries, that may lead to other opportunities in the future. The film will later be used in Working Denbighshire's promotional materials going forward.

A better connected Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Maintain a quality road network

Our annual road condition data for 2022 to 2023 for classified A, B and C roads was reported in our April to July report. We have now completed our annual Surface Dressing programme on a number of high priority roads where this represents the most cost-effective method of prolonging the life-span of the road. Our further annual Resurfacing Programme on a number of roads across the county where the life has expired is ongoing and we are on target to deliver the remaining 2023 to 2024 programme.

Throughout September we carried out [cyclic maintenance work](#) on a number of our roads which included grass cutting, litter picking, drainage cleansing and streetlight works. Advanced notice signage was installed and a letter drop to surrounding properties took place to inform residents of the works.

The average for the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale) between July and September was 23.33% and remains a 'Priority for Improvement' and an area of concern. The service is working hard to improve performance in this respect.

Discussions with Welsh Government to secure funding to deliver the most viable option to replace Llannerch Bridge are ongoing. They are already supporting us in funding the detailed design part of the process, which has now started, however, funding for the construction phase still needs to be sought.

With the Welsh Government's default 20mph speed limit coming into force from September 17, we consulted with the wider public with the proposal to [retain five roads in the county as 30mph](#).

Working through the regional body, and within the context of the Wales Transport Strategy, we will enable people to access education, employment, services and activities

The project to Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (STP) has now developed annual and quarterly measures for inclusion in this theme, the Team is currently gathering baseline data for these measures which will be included once available.

In July 2023, in partnership with Transport for Wales we [extended the current Fflecsi scheme](#) (demand responsive public transport) across Denbigh by introducing a second electric vehicle, a wheelchair accessible Nissan Dynamo E-NV200 EV micro bus. This will provide people with a greater range of pick-ups and destinations along the new Denbigh 77 route and [extends the scope of public transport for the Denbighshire communities](#) of Nantglyn, Prion, Peniel, Saron, Tremeirchion and Rhualt.

We wanted people to enjoy the great attractions Llangollen and the surrounding area has to offer and during the summer we worked collaboratively with police officers to [manage and promote safe and responsible parking](#). We also encouraged visitors to save parking spaces every Saturday by using the Dee Valley Picturesque Bus (which will run up until November 4, 2023) that provides a circular route, linking Llangollen and the surrounding villages to Horseshoe Falls and popular local attractions including Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Wenffrwd Nature Reserve, Valle Crucis Abbey, Plas Newydd Historic House and the Horseshoe Pass.

We are currently working with Sustrans Cymru to understand how to make travelling actively in the local area more accessible, safer, and more enjoyable for the whole community, encouraging more journeys to be taken on foot or cycle instead of by car. On September 26, a survey was launched on future improvements for local walking, wheeling, and cycling around [Ysgol y Castell in Rhuddlan](#).

A further three Clwyd West Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Projects will support this pledge, for which Project Teams are currently being established - all with an expected delivery date of March 2025. The St Peter's Square project will deliver a scheme of public realm improvements to enhance pedestrian and traffic flows around the square and to facilitate a more flexible central events space. The Ruthin Cae Ddol project will improve connectivity through the park and between the park and the town centre. The project to improve Moel

Famau Facilities and Cycle Paths will see new and improved toilet and refreshment facilities, with extended and sustainably managed cycle routes.

Support our county's green infrastructure

As a result of funding from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF), enhancements to [Green Lane car park in Corwen](#) will be of benefit to residents and visitors with the installation of five electric vehicle (EV) charging points at the site due to come online. Further enhancements at the site are scheduled to commence in September with the refurbishment of the toilet block, signage works and a new bus layby and associated markings. This increased our total number of [charging points across the county](#) to 80.

We also took the opportunity to highlight this increased [network of chargers ahead of the August Bank Holiday](#) to local and out of county EV owners as to their availability across the county to help support visits to tourist attractions, events and businesses.

In August, following a comprehensive public consultation process to ensure that the final plans for [Llangollen's 4 Great Highways project](#), (also funded by LUF) reflected local thinking, we were pleased to have initiated the tendering process to find a contractor to complete the works with a view to appointing one in early to mid-September. The aim of the project is to enhance the landscape and improve accessibility, interpretation and signage in Llangollen. It is important to us to ensure that the signage in the area reflects how local people want the town to be portrayed and feedback on people's preferred [design options for the new interpretation and wayfinding](#) that is due to be installed is currently being sought with a closing date of October 8.

Support communities with improved digital networks and skills

With internet access becoming a vital part of everyday life, with many essential services and schemes now moving online, we urged anyone who may need some help in this area to contact or visit their local library for more information. We have been working with the Good Things Foundation, to help distribute free SIM cards and mobile data to local people [living in data poverty](#) through the National Databank Scheme in our Denbighshire's Libraries.

Telecare services are being digitised in readiness of analogue services ceasing in 2025. This theme includes an activity that reports progress towards achieving digitisation, and

we had previously intended on including a measure of the new digital service. However, a measure is no longer deemed necessary and has been removed.

For further measures and activity in support of skills, training and employment, please see our [learning and growing theme](#).

Promote personal and community well-being

This theme also includes measures in relation to personal and community well-being. Our Community Resilience Team has seen the number of projects or groups supported steadily grow. In this period 73 groups and projects were supported which included 36 new enquiries and 37 receiving ongoing support from the previous reporting period.

The Gwyddelwern Community Hub LUF project has been included in this report this period. The project, with an expected completion date of March 2025, will provide a new energy-efficient community hub to increase the range of facilities available in the village.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

Within this theme there are several nationally benchmarked measures that give an indication of performance compared to other local authorities in Wales. For further measures and activity in support of well-being please see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring theme](#); for community focussed school activity and developing digital competency please see our [Learning and Growing theme](#).

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
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	18% Priority to Improve Same	16% Priority to Improve Worse	16% Priority to Improve Same	29% Priority to Improve Better	23.33% Priority to Improve Worse
The number of projects or groups supported by	55	53	61	78	73

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
the Community Resilience Team - Benchmarked Locally	Good Better	Good Worse	Excellent Better	Excellent Better	Excellent Worse
The number of tenants involved in community projects – Count Only	6	6	6	6	6
Number of journeys using Fflecsi bus services	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending
Number of journeys on service buses	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending
Number of concessionary journeys on service buses	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data pending

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Number of cycle journeys per annum on designated Active Travel routes (Sample)	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Baseline data being established
Number of pedestrian journeys per annum on designated Active Travel routes (Sample)	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	Baseline data being established
The percentage of principle A roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	2.6% Excellent Better	2.2% Excellent Better
The percentage of non-principal/classified B roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	3.8% Excellent Better	3.5% Excellent Better
The percentage of non-principal/classified C roads that are in overall poor condition – Benchmarked Nationally	7.5% Excellent Better	16.4% Priority to Improve Worse

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of premises that receive less than 30Mbps - Count Only	No data	4.57%
The percentage of premises that receive less than 10Mbps - Count Only	No data	2.88%
The percentage of library users who say that using the library has had a positive impact on their digital skills and confidence - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	65% Good
The percentage of people who borrowed a digital device from a library who said it had made a positive impact on their digital skills and confidence - Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of community projects co-produced with the community and third sector - Count Only	7	7
The number of volunteer hours supporting community resilience and development activity - Count Only	No data	700 (estimate)
The number of contacts provided through the council's Edge of Care volunteer service - Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	795

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the transport and road infrastructure to support thriving, cohesive, and well connected communities - Benchmarked Locally	30%	65%	5%	31% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the digital infrastructure (such as good broadband connectivity,	49%	45%	6%	52.2% Acceptable

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
good mobile internet or mobile phone signal) to support thriving, cohesive, and well connected communities – Benchmarked Locally				
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire has the social infrastructure needed to support personal and community well-being – Benchmarked Locally	56%	34%	10%	62% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government's next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Access to Services (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Same	14% Priority to Improve Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

Projects or Activities

This theme contains 18 projects and activities. Eight of which are 'On Target', three are 'Experiencing Obstacles', five are in development and two have now been completed.

Title	Status	Exception
Implement an annual Resurfacing programme on a number of roads across the county where the life has expired.	On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Implement an annual Surface Dressing programme on a number of high priority roads where this represents the most cost-effective method of prolonging the life-span of the road	Completed	No exception
Aim to deliver the most viable option to replace the Llannerch Bridge	On Target Same	No exception
Contribute to the development of the new Regional Transport Plan	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The Corporate Joint Committee is focussing on establishing appropriate governance arrangements before moving to delivery.
Review, develop and modernise rural, urban and inter-urban transport services, where appropriate, working with partners within the Metro project and alongside the emerging bus reform	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a Sustainable Transport Plan (to include Active Travel)	At business case stage	No exception
Four Great Highways (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target	No exception
Wenffrwd (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target	No exception
Corwen to Cynwyd Active Travel Route. Phase 1 (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception
2a Moel Famau country park new cycle paths & visitor facilities (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception
1a St Peter's Square (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception
Green Lane Car Park Corwen (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target Same	No exception
2d Gwyddelwern Community Hub (CW LUF)	At business case stage	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Traffic modelling and design traffic improvement works	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Project is on hold whilst funding is being sought to progress or develop it further.
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Public Charging Points	Completed	Awaiting two sites to become live.
Progress towards digitalisation of telecare services before the 2025 deadline for ceasing of analogue telephone services.	Experiencing Obstacles	Clear options appraisal will allow decisions to be made in order to progress.
Develop a community resilience action plan	On Target Same	No exception
Replace our current backup infrastructure to remove the reliance on legacy technologies and improve resilience.	On Target	No exception

A Greener Denbighshire

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Deliver our Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive council by 2030.

Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021 to 2022 and 2029 to 2030) is scheduled to be reviewed and refreshed every three years. The first official review and refresh of the Climate and Ecological Change Strategy will be carried out this year, 2023 to 2024. Delivery of the strategy does not stop whilst this review is taking place; work continues concurrently with the review to deliver a Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council and reduction in supply chain emissions.

Ensuring the strategy remains relevant, up to date and bought into is integral to delivering upon the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declaration (2019) which committed the Council to become Net Carbon Zero by 2030 and improve biodiversity in Denbighshire.

There are a number of key annual performance measures that are being used to judge the performance of the council in achieving its 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, all of which were reported in our [January to March 2023 report](#).

Data for reducing carbon tonnage from our supply chains measure for 2022 to 2023 is currently pending (as are previous years). The data collation methodology is currently being revisited in order to provide accurate annual figures. These figures will be reported as soon as they are available.

A round up of all the great project work and activities progressed during July to September can be found in our ["A round up of news" section](#).

Improve recycling rates and reduce waste

Throughout September, we invited school children to submit their [creative names for our 21 new recycling vehicles](#), including three electric vehicles in either Welsh or English. The new fleet has been bought to replace the old fleet and is part of a range of measures we are taking to reach the county's recycling target of 70%. We also sought more images to go on the livery for future vehicles in our waste and recycling fleet from [local photographers](#). We want our new vehicles to show our collective pride in the county.

Support communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change

The two Coastal Defence Improvement Schemes for Rhyl Central and Prestatyn Central remain 'On Target'. The new Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy for the county of Denbighshire is still in its early stages with a meeting of the Task and Finish Group of nominated Members to take place towards the end of October to discuss the initial draft of the strategy.

At the beginning of July, following the successful installation of new security gates, the part of the promenade that had been closed between the Pavilion Car Park and Old Golf Road to allow for coastal defence works was [re-opened at weekends](#). This allows uninterrupted access for both cyclists and pedestrians between Splash Point and SeaQuarium. However, access to the prom for heavy plant will still be required during the working week, including tidal working hours, therefore the gates will be closed Monday to Friday.

The Clwyd West Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Loggerheads project will deliver internal improvements to the existing building, with an extended external undercover area and crucially, additional natural flood management measures. The project has an expected delivery date of March 2025.

This pledge also includes supporting communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change by increasing allotments and community food growing opportunities. During the period, Countryside Services staff and volunteers linked up with [Incredible Edible Denbigh](#) to help prepare allotment spaces donated to the group for planting and growing. The group is aiming to grow food with help from the local community, allowing people to access locally produced fruit and vegetable.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of greener initiatives please see our [Housing](#) theme for energy efficiency and our [Better Connected](#) theme for sustainable travel and electric vehicle charging points.

Annual or Biennial Measures

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Net Carbon Zero - Total carbon tonnage emitted and absorbed by the council (excluding supply chains) – Benchmarked Locally	12,205 Acceptable Worse	11,832 Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of DCC owned and operated land in highest categories of species richness – Benchmarked Locally	40.62% Acceptable Better	42.00% Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through fleet – Benchmarked Locally	2,699 Priority to Improve Worse	2,302 Acceptable Better
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through business travel– Benchmarked Locally	163 Excellent Better	251 Excellent Worse
Total carbon tonnage emitted (Corporately) through supply chains– Benchmarked Locally	Data pending	Data pending
Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed in our buildings (owned and operated) - Count Only	No data. New to 2022 to 2023	1MW
The percentage of municipal waste reused, recycled or composted - Benchmarked Nationally	67.67% Excellent	65.91% Good Worse
The number of properties with a high or medium risk of flooding (DCC wide) - Count Only	1,171	1,171
Area of moorland (heather, gorse and bracken) managed per annum – Benchmarked Locally	20 hectares	80 hectares Excellent Better

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is resilient against the impacts of climate change and nature’s decline - Benchmarked Locally	44%	40%	16%	52% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Physical Environment (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation) – Benchmarked Nationally	2% Good Better	2% Good Same

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

This theme is supported by the overarching Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 to 2030 and a further 18 projects and activities. Eight are ‘On Target’, eight are ‘Experiencing Obstacles’ and one is in development. One project is as ‘At Risk’: the Behaviour Change Workstream- Climate Action and Nature Recovery. This is due to staff resource and capacity, which is currently impacting on the progress and delivery of the project.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Programme: Climate and Ecological Change Programme 2021 – 2030	Experiencing Obstacles Same	In year 2023 to 2024 status update: Delays in project delivery, which means benefit realisation will also be delayed.
Reducing carbon from buildings	Experiencing Obstacles Same	2023 to 2024 projects look likely to save approximately 300 tonnes of carbon which is less than the target figure of around 660 tonnes per annum (to meet the 60% reduction from buildings by 2030). Of the projects planned, preparations continue at pace to move these into delivery. There have been delays in mobilising projects even though work has taken place during school holidays.
Corporate Fleet EV Phase 2	On Target Same	No exception
Carbon sequestration on existing land holdings	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Delays in the purchases of Moel y Plas and Llys Brenig will impact on woodland creation.
Wildflower Meadow project	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Future of the project and plans for next year are to be finalised.
Nature Reserve at Green Gates Farm, St Asaph	Experiencing Obstacles Same	New cost estimates, resource capacity and availability constraints, could impact on project milestones, budget, scope of work and potentially funding.
Behaviour change for climate action and nature recovery	At Risk Worse	Staff resource and capacity is currently

Title	Status	Exception
		impacting on the progress and delivery of this project
Carbon reduction through procurement	On Target Better	No exception
Land acquisition for carbon and ecological purposes 2023 to 2024	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Three sites are in the process of being purchased and one new site is being pursued as a potential opportunity.
Implement Ash Dieback work as per the Action Plan across the county	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems in all of our Council service areas	Experiencing Obstacles	Our Ecological and Biodiversity Team are working hard across council services to improve biodiversity, however, instigating any change takes time.
Rhyl Green Infrastructure	On Target Same	No exception
Remodelling Waste Service Operations	Experiencing Obstacles Better	Operations at the new Waste Transfer Station are subject to the approval of a bespoke permit, which was submitted in January 2023 to Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The permit needs to be approved before the service change can take place.
We will work towards reducing the use of plastics within Denbighshire County Council, including School Catering and Procurement, along with any future work (including its Alternative Delivery Models (ADMs) such as Denbighshire Leisure Limited (DLL)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	We are continually looking for alternative drinks provision that would eradicate single use plastics. The trial period of selling drinks in reusable cups was unsuccessful.
Deliver improvement and expansion projects for Denbighshire County Council allotments	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
Develop a new Flood Strategy for the county	On Target Same	No exception
Prestatyn Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	No exception
Rhyl Central Coastal Defence Improvement Scheme	On Target Same	No exception
2b Loggerheads country park new visitor facilities and flood management (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	No exception

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this theme:

Denbighshire County Council's Property Section Energy Team has completed over 90 working measures into 47 council-owned buildings in a drive to [reduce building emissions](#). To date we have improved the efficiency of a range of buildings, from schools to leisure centres across the county, which has included complete mechanical, heating and ventilation overhauls, modifications to heating controls, heat recovery systems, heatpumps, solar PV (panels), LED lighting, battery storage, loft and wall insulation as well as emission reductions through behaviour change and ICT infrastructure. Work at Ysgol Dinas Bran was mentioned in the House of Commons and nominated for a national award.

Earlier this year the Energy Team oversaw the installation of two air source heat pumps at [Ysgol Tir Morfa](#) and during the summer holidays they completed phase 2 with the installation of two solar PV arrays and battery storage to help generate electricity to power the pumps and store any excess. This work not only further reducing the fuel bills but also saving a further six tonnes of carbon emissions per year. More schools are set to receive work over 2023 along with plans for drive through changes in other council buildings.

September also saw the completion of phase two of work to improve [energy efficiency at Csgod y Gaer care home](#) in Corwen. This has resulted in around three quarters less water heating energy use a day. The gas consumption has reduced from an average of 750kwh to 200kwh daily on top of the impact of the previous work. This is a further reduction of around another five to six tonnes of carbon emissions per year. The total emissions at the

care home are now around 10 tonnes per year lower than they were before the carbon reduction project work.

In August, Marine Lake in Rhyl [achieved the Green Flag Community Award for the 12th consecutive year](#). The Green Flag Community Award delivered by environmental charity Keep Wales Tidy is the benchmark for parks and green spaces, which are managed with the help of volunteers.

Volunteers supported by Nature for Health alongside Countryside Service staff completed a [new bridge at Brickfield Pond Nature Reserve](#) to allow a much needed wildlife habitat to develop. The bridge helps take the pathway and visitors over the new water vole habitat, an animal on the UK's endangered list. Countryside staff and volunteers carried out [identification work of moths](#) at the allotments near Coed Morfa, Prestatyn. Developments of the land at [Parc Bodnant in Prestatyn](#) culminated in the creation of a new pond and a new outdoor classroom, which has a bat roof to give the nocturnal mammal a place to roost. Countryside staff have continued to work closely with Rhuddlan Reserve Management Advisory Group and during the period, the Rhuddlan Nature Reserve celebrated achieving an Outstanding 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Award again for 2023, alongside another [RHS National Certificate of Distinction](#). Vital new work is also underway to help [protect and support Denbighshire's curlew population](#).

At the beginning of July, we reminded residents to be aware of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) rules. The TPOs protect trees from [unauthorised pruning or felling](#), and anyone carrying out such work on a TPO tree is committing an offence. In August, we launched an appeal to help [preserve the lineage of ancient Denbighshire trees](#). In July, we thanked the [vibrant volunteer community](#) that supports the Tree Nursery at Green Gates Farm, St. Asaph. The Tree Nursery has [exceeded last season's results](#): producing nearly 8,000 plants during its first growing season last year; growing 13,000 wildflowers this year; and increasing the number of trees grown from 1,000 last season to 11,500 for 2023. In September, the Tree Nursery took onboard [an electric Avant loader and an electric van](#) to help out with manual work at the nursery and support the low emissions delivery of trees and plants.

In August, our Countryside Services had support from a 15 year old Gypsy Cob, Bill, as a traditional [horse powered method to help resource wood](#) to use following ash dieback prevention work at Loggerheads Country Park. This type of forestry management, which has horses move trees from a felled location to a collection area, is more carbon friendly

and is kinder to the forest ecology. Trees deemed a risk due to the disease were cut down at the park and left-over wood will be reused to create benches.

We started preparations to introduce a [natural process across eight county wildflower meadows to control grass](#) length by preparing the meadows for seeding of yellow rattle seeds. With the flowering season finishing, our [seasonal maintenance of our wildflower meadow sites](#) began in August across the county with specialist mowing equipment to carry out the second cut, the first is carried out on the meadows during February and March each year. The Council's Biodiversity team, working with volunteers and groups across the county, started a [programme of plug planting and enhancement work across ten meadows](#). Most recently, in September they were joined by volunteers from an [award winning group, Denbigh in Bloom](#) to add more colour and variety to a Denbigh roundabout. Plants donated by the Council's Biodiversity team, which maintains the tree nursery, supported volunteers of the [Friends of the Ffrith with the development of their own wildflower planters](#).

Schools continued to play an important role in looking after biodiversity and helping tackle the climate and nature emergency, during the period July to September. We highlighted the work of pupils of [Ysgol Penmorfa](#) in creating a multitude of outdoor areas for wildlife to thrive. Pupils of [Ysgol Caer Drewyn, Corwen](#) and our Biodiversity team created a new wildflower meadow in the corner of the school grounds to help local nature. Our Countryside team supported Rhos Street school by carrying out [traditional hedgelaying](#) on their site. In September, [Streetscene members joined the Mayor of Ruthin for a visit to Ysgol Borthyn](#).

In September, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group Cymru together with the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) held a farm walk at Cefn-y-fedw, Pen-y-bryn, Pen-y-cae, Wrexham to highlight the theme of [integration of conservation within a commercial farming enterprise](#).

In September, we issued a [Fixed Penalty Notice \(FPN\) of £250 to an individual for fly-tipping waste on the street](#), violating Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This demonstrates that such behaviour will not be tolerated and that action will be taken when it occurs.

A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

Measures: Priority for Improvement

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Foster community cohesion by ensuring people are protected from harm, abuse and exploitation

North Wales Police reported 368 repeat victims of domestic abuse for the period July to September 2023 (up from 99 between April to June), which compared to 266 for the same period last year. In terms of repeat offenders of domestic abuse reported for July to September, there were 73 offenders – up from 6 during April to June. The significant spike in volumes is also evident for the rest of North Wales. Further work is required to understand what has caused this anomaly. It is important to note that due to the way the repeat victims and offenders data are calculated means that volumes are liable to change as new offences are added to nominals, or as offences move out of the ‘last 12 months’ time period. North Wales Police has also revised the recording standards for these data, and the trend we are seeing (i.e. increased repeat offenders and victims), reflects these improvements.

[Denbigh town centre will have 5 new CCTV cameras](#) and upgraded existing ones as part of plans to enhance security, with funding from the UK Government’s Shared Prosperity Fund. Cameras across the Denbighshire CCTV Partnership, a collaboration with North Wales Police and the town councils of Prestatyn, Rhuddlan and Rhyl, and soon Denbigh, will benefit from 24-hour reactive monitoring.

Denbighshire’s Trading Standards team has been taking action to address [non-compliant vaping products](#) within the county. The council has urged business owners to be aware of the legal requirements that are in place to protect the health and safety of users as it is the responsibility of business owners to comply with the law. [Advice](#) is available from the Trading Standards team. In September, the team warned residents about [rogue traders and doorstep crime](#). Information about legitimate doorstep trading practices is available [here](#) on the council’s website.

Reduce inequalities

87% of staff have completed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e-learning module (not mandatory), which is considered 'Good'. Our measure of the percentage of staff that have completed our modern-day slavery (not mandatory) e-learning module is annual, and we previously reported it as a 'Priority for Improvement'. Despite a slight improvement since June, it remains a 'a 'Priority for Improvement'. This e-learning module is more pertinent to some job roles than others, and we need to ensure that the staff who need this training, access it. This is also the case for hate crime e-learning.

One activity to 'Support diversity and engagement by embedding the framework on a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being' continues to be 'At Risk'. Following notification of a reduction of Welsh Government grant fund to support this work, the team is taking a more targeted approach. A number of training courses were commissioned between July and September for schools to access in the autumn term, and two clusters of schools have been approached to pilot two particular interventions and we will provide an update on those through future reports.

A contacts list for advocates of groups of people with protected characteristics has been developed with the Regional Community Cohesion Officer and will be tabled at the next meeting of the council's Strategic Equality and Diversity Group, both for information and to collectively consider how best to promote this list across the organisation.

The council has supplied 15 public locations across Denbighshire with [in case of emergency period products](#) display units which the public can access for free, funded through the Welsh Government Period Dignity Grant.

In September, the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership visited the [Ty Pride project in Rhyl](#), which supports LGBTQ+ young people who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The only one of its kind in Wales, the project is a partnership between Denbighshire County Council, homeless charity Llamau, and the charity West Rhyl Young People's Project and Viva LGBTQ+.

Alleviate poverty

As reported previously, according to the latest data from the National Survey for Wales, the percentage of people living in households in material deprivation has increased from

9.1% in 2019 to 2020 to 14.8% in 2022 to 2023. On the basis of this deterioration - using our standardised methodology for calculating what poor and excellent performance looks like - performance is 'Acceptable'. During 2022 to 2023, Neath Porth Talbot had the highest percentage of people living in households in material deprivation at 21.5% and Monmouthshire the lowest at 8.4%.

19.3% of children in Denbighshire were living in workless households in 2022 and is a 'Priority for Improvement'. This has improved slightly since 2021, at which point 21.1% of children were living in workless households.

The national basic income pilot has commenced and 100% of Denbighshire's eligible care experienced young people are taking part in the scheme, which is considered 'Excellent'.

We reported in our last report that we have made enquiries with colleagues in Data Cymru for suitable national measures of fuel poverty reported at a local authority level; however, it currently appears that none exist that are routinely reported upon. We are exploring whether any local measures exist or can be easily captured.

Since September 2022, the [Universal Primary Free School Meals \(UPFSM\)](#) offer in Denbighshire has been successfully rolled out to Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The [UPFSM offer has been extended to Years 3 and 4](#) from September 2023, and the phased delivery approach will see all primary pupils offered free school meals by 2024. In response to the UPFSM roll out, schools such as [Christ the Word in Rhyl have upgraded their dining capacity](#). The percentage of eligible primary and secondary school pupils taking Free School meals during the summer term of 2023 was 63% and 78% respectively.

Denbighshire County Council has been collaborating with the Design Council to 'design differently' and take preventative action to tackle issues such as waste. As part of the project, the council has been working with ReSource, the operators of [Ruthin community café Seconds](#). The café is sourcing local surplus food to prevent food waste and keep costs low for its customers, demonstrating an integrated approach to supporting people through the cost of living crisis whilst addressing long-term issues affecting the planet.

In July, the council reminded parents and guardians that the [School Essentials Grant](#) was open for applications. To qualify, parents needed to receive at least one benefit, such as income support, but they must not already receive Working Tax Credit. Up to £200 was available depending on the age of the child.

Continue to support and resettle refugees through the UK Global Resettlement Scheme, in support of Wales' declaration to be a Nation of Sanctuary

Working Denbighshire has continued to offer one-to-one support for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, including delivering the social group for English language skills practice for Ukrainian participants. We have also assigned employment co-ordinators to work with local employers on specific opportunities for those with the poorest English language skills. In addition, we continue to run workshops designed to provide refugees from all areas with information on UK 'employer expectations'.

In August, an [event held for resettled families in Denbighshire](#) was organised by Denbighshire County Council, the British Red Cross and the North East Wales Community Cohesion Service. The free multi-cultural event provided activities and performances for families from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

We have recalculated the number of families resettled within Denbighshire during 2022 and 2023 and have made an amendment to the total (cumulative) number from 75 to 41. This discrepancy relates to the different schemes of support available. For clarity, the revised figure does not include families hosted through the Super Sponsorship Scheme.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

The majority of the measures below are new to this Corporate Plan and to the 2023 to 2024 financial year. Some data is pending for this report and will be obtained for our next report. Other information, such as 'the number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools', is expected by November 2023.

For further measures and activity to support well-being, see our [Healthier, Happier and Caring](#) theme. There is additional information to support housing and homelessness in our [Housing](#) theme; measures and activities to support employment and deprivation our [Prosperous](#) theme and education and volunteering in our [Learning and Growing](#) and [Connected](#) themes.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse reported including non-crime occurrences (3 or more in 12 months, measured as year to date) - Count Only	266	386	537	99	368
The cumulative (year to date) number of repeat offenders of Domestic Abuse reported (3 or more in 12 months) - Count Only	28	42	56	6	73
The number of young people referred to the Youth Justice Service during the year from Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	70	Data pending
The percentage of eligible primary school pupils taking Free School meals (Denbighshire) – Count Only	No data: does not apply	68.3%	Data pending	Data pending	63%
The percentage of eligible secondary school pupils taking Free School meals (Denbighshire) - Count Only	No data: does not apply	80.52%	Data pending	Data pending	78%

Annual or Biennial Measures

2019 to 2023 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2022 to 2023
The percentage of people living in households in material deprivation – Benchmarked Nationally	9.1%	14.8% Acceptable Worse

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have undertaken the hate crime e-learning module (not mandatory) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	7% Priority to Improve
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have undertaken modern day slavery e-learning module (not mandatory) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	25% Priority to Improve
The percentage of personnel within DCC who have completed violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence e-learning - Benchmarked Locally	New to 2022 to 2023	87% Good Better
The number of reported occurrences of prejudice related bullying in schools - Benchmarked Locally	No data	Data pending. Expected November 2023
The percentage of adults who say their library is an enjoyable, safe and inclusive place - Benchmarked Locally	93% Excellent Same	93% Excellent Same
The percentage of children in poverty in Denbighshire – Benchmarked Nationally	34.9% Priority to Improve	28.1% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of children living in workless households – Benchmarked Nationally	21.1% Priority to Improve	19.3% Priority to Improve Better

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
Measures of all households and vulnerable households living in fuel poverty in Wales (placeholder) - Benchmarked Nationally	Data pending	Data pending
The percentage of eligible young people leaving care in receipt of the basic income pilot from the Welsh Government - Benchmarked Nationally	No data. Pilot Scheme across Wales to be undertaken	100% Excellent
The cumulative number of families resettled within Denbighshire – Count Only	6	41
The number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024
The number of customer complaints received by the council related to race – Count Only	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	Data expected April 2024

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agreed that people in Denbighshire are treated fairly and equally, and have access to opportunities to promote their well-being and community cohesion - Benchmarked Locally	36%	44%	20%	46% Acceptable

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation Measures

Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data is published infrequently - every four to five years - with the most recent data being available for 2019. Unless new data is published, we will not comment on WIMD but we will retain the measures in this report as they provide important context and help to inform our overall measures status for each theme. Welsh Government’s next WIMD update is expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

Title	2014	2019
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales in terms of Community Safety (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD) - Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Worse	10% Priority to Improve Better
The percentage of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Denbighshire in the 10% most deprived in Wales (Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation - WIMD) - Benchmarked Nationally	14% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Priority to Improve Better

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

There are 20 projects supporting this theme of the Corporate Plan. 15 are 'On Target', 3 are 'Experiencing Obstacles' and one is 'At Risk', with exceptions for those reported below. One activity is being scoped.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Undertake preventative work, in partnership with the Police Licensing and Local Authority Licencing, in relation to business premises (including sales to minors, alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes)	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver Gypsy, Roma and Traveller awareness raising community events	On Target Same	No exception
Purchase of ANPR cameras - The purchase of six specialist ANPR specification redeployable surveillance cameras which will enable us to monitor and gather information in respect of environmental crime hotspots.	On Target	No exception
Commit to the Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan through Service Business Plans	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The detail of some actions and lines of responsibility is still being agreed with services.
Deliver upon the pledge to promote zero racism in Denbighshire	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Capacity pressure is slowing progress. This will

Title	Status	Exception
		be progressed during January and March.
<i>Promote to schools English as an Additional Language Programme in terms of tackling racism and ensure anti-racism policies at schools are up to date (this includes raising awareness of ARWAP)</i>	This activity is being scoped.	No exception
Engage and support tenants most likely to be experiencing social inequality to access services and take an active role in their community	On Target Same	No exception
Bruton Park, Rhyl (working with Bruton Park residents to maximise community well-being).	On Target Same	No exception
Develop Croeso Cynnes hubs throughout the County.	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	No indication as yet from Welsh Government of any funding being allocated this year to support local groups to set up hubs. Libraries have continued throughout the year to offer warm spaces along with free tea and coffee facilities. We continue to work with local community groups to assist in setting up new hubs, supporting existing ones and with promotion and branding to promote these spaces. We are looking for further funding to support this work.
Support diversity and engagement by embedding the framework on a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being	At Risk Same	A number of training courses were commissioned between July and September for schools to access in the Autumn term, using the authority Wellbeing Grant. Interventions are chosen for their evidence base and impact. Given that the WG Wellbeing grant has been reduced this has impacted on the breadth of training and school activity that

Title	Status	Exception
		could be offered. Two clusters of schools have been approached to pilot two particular interventions.
Review and revise the Youth Council for Denbighshire.	On Target Same	No exception
Embed the DCC Anti-Bullying Strategy throughout all schools	On Target Same	No exception
Period Dignity	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a network to engage people and groups with protected characteristics (through the Strategic Equality and Diversity Group)	On Target Same	No exception
Universal Free School Meals for all Primary School Pupils	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver the county wide Food Strategy and Food Partnership Network (including social supermarket project – Cogog) around Denbighshire	On Target Better	No exception
Enhance the School Holiday Enrichment Programme to support children to eat well	On Target Same	No exception
Enhance the offer, through Working Denbighshire, for all refugees who have settled in Denbighshire to gain support of an employment mentor (all adults are actively involved in English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes	On Target Same	No exception
In partnership with Denbighshire Leisure Ltd and the Third Sector, secure funding for creative and cultural activities to work with resettled families in the county	On Target Same	No exception
Greener community infrastructure: Accessible Play Area Provision to deliver play areas in strategic locations across the county that are accessible to all by installing specialist	Started On Target	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
equipment and making improvements to footways and street furniture in the public realm and immediate vicinity		

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place between July and September in support of this theme:

[Emergency Services Day](#) took place on September 9, and the council marked the occasion by raising a flag in their honour at County Hall in Ruthin. Earlier in the month, Denbighshire County Council showed its support for [Merchant Navy Day](#) (September 1) by raising the Red Ensign flag.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

Play our part in achieving one million Welsh Speakers in Wales by 2050, by delivering the Welsh Language Strategy with partners and communities

We previously reported that the number of people who could speak Welsh (aged 3 or older) as at the end of March 2023 stood at 35,000, which was 38%, and that whilst the percentage had increased overall for the whole of Wales, this was not replicated in Denbighshire with 900 fewer people reporting they could speak Welsh (a 0.9% decrease) compared to the end of March 2022. It has been decided that it will be most helpful, going forward, to focus on the percentage of year one pupils receiving their education through the medium of Welsh, and so this indicator of self-reporting of Welsh will be removed henceforth from our Performance Management Framework. Furthermore, Menter Iaith Sir Ddinbych is currently analysing the most recent Census data to determine the vibrancy of the Welsh language in smaller areas. We are also keen to gather examples where the language is thriving and is connected to our culture and our economy (for example, farming and agriculture), which better demonstrate people's experiences of a thriving language in their community. We will identify ways to capture these experiences.

28.4% of year one pupils received their education through the medium of Welsh during the academic year 2022 to 2023, a 1% increase on the previous year. Our ambition, according to our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), is to increase this to 32% by 2027 (the end of this new Corporate Plan), working towards 40% by 2032. Our ambition was based on projections, which included assumptions regarding growth in demand in existing Welsh medium schools and the transition of existing English medium schools to offer a Welsh medium foundation phase. The main area of concern is a reduction in the percentage of learners who received education in year 2 in 2022 to 2023, in part as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has reduced the baseline in the plan from 28% of learners receiving Welsh medium education in September 2020, to 26.4%. This reduction will make the ambitious targets of WESP very far-reaching. We had hoped to confirm our threshold for intervention, i.e. what will constitute a 'Priority for Improvement', in our previous report but the changing baseline has made determination of our thresholds

difficult. An additional issue is the expectation around schools' changing language category. At the time of developing the plan there was a greater expectation of the language outcome for schools transitioning from English to Welsh medium provision and it is unlikely that these pupils will contribute to this target now. Welsh Government is aware of the current position, and this will be kept under regular review. The council has also shared its annual progress report with the Welsh Government and we are awaiting their response. There is a clear, county-wide vision to develop Welsh in Education and effective collaboration is happening with committees working on specific projects and initiatives. The Welsh in Education Support Team now includes six members of staff who offer support and guidance to staff and schools in all sectors. The council's officers have met with school leaders and shared development plans with all primary schools to assist them in their endeavours to increase Welsh provision and develop Welsh oracy skills. Progress in relation to Welsh medium provision in schools was also discussed at [Performance Scrutiny](#) in September. The main area of concern (a reduction in the percentage of learners who received education in year 2 in 2022 to 2023) was discussed. However, positively, Welsh medium pre-school education was reported to be thriving and over the summer of 2023, the Council was invited to submit business cases for capital funding of £5.8m for five projects to assist with Welsh Medium provision. The projects in four primary schools and the development of an immersion provision in Ysgol Brynhyfryd will assist in progressing towards these targets. Strong retention of pupils in Welsh Medium schools throughout their education is key to delivery of the plan together with the expansion of provision either via re-designation of the language category of schools or the development of new Welsh Medium schools where appropriate. To support this, investment in training programmes to ensure there is sufficient capacity for Welsh Medium teaching provision, including enhancing the Welsh Language skills of current second language staff, is key to the delivery of the plan. We are in continual dialogue with Welsh Government and will review our targets regularly. Furthermore, we are developing a new webpage that will promote the benefits of Welsh medium education and offer support and resources to families, which include a list of schools under the new categorisation, Welsh medium education myth busting, case studies and videos. We are developing the website with the Welsh Language Forum, and we will include links to advice and resources from other organisations. Menter Iaith Sir Ddwyfach has agreed to fund the production of a postcard containing a QR code to link to the website. This is an action from our Welsh Language Strategy.

Following approval of the [Welsh Language Strategy 2023 to 2028](#) in June, officers have been developing ideas and guidance to inform recruitment of staff with Welsh essential and Welsh desirable skills. HR staff have attended a workshop with the Welsh Language Commissioner to get advice and guidance to help us comply with Welsh Language Standards. We would like to recruit more Welsh speaking staff, including more staff that are happy to identify some Welsh language skills and grow in confidence. The aim is to move to a position whereby every job has at least, as a minimum, a Level 1 Welsh language skills requirement (some positions will require a Level 5 skill). Guidance for managers is being produced and we are developing information for applicants outlining the skills required for each Level, and will outline the training and development opportunities we have in place to support and enable their progression. New starters and staff will be supported to develop their confidence and skills to achieve this. We want to see staff who would describe themselves as lacking confidence or fluency currently, having more informal conversations in Welsh and growing in confidence to write short emails in Welsh for example. Elected members and officers with fluent Welsh skills already discuss items at Committees through the medium of Welsh and we are seeing more members and officers who are learning making a commitment to introduce themselves and the item in question through the medium of Welsh. Furthermore, more staff have been learning entry level Welsh this year than any previous year, with 16 staff currently learning Welsh. Another course will start in October. Altogether there will be around 40 members of staff that have entered the entry level course. We have a learner's agreement for managers and staff, and we ask that these are signed before staff undertake additional training. We will bolster this agreement to include measures to encourage staff to ensure they use their new learning after their course has finished.

By the end of September 2023, 79.2% of staff had completed Welsh language awareness e-learning (a small decrease since June 2023) and is a 'Priority for Improvement'. New starters are required to complete the e-learning module within their six month probationary period. We have interrogated our data and based on the period January to July 2023, 499 staff had not completed the e-learning. 167 of those had joined in the period January to July 2023 and the remaining 332 had joined prior to 2023. This suggests that we need to ensure all staff undertake the training during their probationary period and support staff that have not yet completed it, to do so. Strengthening the induction process from a Welsh language perspective is a priority for the coming months.

During the period, we continued to run our 'Paned a Sgwrs' sessions, which are open, informal online meetings to give people an opportunity to practise using their Welsh. These will be suspended momentarily from October, due to staffing. On October 16, Diwrnod Owain Glyndwr, we created a fun quiz about Owain Glyndwr, Welsh, culture and heritage and shared a [video](#) we created about Owain Glyndwr and his association with Corwen and Denbighshire more widely. During the period, a meeting of the Welsh Language Champions took place. The Group has agreed to develop a video featuring children from across Denbighshire schools with the theme of the Rugby World Cup for [Shwmae Su'mae Day](#) on October 15.

A workshop, due to take place before the end of the financial year, is being planned for all elected members to brief them on what the council is doing to promote Welsh in the county, e.g. through the Welsh Language Strategy and the Welsh in Education in Strategic Plan.

Develop a cultural strategy and programme of events

Our pledge to 'Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events' remains on hold. We will develop a plan about how a cultural strategy, in the broadest sense, could connect and contribute to wider outcomes in terms of our economy and personal well-being for example. Despite this pledge being on hold, the council continues to support and promote a wide range of cultural projects and events. For example, we are continuing to develop a planning application as part of the project to develop Bodelwyddan Castle as a Country Park and a gateway to Denbighshire.

From October, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) will be inviting feedback on an initial Area of Search map for a proposed new National Park in North East Wales. The engagement period will run from October 9 until 23:59 on November 27, 2023. Welsh Government has commissioned NRW, as the Designating Authority in Wales, to evaluate the case for a new National Park based on the existing Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The case for a new National Park will be considered within the existing Senedd term (2021 to 2026). A questionnaire to capture feedback is now live on the project [website](#).

We are also progressing with the Denbighshire Heritage Service Forward Plan for 2023 to 2026 and are about to start wider staff consultation on the draft Plan. The Plan sets out our objectives, the resources we need, links to current heritage projects (including those funding by the Levelling Up Fund, the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Heritage Lottery

Fund) and the costs of future projects. Throughout there is a focus on long term sustainability for all our heritage sites, in line with the Sustainable Development Principle. During the period, [Nantclwyd y Dre](#) was accredited as a Quality Assured Visitor Attraction and awarded, once again, Hidden Gem status following an assessment by Visit Wales.

The Denbighshire Tourism Ambassador scheme gave a presentation to Llangollen Eisteddfod Welcome Host students in July and plans are progressing for Wales Ambassador Week, which is due to take place during 20 to 26 November. Activities will include an online event and sponsorship of the Skills Award at the Go North Wales Tourism Awards 2023. There are now 375 Bronze, 290 Silver and 265 Gold Level Ambassadors. 6,030,000 tourists visited Denbighshire in 2022, which is a significant increase on the 2020 figures (reflecting the disruption due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions). The figure is the highest yet, since we started data collection in 2013. [Ruthin Gaol](#) has seen record high visitor numbers since its re-opening earlier in the year, with over 7,000 visitors so far (as at September 2023). The Gaol reopened on April 1st after two years' flood renovation works.

Whilst the activity to “Develop a new Library Strategy for Denbighshire reflecting the priorities and ambitions of the Corporate Plan and the Welsh Government Culture Strategy” is ‘Experiencing Obstacles’, Denbighshire Libraries continues to support this theme. At the start of the summer, Denbighshire Libraries launched an LGBTQ+ timeline, depicting important moments from history from the 1600s until the present day. The timeline was developed following training commissioned by the Welsh Government in 2021 to encourage the celebration of local stories of sexual orientation and gender identity. The Timeline is now available [online](#). During the summer holidays Denbighshire Libraries held another successful [Summer Reading Challenge](#), themed around play, sport, games and physical activity. The Summer Reading Challenge has been running since 1999 and helps to improve children’s reading skills and confidence over the summer holidays. Materials are available bilingually and the council encouraged families to take part to help children keep up with their Welsh skills over the summer holiday. In September, Denbighshire Libraries welcomed Waterstones Children’s Laureate (2022-2024) Joseph Coelho to Denbigh Library as part of his nationwide ‘Library Marathon’ mission. The tour included a special event at Denbigh Library, where Coelho became a member of Denbighshire Libraries, borrowed a book, and read and performed his works for pupils of Ysgol Pendref. Library users can now borrow five brand new ‘[Memory Boxes](#)’, all set in the 1950s, which can be borrowed just like a book. Created by Making Sense

CIO, and funded by Dementia Aware Denbighshire, these boxes contain carefully chosen items from the 1950s, designed to spark conversations and rekindle memories.

Of importance to this theme are some of the successful Levelling Up Fund Projects relating to culture and heritage. Clwyd South Round 1 projects are already underway. The majority of works as part of the project at Plas Newydd, Llangollen to 'Enhance the visitor experience to include improvements to the grounds' are complete. Some remaining path work, planting, signage and interpretation is in progress. The Horseshoe Falls project will be undergoing its procurement phase between September and October. Clwyd West projects continue to be under development and remain at Project Brief stage. All projects have reviewed their delivery and financial profiles, and this has provided a more realistic timeframe for projects as requested by the UK Government. Most projects have design teams in place, initial surveys are underway and, in some cases, complete and awaiting final reports. Project Boards are in place for each of the projects with first meetings due to take place over the next quarter. Public engagement is slightly delayed and will start in November to December. Expected construction start dates are noted below.

Working in partnership to deliver an improved and sustainable archive service for North Wales

The Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project continues to be 'At Risk', on the basis that funding has yet to be secured and therefore the funds are not in place to proceed as planned with the accommodation solution and the activity plan. Subject to the necessary approval from Cabinet, who now also wish to review alternative options in Denbighshire (Flintshire County Council's Cabinet has endorsed the project in Mold), a funding application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (Welsh capital grant funding) will be submitted in November 2023, and the outcome should be known some four months later. In the meantime, both archive services will continue to work collaboratively and develop the service under the North East Wales Archive brand.

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of Welsh language and culture (for example, our pledge to be close to our communities), please see our [Well-Run, High Performing Council](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of staff that have completed Welsh Language Awareness e-learning - Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	No data. New to quarter 4 2022 to 2023	73% Priority to Improve	80.3% Acceptable Better	79.26% Priority to Improve Worse
Measure: The number of Denbighshire Artisans supported (DLL Contract KPI) - Benchmarked Locally	No data	No data	55 (annual figure) Excellent	30 Excellent	39 Excellent Better

Annual or Biennial Measures

2019 to 2023 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2022 to 2023
Heritage income generated over the year (£) - Benchmarked Locally	44,224 Count only	12,861 Count only

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage of year 1 pupils receiving Welsh medium education - Count Only	27.4%	28.4% Thresholds pending
STEAM - The number of tourists visiting Denbighshire - Benchmarked Locally	4,350,000 Acceptable Better	6,030,000 Excellent Better

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that Denbighshire is a county where the Welsh language is a living, thriving language - Benchmarked Locally	55%	33%	12%	62% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the rich cultural heritage and natural assets of Denbighshire are being used to their full potential - Benchmarked Locally	44%	42%	14%	51% Acceptable

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Project Update

This theme contains 18 projects and activities. Four have not yet started and are at project brief stage; one is on hold; ten are 'On Target'; two are 'Experiencing Obstacles' and one is 'At Risk'.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Implement the WESP to support 1 million speakers by 2050	On Target Same	No exception
Deliver the Welsh Language Strategy 2023-28 to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the county	On Target Better	No exception
Deliver the service delivery, policy making and operational standards of the Welsh Language Policy	On Target Better	No exception
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Develop a cultural and heritage strategy and a programme of events</i>	On hold	To be scoped during 2023 and 2024
Develop phase 1 Bodelwyddan Castle as a Country Park and a gateway to Denbighshire	Experiencing Obstacles Same	The original planning application received objections from CADW and Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust for certain elements of the project. A revised planning

Title	Status	Exception
		application is being developed before moving the delivery of the project from Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 2 onto RIBA Stages 3 and 4. These stages are scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2024 so that work on the ground commences in April 2024 and is completed by December 2024.
Work with partners on the proposed designation of a National Park in North East Wales	On Target Same	No exception
Seek the designation of the AONB as a Dark Sky Community	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver the Denbighshire Heritage Service Forward Plan 2023 to 2026	On Target Same	No exception
Develop and deliver the Ambassador Scheme in Denbighshire and across Wales in partnership	On Target Same	No exception
Develop a new Library Strategy for Denbighshire reflecting the priorities and ambitions of the Corporate Plan and the Welsh Government Culture Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Welsh Government's Cultural Strategy has not yet been published and is expected during 2024 to 2025.
Support and implement the National Music Service	On Target Same	No exception
Plas Newydd, Llangollen: Enhance the visitor experience to include improvements to the grounds (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 1)	On Target	No exception
Horseshoe Falls (Clwyd South Levelling Up Round 2)	On Target	No exception
Ruthin Clock Tower: Renovation of Clock Tower exterior (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from May 2024.

Title	Status	Exception
Ruthin Gaol/46 Clwyd Street, Ruthin: Premises restoration including new access and improved public facilities (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from November 2024.
Nant Clwyd-y-Dre, Ruthin: Restoration to the Grade 1 listed building (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from November 2024.
Cae Ddol, Ruthin: Public Realm Upgrade and connect to the heritage theme (Clwyd West Levelling Up Round 2)	At project brief stage	Works expected to commence from July 2025.
Denbighshire and Flintshire Joint Archive Project	At Risk Same	Funding has yet to be secured. Funds are not in place to proceed as planned with the accommodation solution and the activity plan.

A round up of news

The following additional news and committee items took place between July and September in support of this theme:

In August, the council showcased some of its campaigns and services at the [Denbigh and Flint 2023 show](#). The Climate Change Programme team were on hand to talk about how the council is working to tackle the impact of climate and ecological change. Tourism teams promoted their sustainable work in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Working Denbighshire promoted their role in helping young people get into work; and Archives staff offered people the opportunity to see how the county had changed over time. Flintshire County Council staff were also on hand promoting fostering, early years support and support for people with disabilities.

In August, families were invited to attend a free event to turn [marine sourced litter into artwork](#). The session was led by artist Tim Pugh, an environmental artist based in Flintshire who works with a wide range of mixed materials and media to create drawings and temporary installations.

An exhibition, part of the [Our Picturesque Landscape project](#) funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, opened at the Dory Gallery in Llangollen this September. Following a rich tradition of the Dee Valley inspiring artists, poets and tourists for centuries, the

exhibition will host over sixty contemporary works of art inspired by the picturesque scenery of the Dee Valley.

In August, a member of the public donated a [portrait of the family of Private Henry Jones, of Mwrog Street, Ruthin](#), who lost his life during The First World War. The North East Wales Archives in Ruthin already held a collection of postcards and letters sent by the Royal Welsh Fusilier from The Front and researchers can now put a face to a name with a picture of his wife and children.

In September, North East Wales Archives in Ruthin hosted a free '[open doors](#)' event welcoming visitors to explore some of the historical photographs in the collection. The event included activities for families, including Cyanotype printing with a local artist. A guest exhibition by local photographer Jac Williams was also held, named "Honest Agriculture".

A well-run, high performing council

Measures: Acceptable

Projects: Experiencing Obstacles

Corporate Plan Update

This section relates to our Corporate Plan pledges for this theme. There is, inevitably, some cross over with the seven governance areas. For transparency, our self-assessment as to how well we are performing specifically in each of the seven governance areas can be found in the [Self-Assessment: Governance Areas](#) section.

As we explained in our previous report, we have held discussions to determine the right strategic set of measures and activity to monitor through these performance reports. There is though, still some work to do before a final indicator set, which should include qualitative measures better suited to this theme, which is about our organisational culture.

The new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board, providing governance for this theme, will be established in October 2023. At the time of writing this update, the Board had met and agreed a way forward to progress the theme's five pledges, which are aligned to our Council's five Principles. A full update on that will be included in our next update report, but for now, some changes to this theme's pledges have been requested. These changes offer an expansion and clarification on each pledge. Approval for these wording changes will be sought from County Council as part of our Self-Assessment Report for the year in spring 2024.

Embed a positive culture of ambition, transparency and continuous improvement

For this pledge, the Board is requesting to add additional wording (Instilling a "one council" ethos), which it believes captures the overall ethos of theme 9.

In July, the Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) attended [Governance and Audit Committee](#) to present the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2022 to 2023. The council has a statutory duty to publish an AGS and forms part of the Statement of Accounts. The AGS is drawn up following evaluation of the council's governance functions, using information from the self-assessment and reports presented to committees throughout the year. The following key improvement actions were identified:

- Review and update the Officers' Code of Conduct and the process for recording and capturing the response taken to declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality.
- Workforce capacity and resilience and reliance on key positions.
- Review the Whistleblowing Policy.
- Address exceptions, exemptions and variations from Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs).
- Continuing budget pressures and uncertainty over funding. Also, address any actions arising from the review of the Financial Management Code.
- Uncertainty over future funding arrangements following EU Exit.

The delivery of these actions will be monitored by the Governance and Audit Committee, and the Corporate Governance Officers Group.

In September, the Corporate Director: Governance and Business presented a [draft annual report of the Governance and Audit Committee](#) for the same committee's approval, prior to the report being submitted to Council for approval in November 2023. The report covers the periods 2020 to 2021, 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 and summarises the composition of the committee and its work. The edition of this report to be presented next year (in respect of 2023 to 2024), as well as setting out how the Committee has met its terms of reference, will also include the results of the Committee's annual self-evaluation of its effectiveness against the 'Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police' and associated guidance, which was published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in 2022. This will enable the Committee to raise any concerns it may have had during the year, what it has done to escalate these and/or make recommendations as necessary.

Again in September, the annual report of the council's Scrutiny Committees 2022 to 2023 was presented to [Council](#) for approval. The report outlined processes, summarised the work undertaken during the year, outcomes from Scrutiny and requests from residents. One of the main objectives of the scrutiny process is to add value and to try and ensure that decisions taken by the Council have a positive impact on the lives of people who live, work and visit Denbighshire. The report gave an example of a positive outcome whereby a Moorlands Management Officer role was established as a direct result of a recommendation made by Communities Scrutiny Committee. This post was established in 2020 following the Committee's Review into the Llantysilio Mountain Fire 2019. An update report was presented to the Committee in March 2023 highlighting the positive impact of having a Moorland Officer fostering good relationships and co-ordinating multi-agency and

stakeholder working in relation fire response plans and habitat/fuel load management over key areas of the Clwydian Range, Llantysilio Mountain and Llandegla Moor.

Robust whistleblowing arrangements support good governance throughout the council, which in turn enables effective delivery of priorities. To support this the Monitoring Officer gave a report in September to the [Governance and Audit Committee](#) about the operation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy during January 2021 and April 2023. During this period, six new concerns had been raised. The report was sensitive and restricted.

We have, in this period, confirmed arrangements for the Panel Performance Assessment with Governance and Audit Committee. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 places a duty on councils to arrange for a panel to undertake and respond to a corporate, organisational level assessment, of the extent to which the council is meeting its performance requirements. Responsibility for these assessments has been agreed as sitting with the Corporate Executive Team and a constitutional amendment is being sought to reflect the duty. We will be meeting with the Welsh Local Government Association in October to discuss practical arrangements for the Panel Performance Assessment.

Be close to our communities

The Board has requested that an additional sub-pledge be added here ("Empowering and enabling our communities by encouraging community leadership and community resilience"), to capture the support the council offers to communities across the county.

During the period, we have been finalising our draft Public Participation Strategy and Engagement Policy ready to seek approval from the Special Democratic Services committee in November. The Public Participation Strategy is a legislative requirement under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021, which requires principal authorities to have a strategy promoting ways to raise awareness of the council's functions, how to become a councillor, and how to get involved in local decision-making processes. Our Engagement Policy will set out best practice and the Strategy will focus our efforts on areas for improvement, which should complement other objectives such as equalities and diversity.

The council's new Procurement strategy was approved by Cabinet in September. Five collaborative procurements were awarded during the period, and no collaborative

procurement opportunities were missed. For more detailed information about performance in relation to procurement (the council's spend with local suppliers and contracts containing community benefits), please see our [prosperous theme](#) and [governance section about procurement](#).

Following the tranche review, thresholds for the percentage of negative news stories about the council have been reviewed and adjusted. 'Priority for Improvement' was previously considered to be 7% or below, which is felt to be unrealistic given news tends to have a negative bias. The threshold has therefore been changed to 31% or above. These new thresholds have been applied to data points since the start of the new Corporate Plan (October 2022). The percentage of negative news stories about the council (taken as a proportion of all news stories about the council) has decreased from 12.5% to 5.3% this period, and is considered 'Excellent'.

The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter has increased from 29% to 55%. This represents 33 from 60 complaints upheld or partly upheld and is considered 'Acceptable'. In July, the Head of Adult Social Care and Homelessness presented the Your Voice Complaints report for 2022 to 2023 to [Governance and Audit Committee](#). The report captures any compliments, suggestions and complaints received by Denbighshire County Council under the council's customer feedback policy. The report also included Social Services complaints received under its statutory complaints procedure. The Committee was briefed on the role of the Complaints Standards Authority, which has responsibility for monitoring all complaints received about councils in Wales. The council had recently received the Ombudsman's draft report for Denbighshire that stated they had received 32 complaints in the previous year but had only intervened in two of those complaints; both of which were resolved informally.

Whilst 'On Target', the activity to 'Implement the new requirements of the UK Elections Act 2022 and other electoral reform' is worth noting as challenging. The pace, scale and diversity of the electoral reform programmes from the Welsh and UK Governments pose a considerable challenge and risk to every principal council. The council has taken steps to strengthen its core electoral team and is keeping pace with the various timescales for implementation of the measures including voter identification and reform to absent voting and oversees voters. During this period, the electoral team has continued to undertake training and engage in national and regional discussions on electoral reform implementation activities. The second tranche of the Elections Act reforms will be implemented from October 2023, and these bring with them significant complications and

risks. For this reason, we will monitor this risk closely through our Corporate Support Service: People Risk Register.

Have clear performance expectations

Following resumption of our Service Performance Challenges, the Board has suggested we add delivery of those challenges to this pledge.

The challenges are instrumental in ensuring accountability of and support to services, and for shaping a collective understanding of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. An action to improve the way services work with our customer service system was agreed following the Service Performance Challenge for Highways and Environmental Services. Continuing to engage with members and ensure they are kept informed was identified as continually important during the Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Service Performance Challenge. These align with the other pledges within this theme and will be explored further by our new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board.

We have received no formal recommendations for improvement from external regulators (Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and Audit Wales). There have been no low assurance reports in this period from Internal Audit. Between April and September, seven of the ten Internal Audit reviews published had a high assurance level; the remaining three had a medium assurance level. The Annual Governance Statement for 2022 to 2023 found that none of the referrals made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during the year were upheld.

The Head of Education attended [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in September to discuss the [report](#) following the joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) that took place in Denbighshire in February 2023, involving Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn. The report was presented to the Committee as a confidential Part 2 item.

Audit Wales shared with [Governance and Audit Committee](#) its Assurance and Risk Assessment report for the audit year 2021 to 2022. The review focused on the implications of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (including self-assessment arrangements), and carbon reduction plans. Audit Wales made the following recommendation: "The Council needs to fully cost its action plan to ensure the plan is

achievable. This should include detailed costings for the period covered by the Medium Term Financial Plan and broader estimates for the remainder of the plan.”

Our measure on budget variance for the period (i.e. what we have and receive versus what we are spending) was £3.119million. The council’s reserves remained at £5.531million.

As reported previously, we have started to monitor the revenue outturn expenditure per head of population, which we benchmark nationally. Data for 2022 to 2023 has not yet been published nationally and will be available in our next report. Whilst this is a single crude measure that could warrant being examined alongside council tax rates for example, it does offer a lens into a debate about value for money, which is one of the pledges within this theme; a pledge that will be scoped further by the new Board.

Our [Corporate Risk Register](#), as at February 2023, had a total of 20 risks on the register, 11 of which are inconsistent with our risk appetite (55%). This is considered to be a ‘Priority for Improvement’. Our review of the Register commenced in September 2023, with reports scheduled to be presented to Cabinet Briefing, Governance and Audit Committee and Performance Scrutiny in November. Whilst not yet signed off, as at September, 54% of our corporate risks are inconsistent with the council’s risk appetite statement.

All projects were updated during the period, and performance is ‘Excellent’. This is an improvement of 1.9% on the last reporting period. There were no projects presenting as ‘Compromised’. Just under half (46.2%) of all Corporate Plan measures were showing as a ‘Priority for Improvement’ during July to September, which is considered ‘Acceptable’.

Promote strong staff and elected member relations

On reflection, a fundamental element of this pledge is missing from our description and for this reason, the Board has requested the following additional wording: “Having good communication and close working relationships between elected members and officers”.

In July, County Council was asked for its view and direction on the requirements for [member training](#). The report asked for Council’s support for mandatory training in respect of the Members’ Code of Conduct, any other training that should be mandatory; timescales for completion; and sanctions for non-compliance (and exemptions). It was agreed that member training be added to the next Group Leaders meeting and be brought back to a future Council meeting.

The [Standards Committee](#) assured Council in September that it had taken a proactive role over the year in ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct and ethical behaviour along the Nolan Principles of Public Life, which also reflect our four values. A key role for the Committee going forward will be receiving an annual report from each Group Leader on the efforts being made that contribute to compliance with their new duty to take reasonable steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. A new group, the [Ethical Liaison Group](#), has been established and will meet regularly to discuss behaviour as part of the new duty placed upon political group leaders to promote ethical behaviour.

Ensure Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work

As at September 2023, the percentage of staff who were eligible for and who had at least one or three one-to-one meetings in the last 12 months stood at 56%, down from 58% in the last period. This is a rolling total. Following the Service Performance Challenges that have already taken place, it is apparent we need a wider action to ensure all staff have regular one-to-one meetings. It may be that these meetings are taking place but are not being recorded. This will be explored further by our new Well-Run, High Performing Council Board. Given the importance of one-to-one meetings the Board has asked for an explicit reference to “ensuring all staff have regular one-to-one meetings with their line manager” within this pledge.

Sickness absence data for the period April to June 2023 is now available and stood at 8.83 days per full time equivalent. Performance remains a ‘Priority for Improvement’ this period, at 8.82 days. We will review our performance thresholds once national benchmarking data is available with one year’s worth of data unaffected by Covid-19-related restrictions.

The percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules (excluding schools) stood at 49.8% at September (slightly less than the 51% in the previous period) and remains a ‘Priority for Improvement’. From this period onwards we will monitor this annually instead of quarterly. We are anticipating that this data will start to look very different as we start to look at whether courses are overdue and not just completed. For this reason, we anticipate that the percentage of staff that have completed the mandatory e-learning will dip. HR will monitor completion rates closely through their monthly reporting systems.

This theme has, up until now, included two measures of staff turnover: the percentage of employees who leave Denbighshire as a percentage of the total workforce excluding schools, and the percentage including schools. On the basis that the latter measure, which includes schools, has been harder to obtain national comparative data for, we will focus in future on the measure that excludes schools. As for sickness absence, we will review our thresholds for performance in relation to staff turnover in April 2024.

Performance Framework: Measures Update

For further measures and activity in support of procurement and community benefits, please see the [Prosperous](#) theme.

Quarterly or Biannual Measures

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The percentage of Corporate Plan Measures showing as 'Priority for Improvement' – Benchmarked Locally	51% Priority to Improve Same	No data: does not apply	49.5% Acceptable Better	48.3% Acceptable Better	46.2% Acceptable Better
The number of projects on the project register showing as 'Compromised' – Benchmarked Locally	2 Acceptable Worse	1 Good Better	1 Good Same	0 Excellent Better	0 Excellent Same
The percentage of projects whose delivery confidence was updated in the last three months – Benchmarked Locally	100% Excellent Better	95% Good Worse	96% Good Improved	96% Good Same	100% Excellent Better
The percentage of corporate risks inconsistent with the council's risk appetite statement – Benchmarked Locally	55% Priority to Improve Better	No data: does not apply	55% Priority to Improve Same	No data: does not apply	54% Priority to Improve Better

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The cumulative number of negative reports from external regulators – Benchmarked Locally	0	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same
The cumulative number of Internal Audit low assurance reports, financial year to date – Benchmarked Locally	0	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same	0 Excellent Same
Corporate and Service Budget Variance (£k) – Count Only	2,661	2,189	1,585	3,348	3,119
Council reserves (£k) – Count Only	7,135	7,135	5,531	5,531	5,531
Negative news stories as a percentage of all news stories about the council – Benchmarked Locally	11% Priority to Improve Worse	12% Excellent Worse	14% Excellent Worse	12.5% Excellent Better	5.3% Excellent Better
The percentage of external complaints upheld or partly upheld over the last quarter – Benchmarked Locally	67% Priority to Improve Worse	53% Acceptable Better	42% Good Better	29% Excellent Better	55% Acceptable Worse
The percentage of Members that have completed Code of Conduct training – Benchmarked Locally	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	No data. New to 2023 to 2024	100% Excellent	98% Excellent Worse

Title	Quarter 2 2022 to 2023	Quarter 3 2022 to 2023	Quarter 4 2022 to 2023	Quarter 1 2023 to 2024	Quarter 2 2023 to 2024
The rolling average number of working days / shifts per full time equivalent (FTE) local authority employee lost due to sickness absence – Benchmarked Nationally	10 Priority to Improve Worse	9.8 Priority to Improve Better	9.8 Priority to Improve Same	8.83 Priority to Improve Better	8.82 Priority to Improve 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	52% Priority to Improve Better	53% Priority to Improve Better	61% Priority to Improve Better	58% Priority to Improve Worse	56% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of staff for whom we have equality monitoring information – Benchmarked Locally	76% Excellent Better	72% Excellent Worse	71.5% Excellent Worse	67% Excellent Worse	69.4% Excellent Better
The percentage of employees that have completed all 9 mandatory e-learning modules by the end of the year (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Locally	No data	No data	49% Priority to Improve Better	51% Priority to Improve Better	49.8% Priority to Improve Worse
The number of actual collaborative procurements – Count Only	2	1	2	0	5
The number of missed collaborative procurements – Count Only	0	0	1	1	0

Annual or biennial measures

2019 to 2022 data

Title	2019 to 2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022
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	15%	4%	21%

2021 to 2023 data

Title	2021 to 2022	2022 to 2023
The percentage difference in the mean hourly rate of pay for women – Benchmarked Locally	6.7% Acceptable	-13.4% Excellent Better
The percentage of the lowest paid salaries (bottom quarter) that are women – Benchmarked Locally	79.3% Priority to Improve Better	80.7% Priority to Improve Worse
The percentage of attendance by elected members (expected and present), year to date - Benchmarked Locally	89%	84% Good Worse
The percentage of employees who leave Denbighshire as a percentage of the total workforce (excluding schools) – Benchmarked Nationally	10.6% Good Worse	12.4% Acceptable Worse
Revenue outturn expenditure per head of population (£s) - Count Only	2,913.25 Thresholds pending	Data pending. Available November 2023

Stakeholder Survey 2022 to 2023

We have amended the way we analyse Stakeholder Survey responses to include a status for those who expressed an opinion and agree (we previously included “Don’t know” and “No Opinion or Unsure” responses in our analysis).

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council is transparent, well-run, and high performing – Benchmarked Locally	41%	42%	17%	49% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council works well with partners – Benchmarked Locally	41%	15%	44%	74% Good
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that there is a good working relationship between political leaders and senior management – Benchmarked Locally	29%	24%	47%	55% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its performance well – Benchmarked Locally	42%	38%	20%	53% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its risks and challenges well – Benchmarked Locally	42%	34%	24%	55% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council manages its finances well – Benchmarked Locally	37%	41%	22%	48% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council has effective long-term plans in place – Benchmarked Locally	38%	30%	32%	56% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats its workforce well – Benchmarked Locally	48%	16%	36%	76% Excellent
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council makes best use of its assets and resources – Benchmarked Locally	28%	52%	20%	35% Priority to Improve

Title	Agree	Disagree	No opinion or unsure	With an opinion, and agree
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council purchases its goods and services in a fair and efficient way – Benchmarked Locally	28%	25%	47%	54% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council acts on the concerns of residents – Benchmarked Locally	39%	42%	19%	48% Priority to Improve
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council treats all people fairly – Benchmarked Locally	42%	31%	27%	58% Acceptable
The percentage of stakeholders who agree that the council's Corporate Plan and priorities reflect the needs of the local community - Benchmarked Locally	37%	36%	27%	51% Acceptable

Corporate Plan Performance Framework: Projects Update

There are 20 projects of activities in support of this theme. Currently, nine activities are 'On Target', six are 'Experiencing Obstacles', two are complete and three are on hold. Our next report will include an update on progress of the Well-Run, High Performing Council Board in respect of the theme's five pledges.

Projects or Activities

Title	Status	Exception
Prepare for Peer Review for Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	On Target Better	No exception
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Develop and launch a new customer service framework (linked to our Welsh Language Strategy and Policy)</i>	On hold	This is on hold. Task and finish groups for each of the five pledges within this theme have been established and will be considering this over the coming six months.

Title	Status	Exception
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Procure a new corporate CRM (timescale 2025)	On hold	This is on hold. Task and finish groups for each of the five pledges within this theme have been established and will be considering this over the coming six months.
Implement the Public Participation Strategy	On Target	A draft strategy will be taken for approval to the Special Democratic Services committee in November.
Develop a co-production strategy (DCC wide)	Experiencing Obstacles Same	Currently looking at models used by other local authorities and seeking to make contact with co-production network Wales from October 2023. We are looking at how this links to, and can support delivery of, the Corporate Plan themes.
Update the procurement strategy (to become a new project: Implement the new procurement strategy to deliver decarbonisation and the principles of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill)	Complete	No exception
Develop and secure Asset Management Group adoption of new Asset Management Strategy	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	The first revised portfolio plan was planned to be reported to the Asset Management Group in September but has been postponed until November. Portfolio plans will inform the development of the new Asset Management Strategy. It is anticipated that the next phase of the project will look at the council's office estate, i.e. what it needs and where, as part of the New Ways of Working project.
Develop and deliver portfolio plans to determine the shape, size and future use	Experiencing Obstacles	Work has commenced on the remaining portfolio

Title	Status	Exception
of assets for each of the council's asset management portfolios	Worse	plans and these will be presented to Asset Management Group over the remainder of the year. This is also subject to delay following postponement of the report to Asset Management Group from September to November.
Undertake an annual review of the Corporate Workforce Plan 2022 to 2027	On Target	Workforce planning will commence once all new Heads of Service are in post, which is expected to be November 2023.
SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: <i>Ensure value for money is embedded within our organisational culture, and that decisions are balanced by considering service quality and social value.</i>	On hold	This suggested activity is on hold. Task and finish groups for each of the five pledges within this theme have been established and will be considering this over the coming six months.
Establish the Ethical Liaison Group	Completed	The Group has been established and will be meeting on a regular basis.
Update the Members' Code of Conduct to include a timeframe within which Members are expected to have completed Code of Conduct training	Experiencing Obstacles Better	A report will be taken to Council in the autumn of 2023.
Develop a framework to guide councillors in handling harassment, abuse and intimidation	On Target Same	No exception
Implement the new requirements of the UK Elections Act 2022 and other electoral reform	On Target	No exception
Ensure that the Constitution is fit for purpose following the changes brought about by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021	On Target	No exception
Raise awareness of mental health issues across the council through delivery and	On Target Same	No exception

Title	Status	Exception
embedding of the Time to Change action plan		
Embed the new agile working policy and support any learning and development needs from it	On Target Same	No exception
Improve the information we have about our workforce, including equality information, to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports	Experiencing Obstacles Same	A data collection survey will be launched during October to December to ensure that we have as much data in the HR system as possible.
Deliver the action plan of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Operational group	Experiencing Obstacles Worse	Continuing to formalise 'Home grown' route for Occupational Therapy with partners, and working with colleges to provide local authority and provider placements as a route into employment. Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme Partnership Coordinator post is currently being advertised and some activity is on hold.
3rd Generation - North Wales Construction Framework	On Target	No exception

Self-Assessment: Governance Areas

The following is our self-assessment against the seven key governance areas and seeks to paint a picture of how well the council is performing, how we know that (linking to evidence where it is available), and what we can do to improve. Our news round up is included in each governance section.

Corporate Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Corporate Planning is about how the council sets out and makes arrangements to deliver on its strategic objectives.

Corporate Plan Governance Arrangements

Final arrangements concerning the governance of the 2022 to 2027 Corporate Plan were shared with [County Council](#) in July. Subsequently, the Strategic Planning and Performance Team have been working with the Chief Executive, corporate directors and cabinet members to agree programme definition documents and a forward programme of meetings for the five Boards, namely:

- Housing and Homelessness Board
- Prosperous Denbighshire Board
- Greener Denbighshire Board
- Fairer, Safe and more Equal Board
- Well-Run, High Performing Council Board

For those themes that are not overseen by a Board (Healthier, Happier and Caring Denbighshire; Learning and Growing Denbighshire; Better Connected Denbighshire; and A Denbighshire of Vibrant Culture and Welsh Language) quarterly meetings have been arranged between Strategic Planning and Performance Officers and the relevant Cabinet member and Corporate Executive Team leads to monitor performance and identify areas for improvement. These arrangements are in addition to regular quarterly reporting through the Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny, our annual Self-Assessment to Governance and Audit Committee and County Council, and six monthly tranche reviews with all Heads of Service and Cabinet members.

Corporate Plan Tranche Review

In September, Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team held its second tranche review on the Corporate Plan, which focussed on reviewing performance information put forward in the annual Self-Assessment of Performance Report (the first report based on the new Corporate Plan Performance Management Framework). The meeting identified a number of actions for the new Corporate Plan Boards and strategic leads to explore and take forward, but discussion focussed primarily on the need to be clear about our performance expectations and the accuracy of our reporting. In the present financial context, it is important that the council keeps under review the relevance of the performance measures that it uses, the appropriateness of agreed thresholds, and particularly the viability of projects.

Senior Leadership Team

Further appointment panels took place in July for the three remaining vacant Head of Service posts. Catrin Roberts was confirmed as the new Head of Corporate Support Service: People; Helen Vaughan-Evans as the new Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance Digital and Assets; and Elizabeth Thomas as the new Head of Finance and Audit. These appointments conclude the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team. For more information on the new structure, [visit our website](#).

Agree and implement a whole council approach to New Ways of Working

Following the restructure of the Senior Leadership Team, responsibility for the New Ways of Working project has now moved to the Corporate Director for Governance and Business. It is anticipated that the next phase of the project will look at the council's office estate, i.e. what it needs and where.

Respond to the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Following the publication of the WLGA's methodology in June, and our initial discussions around arrangements for the Panel Performance Assessment with the Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet, we have in this period tabled a paper with the [Governance and Audit Committee](#) to seek their recommendation to amend the council's constitution. This is to provide clarity around the matter of local choice allowed in the legislation concerning responsibility for the assessment process - i.e. whether it sits with the Executive team or with County Council. The proposal that the Executive be responsible was accepted, and a recommendation for a constitutional amendment will be tabled with County Council in November. In the meantime, having also had a steer on preferred timetabling and approach, we can now progress discussions with the WLGA around practical arrangements. An initial meeting has been scheduled for late October. A procurement exception is also being sought through legal and procurement teams.

Financial Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Financial planning relates to the management of our income and expenditure.

Finance Update Reports

At its [meetings in July](#) and [September](#), Cabinet received an update on the council's financial position. The net revenue budget for 2023 to 2024 was £250.793million (up from 233.696million in 2022 to 2023). The position on service and corporate budgets was a forecast overspend of £3.119million (2.395million overspend last month). The increase was mainly due to additional pressures within children social care and homelessness. Services were prompted to review all the expenditure and income in their areas to mitigate the impact of the overall budget overspend. The budget mitigation reserve could cover this overspend in the current year, however that would reduce the resources available to meet unforeseen pressures in future years. The 2023 to 2024 budget required service savings and efficiencies of £8.172million to be identified and these are assumed to have been achieved. At the end of August, the council's borrowing totalled £264.454million at an average rate of 4.28%. Investment balances were £10.7million at an average rate of 3.53%.

In the report, the budget for Education and Children's Services remained as an area of concern as the forecast overspend was £1.041million, mainly due to pressures in children's social care. The Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service budget also remained a high-risk area; with the outturn prediction being £2.152million due to pressures in placement costs (£1.3million) and (£0.9million) in homelessness. For schools, the budget agreed by the County Council for 2023 to 2024 included a total net additional investment (excluding increases in Welsh Government grants) in schools delegated budgets of £3.03million. The latest projection for school balances to be carried forward into 2024 to 2025 is a net credit balance of £2.624million, which represents a decrease of £6.315million on the balances brought forward into 2023 to 2024 of £8.939million. The high opening balances were mainly due to receipt of one-off funding to be spent on catch-up and recovery programmes in school. There is a small underspend of £162,000 on non-delegated school budgets. Corporate budgets were projected to break-even in the report, however, risks around pay settlements, energy and other inflationary pressures were highlighted as requiring close monitoring in future months due to it being difficult to quantify them at this early stage of the year.

With regards to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the latest revenue position assumed a decrease in balances at year end of £804,000 compared to £922,000 at the time the budget was approved. The decrease related to a reduction in estimated rental income, offset by a reduced contribution to the HRA capital programme. HRA balances are

therefore forecast to be £764,000 at the end of the year. The Capital budget of £24million is largely allocated between planned improvements to existing housing stock (£12million) and new build developments and acquisitions (£12million).

The report also gives a summary of the council's Capital Plan. The approved capital plan is £113.2million, with expenditure to date of £25.1million.

Statement of Accounts

The council has a statutory duty to produce a statement of accounts that complies with approved accounting standards. As explained in previous performance update reports, the task of ensuring that the [Statement of Accounts for 2021 to 2022](#) could be signed off by Audit Wales had taken longer than expected. However, at September's meeting, an audited final set of accounts for 2021 to 2022 was approved by the Governance and Audit Committee.

The first draft of the Annual [Statement of Accounts for 2022 to 2023](#) has been submitted to the external auditors and was submitted to the Governance and Audit Committee in September for information. After consulting with Audit Wales, it is currently planned that the audited accounts will then be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in spring 2024 for formal approval.

Annual Treasury Management

At [meetings in July](#) and [September](#), Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet reviewed the Annual Treasury Management report, which outlines the council's investment and borrowing activity for 2022 to 2023. The report also provides details of the economic climate during that time and shows how the council complied with its Prudential Indicators. The council's outstanding borrowing at 31 March 2023 was £261.5million at an average rate of 4.15% and the council held £24.2million in investments at an average rate of 3.41%. Members were reminded of the three priorities when investing funds, of these three, the key factors for Denbighshire were security and liquidity.

Governance and Audit Committee also scrutinised the Treasury Management Update Report, which provides details of the council's treasury management activities during 2023 to 2024 to June. The update set out the borrowing strategy of the authority, which would likely be required to take out additional borrowing. The main reason for the increase in borrowing was due to the Rhyl Flooding scheme. The project would have to be funded by

the council to later reclaim the funds from Welsh Government. Interest rates were currently high, this impacted borrowing costs. The council did try to borrow short term where possible from other authorities, and was receiving advice from Arlingtonclose Ltd Treasury Management consultants. The budget position and the Capital Plan would be monitored in the light of the worsening financial outlook for the medium term. A review of the money laundering policy had begun, with a draft of the new policy available.

Other developments in the last period

Budget pressures

The council is facing significant funding gaps in future years. This funding gap (or budget pressure) has come about due to high rates of inflation (everything is costing us more), pay settlements and increased demand for our services, particularly in relation to children's and adult's social care. The council's Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet are working closely to deliver a balanced budget so that the council is financially stable now and in the future. We are looking at all options as to how best to find the savings next year that can cover this funding gap, so we can set a balanced budget. Senior managers have been asked to identify potential efficiencies and savings within their services so that we can come up with a comprehensive list of potential savings across everything we do. This is going to involve many difficult decisions about the level of services we currently offer. We are no different to all other local authorities in this regard. We have invited staff to contribute ideas for areas of savings or efficiencies that could help contribute to ensuring that the council can set a balanced budget over the coming years. The suggestions will be considered by the Finance and Audit Service, the Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet during October and November. During the period we implemented a series of measures to introduce corporate budget controls including vacancy control procedures, and a requirement for Head of Service authorisation for use of agency staff, overtime and credit card payments.

Performance Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Performance management means the structures and processes we have in place to ensure that we deliver what we said we would, whilst encouraging active involvement and challenge from across the council, our elected members, and residents.

Internal Audit Reviews

The Chief Internal Auditor (CIA) attended [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in July, to update the committee on the Internal Audit Team's progress as well as providing summaries of Internal Audit reports. The report confirmed that seven audits had been completed since April, none of which received a low assurance rating. Please also see our section on [clear performance expectations](#).

Self-Assessment of Performance

At its meeting in July, [County Council](#) approved its Self-Assessment report for 2022 to 2023. Identified Improvement Actions will be taken forward through Service Plans and, where appropriate Corporate Plan Boards or strategic leads. Progress will be monitored through our quarterly reports. Additionally in this period, the Strategic Planning and Performance Team has published the council's first quarter Performance Update Report for 2023 to 2024, which will be available to view with our earlier reports on denbighshire.gov.uk/performance. Combined with this present report, these are the first two of four that make up our ongoing Self-Assessment for the year.

Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: Performance Management Framework

By the time of this, our third report on the new Corporate Plan performance management framework, the flow of data and information is becoming steadily smoother as the framework becomes more embedded. The Strategic Planning and Performance Team continue to work closely with Services to address any gaps or aspects still in need of development.

Update the Performance Management Guide

Following agreement of the new Corporate Plan's Performance Management Framework and governance arrangements, as well as changes to the Senior Leadership structure, it is timely to review the council's Guide to Improving Services – the guide that explains the council's approach to performance management. Work has been ongoing on this through the summer, and should be finalised by the autumn.

Annual Stakeholder Survey

In this period, we have launched our [Stakeholder Survey for 2023 to 2024](#), inviting feedback on how the council is performing. The Survey will run until February 29, 2024,

and may be completed online or through paper copies available on request at our libraries. It will also be promoted through our partner networks, social media and the press. The results of the survey will again feed into our end-of-year Self-Assessment report, and will be shared with our managers to inform service improvement.

Service Performance Challenge

The Service Performance Challenge Programme continues, with Education and Children's Services having been through the process in this last period. Some challenges were also rescheduled in this period to accommodate newly appointed Heads of Service. Key actions arising from these discussions are discussed in the [clear performance expectations section](#) and will be noted with the [Improvement Actions](#) below, and progress will be captured in future performance update reports.

Risk Management

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Risk management refers to our planned approach to identify, assess, control and monitor risks and opportunities facing the council.

Corporate Risk Register

As reported above, our review of the Register commenced in September 2023. Whilst not yet signed off, as at September, 54% of our corporate risks are inconsistent with the council's risk appetite statement. The current review has included a significant rationalisation of the Register with some risks being merged and removed, some being deescalated back to be managed through service risk registers and two new risks being added. This has enabled a greater focus on the risks associated with not being able to deliver a balanced budget, or where insufficient funding leads to a withdrawal or scaling back of services, even when a balanced budget is delivered.

Workforce Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Workforce planning means the process by which we analyse, forecast and plan workforce supply and demand, and assess gaps to ensure that we have the people and skills - now and in the future - to deliver our services and fulfil our strategic objectives.

Staff Training, Development and Mental Health

Since the [Agile Working policy](#) was approved in July, four training sessions for managers have taken place, which have been attended by over 60 managers. HR Business Partners have attended all service management team meetings to discuss the new policy.

The Time to Change action plan is nearly complete. The only remaining action is to ensure that Mental Health Champions are in place. The Champions will have a role in ensuring that support for mental health and well-being is embedded across the council. We have also changed our Employee Assist Programme to a new provider, to ensure we can offer support services through the medium of Welsh.

Improve the information we have about our workforce

This information includes equality information to support more detailed analyses in future Public Sector Duty Reports. Due to continual changes in staff, the equality information we have about our workforce tends to fluctuate. By the end of September, we had equality information for 69.4% of staff. A data collection survey will be launched during October to December to ensure that we have as much data in the HR system as possible. It should be noted however that some staff choose not to disclose information about themselves.

Workforce planning

As reported previously, workforce planning was identified as a continually important area of work for the Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Service, during its Service Performance Challenge. HR Business Partners work closely with all services on a regular basis by issuing monthly reports.

A fresh workforce planning process will commence in the new year, by which time the new senior leadership structure will be in place, with all new Heads of Service in post from November. Furthermore, a follow up review of the Internal Audit Review of workforce planning undertaken in May, is due to take place between January and March 2024.

In the meantime, there continues to be a significant focus on recruitment, especially in social care and health roles. In July, a report was presented to [Performance Scrutiny Committee](#) providing information and progress on the workforce plan including recruitment and retention activities, together with turnover and sickness absence data for 2022 to 2023. A further report will be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time detailing the progress made in relation to workforce planning and recruitment and retention. The

Committee requested that Heads of Service for those services where staff recruitment and retention are proving to be a persistent challenge be invited to that meeting to discuss the potential impact of those challenges on service delivery and how they are addressing staff shortages in the short to medium term, until long-term solutions are found.

As reported for our [Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language theme](#) above, following approval of the [Welsh Language Strategy 2023 to 2028](#) in June, officers have been developing guidance to inform recruitment of staff with Welsh essential and Welsh desirable skills. The aim is to move to a position whereby every job has, as a minimum, a Level 1 Welsh language skills requirement (some positions will require a Level 5 skill).

Progress in delivering the action plan of the Social Care Recruitment and Retention Operational group continues. Two places have been awarded on the Open University full BA (Hons) programme, and a further three candidates are starting the Higher Certificate pathway. Furthermore, several care homes are employing Ukrainian refugees with great success and both Denbighshire County Council care homes are providing placements to Working Denbighshire citizens.

Service Challenge Action: DBS Compliance

Safer recruitment remains a high priority for the council and continued efforts to increase compliance means this action is now complete. We will continue to monitor compliance on a monthly basis as part of our core HR business as usual work.

Assets

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. By assets we are referring to our management of the council's estate (including office buildings and highway infrastructure owned and / or controlled by the council) and digital assets.

Asset Management Strategy

During this period, the council has taken steps to ascertain the structural integrity of its buildings in the face of nationwide concerns about the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in public buildings. Discussion about RAAC in relation to school buildings has been reported in our [Learning and Growing theme](#). The Asset Management Team has been reviewing data from previous RAAC Surveys and this has been prioritised

above all other work. Welsh Government has asked for information about the presence or risk of RAAC in non-school buildings.

The first revised portfolio plan was planned to be reported to the Asset Management Group in September but has been postponed until November. Portfolio plans will inform the development of the new Asset Management Strategy. The New Ways of Working project was established to look at the capacity and use of offices to seek ways to maximise the use of space across the council's portfolio. This will be reviewed with the Corporate Executive Team over the coming months.

ICT strategy

Having a good robust ICT infrastructure that can innovate as well as handle growing pressures from across the council was discussed during the Highways and Environmental Service Performance Challenge. It was agreed that the service should work with ICT to improve the way the service delivers its functions and that the ICT Strategy should prioritise service needs in the face of limited resources.

Procurement

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Procurement is the process by which the council meets its needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money and good outcomes for society, culture and the economy, whilst contributing to decarbonisation and nature's recovery.

Denbighshire Procurement Strategy

A new and updated Denbighshire Procurement Strategy was approved by [Cabinet](#) in September. It reflects and supports the council's corporate priorities and the seven well-being goals and aligns with the upcoming UK Government Procurement Bill and the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act. Expectations about what we buy and how we buy it are increasing, and we will be expected to deliver not only value for money but also have a positive impact on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our communities, known as socially responsible procurement.

New procurement regulations, that streamline over 300 current individual regulations, will be introduced and we need to prepare, raise awareness and train all officers affected. New powers, responsibilities and obligations are included in the Procurement Bill and this

currently includes obligations to consider small businesses, including local businesses; produce a pipeline of future procurements that is visible and easily accessed; and publish contract reports.

A joined up and streamlined approach to commissioning, procurement, contract management and reporting will be required to ensure Denbighshire gains the best possible outcomes from new procurement regulations. This will involve working across the council to support Denbighshire's local supply chain.

Governance arrangements to manage implementation of the new strategy are being determined.

Decarbonisation Procurement Expertise

The Business Partner – Carbon, funded by Denbighshire and Flintshire Councils including Denbighshire's Climate Change Team, commenced in post on Sept 4. The postholder will revisit regional contracts as they expire with the aim to, where possible, reduce carbon emissions in the future and identify community benefits in council contracts that reduce carbon and increase carbon absorption. They will also work with business and suppliers in the county to encourage lower carbon practice, starting first with the Design and Print framework. The postholder has been attending Service's management team meetings to raise the importance of reducing carbon in our spend. They are working on a more robust methodology to enable us to accurately report on (and impact) actual carbon emitted via procurement, rather than use the Welsh Government model that aligns carbon emissions to spend. Future reports will focus on decarbonisation via procurement, and progress in implementing our new Procurement Strategy.

Biodiversity Protection and Decarbonisation in Procurement

As reported previously, biodiversity protection and improvement is considered in all council procurements, and to enhance this we are working with our Climate Change team to develop specific questions to include in procurement notices. Biodiversity protection and improvement also forms part of our approach to community benefit 'asks' of contractors, which can range from improved planting schemes to protect or improve biodiversity to working with school children to raise awareness of ecology and biodiversity. To this end this is considered business as usual and the Procurement and Climate Change teams will continue to work closely together to determine the 'asks' we seek via procurement.

Contract Procedure Rules

It remains the case that Contract Procedure Rules will be updated to reflect new UK Public Procurement legislation, which is due in 2023 to 2024. We will continue to report on progress through this report in the meantime. We are planning a cross-council workshop to take place in October, which will include a presentation from an official from Welsh Government on the changing procurement landscape, followed by a shorter presentation from the same official to our Senior Leadership Team in November.

Supporting Businesses and Partners to Adapt

As reported previously, the new and developing legislation from Welsh and UK governments will represent a change on current practice for the council and its procuring services, businesses and the supply chain. The aim is for smaller local businesses to be more engaged in, and to benefit from, procurement. To this end, procurement will feature in the 2024 March for Business campaign, planning for which is already underway. A communications plan is also being developed and will be shared with the council's Senior Leadership Team in October.

Balfour Beatty, as part of the coastal defence schemes, has committed to deliver workshops to community-led organisations on how to develop strategy early in 2024. They will be supported by Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council to deliver a workshop in the north of the county and are aiming to work with the South Denbighshire Partnership to offer an additional workshop in the south.

North Wales Construction Framework Phase 3

In May, Cabinet approved the initiation of a project to procure the North Wales Construction Framework Phase 3 (phase 2 is due to end in May 2024). The project is now live. The tender period finishes on October 2 and we will seek Cabinet's approval in December to appoint successful contractors. This is a framework for all North Wales local authorities. The Framework has been a catalyst for engagement and upskilling of local contractors operating within the regional supply chain, and this will encourage local contractors to become part of phase 3.

Improvement Actions

Two improvement actions have been identified through discussions with Cabinet about this report:

- Provide an update on the reasons for poor performance relating to the percentage of damaged roads and pavements made safe within target time (CAT1 - Category 1 defects dealt within timescale).
- Develop an overview of the cultural offer, with examples from across council services, as part of the plan to be developed setting out how a cultural strategy could connect and contribute to wider outcomes in terms of our economy and personal well-being.

A Service Performance Challenge took place for Education and Children's Services and no new improvement actions were identified.