

Performance Self-Assessment: April 2023 to March 2024

This document presents our performance against our Corporate Plan themes and governance areas between April 2023 and March 2024.

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh. We are also happy to provide this document in large print, audio and braille, please contact the Corporate Improvement and Development Team.



Conwy - Sir flaengar sy'n creu cyfleoedd

Conwy - a progressive County creating opportunity

Contact details and more information

We want to hear whether you think our priorities are the right ones for your community, and how you think we are performing against them. For more information, or to let us know what you think about anything in this report, contact us:

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Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg. We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

BT Relay Service Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling **18001** before the number they require

By Sign

British Sign Language users can contact us using a Sign Language interpreter through the [InterpretersLive! service](#), provided by Sign Solutions.

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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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We want to hear Young People's views!

Having a say isn't just for adults. Young people are the future and we want to hear their views too!

There are lots of ways you as a young person can have your say in Conwy. All of the services working with children and young people in Conwy give opportunities for you to have your say. In particular, Conwy Youth Council are about having a voice and having a choice in decisions that affect young people. They are your representatives and have a say on things that can make a difference to children and young people in Conwy.

If you want to get involved, visit the [Youth Council Facebook page](#), or go to our [Youth Service website](#), or contact us:

By email: youthservice@conwy.gov.uk

By telephone: 01492 575100

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Performance Measurement

We use a three colour – red, amber, green (RAG) – approach to our performance measures and activities. For the purposes of this report, our approach to measuring projects has been applied to all activity, this also being consistent with reporting in our performance management system (CAMMS). Where a measure is identified as a ‘count only’, RAG status and trend descriptors do not apply.

For measures

- A **green** status means that a target has been met.
- An **amber** status means that performance is within tolerance to meet target.
- A **red** status means that performance has not met its target and is below tolerance.

For activity (using project methodology)

- A **green** status means that this element is on track.
- An **amber** status means that a potential problem has been identified.
- A **red** status means a definite problem has been identified and needs addressing.

Trend descriptors

The report also compares the data point (outturn) with the previous available period. In the case of cumulative six-monthly measures, we compare with the same period (i.e. latest mid-year with previous mid-year, latest year-end with previous year-end). This is not describing any movement or change in RAG status.

- **‘Better’** is used to describe where the change in outturn is an improvement. Where higher percentages or numbers are desirable, the figure will be higher than previously. Where lower percentages or numbers are desirable, the figure will be lower than previously.
- **‘Same’** is used when there has been no change to the outturn, with performance matching the previous available period.
- **‘Worse’** is used to describe where the change in outturn shows a declined. Where lower percentages or numbers are undesirable, the figure will be lower than previously. Where higher percentages or numbers are undesirable, the figure will be higher than previously.

Summary position

The chapters below provide a summary of activity that has taken place during 2023 to 2024 in support of our Corporate Plan priorities, and includes an evaluation of performance against key governance functions. Each chapter is supported by a round-up of news stories relevant to our performance, a summary of items scrutinised or approved by our principal committees, and updates on our performance against key identified measures and projects.

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 actions evaluation has been determined by the status of our activities, using our project methodology.

An environment that is valued and looked after

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

A prosperous economy with culture at its heart

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

Education and Skills

Measures: **Amber: Within tolerance**

Actions: **Green: On track**

Affordable, appropriate, good quality accommodation

Measures: **Amber: Within tolerance**

Actions: **Green: On track**

Safe and feeling safe

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

Healthy

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

Thriving Welsh Language

Measures: No status

Actions: **Green: On track**

Informed, included, listened to, and involved in the community

Measures: No status

Actions: **Green: On track**

Resilient council

Measures: No status

Actions: **Green: On track**

1. People in Conwy value and look after the environment

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

1.1. Measures Update

We continue to be a national leader and innovator in recycling, achieving a 70% recycling rate (the only North Wales authority to do so). This involved collecting an additional 1000 tonnes of waste for reuse, recycling or composting compared the previous year. Recycling is everyone's responsibility, and the improvement shows that residents are doing their bit to support the environment. In August 2023, we launched our new campaign, "[Keeping up with the Joneses](#)", which promoted the fact that the vast majority of people in Conwy recycle, while providing advice and encouragement to those who don't, with [enforcement](#) as a last resort. Council Officers also delivered sessions in schools to engage the next generation of Conwy residents in the benefits of reusing, recycling and composting as much waste as possible. In 2023, Ysgol San Sior in Llandudno was the first North Wales School to visit Parc Adfer, the Energy from Waste plant where non-recyclable waste collected in Conwy is processed.

The fortnightly 'podback' kerbside collection of used coffee pods has also been well received with in excess of 750,000 used coffee pods collected for recycling in the first year of the scheme, diverting 12 tonnes of waste from incineration,.

The percentage of local authority maintained streets that are clean has increased from 97% as at the end of the previous financial year to 99% at the end of 2023 to 2024. We were pleased to report in [October 2023](#) that Conwy's streets continue to improve in cleanliness, seeing an overall reduction in litter. This is according to the All Wales Annual Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS) Report 2023 to 2024, published by Keep Wales Tidy. The report highlighted an increase in the cleanliness indicator from 75.3 to 78.5, and an increase in "A" graded streets – from 10.3% to 15.8%, the highest percentage of streets with no litter or refuse in Conwy since the survey began in 2007 to 2008. 97.4% of streets were graded B or above, an increase on last year's figure. 2.6% of streets were recorded as C grade, meaning that 4 streets were below an acceptable standard. For a fourth year, no D grade streets were recorded in the county, which is positive. Smoking related litter continues to be the most common type of litter found on the streets in Wales. This is the case in Conwy, with smoking related litter found

on 45.4% of streets surveyed. This year, for the first time, smoking-related litter also includes disposable vapes. Vapes were found on 2.6% of streets in Conwy.

We take environmental crime very seriously, and have during the year made successful prosecution against individuals that have included imprisonment and fines. It is important for residents to remember that they have a duty to make sure that any waste removers are licenced. Waste carrier licences can be checked by visiting www.naturalresources.wales/CheckWasteLicence, or by calling 0300 065 3000.

The completion of further flood defence works has meant that 322 additional properties are now at a reduced risk of flooding. In October 2023 the Institute of Civil Engineers Wales Cymru awarded the [Llansannan Flood Alleviation Scheme](#) the Roy Edwards Award. The award recognises the best example of outstanding design and construction of a project costing less than £5 million. The [Economy and Place Scrutiny Committee](#) were presented with a biannual report on the coastal and fluvial flood reduction schemes in November 2023. The report included an overview of the funding of projects as well as the flood risk mitigation measures currently undertaken in the county. In [December 2023](#), Cabinet agreed to Conwy's continuing participation as a Board Member on the Welsh Coastal Monitoring Collaboration, which seeks to deliver a standard, repeatable and cost-effective coastal monitoring programme on behalf of Welsh Risk Management Authorities, and to provide the evidence necessary for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management decisions. Cabinet awarded the contract for the construction of the coastal defence improvements in Kinmel Bay in [January](#), 2024, and Llandudno in [March](#). Public consultation on [coastal defence improvements](#) in Llanfairfechan also took place in March, 2024.

22 additional kilometres have been designated as suitable for active travel. In August 2023 we consulted on making access to Conwy Bridge easier. We also undertook a consultation on active travel routes from Glan Conwy to the [RSPB Conwy Nature Reserve](#); and received Welsh Government funding to improve the route for pedestrians and cyclists on [Marl Lane](#), running alongside the A470 and linking to Narrow Lane, Llandudno Junction. We have also installed [new cycle stations](#) at key points along National Cycle Route 5, with funding from Welsh Government's active travel budget. The first stations are available for use at Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr, and Rhos on Sea promenades. There are plans to install six more stations and chargers in Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Old Colwyn, Pensarn and Kinmel Bay.

Town and Community Councils and community groups continue to win awards for parks and green spaces in Conwy, but owing to financial pressures we are unfortunately no longer taking part in Wales in Bloom, Britain in Bloom, and Green Flag initiatives, so the number of awards reported are those achieved only by Town and Community Councils and community groups, with our support. Despite our not entering any awards in 2023, the number of awards received only reduced from 26 to 21

Data for the percentage change in carbon emissions will be available in the autumn. The Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Plan was approved during the year and progress measures will begin to be reported in this report in future as implementation proceeds.

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted – Benchmarked Nationally Target 70%	69% Amber Same	70% Green Better
The percentage of local authority maintained streets that are clean – Benchmarked Nationally Target 95%	97% Green Better	99% Green Better
The percentage change in carbon emissions from our activities compared to base-year (2019 to 2020) – Benchmarked Nationally Target 0 by 2030	-24% Amber Better	No data Anticipated autumn
Number of properties where risk of flooding has been reduced following implementation of flood defence measures – Count Only	282	604
Length of route in kilometres (KM) added to active travel – Count Only	113	135
The number of awards achieved for our parks and green spaces – Count Only	26	21

1.2. Actions Update

There are eight actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. All are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
Through our Climate Challenge Programme, we will work to be a Carbon net zero organisation by 2030.	Green On track	Charging infrastructure installed at 3 sites to support the introduction of electric vehicles into the fleet. 6 electric recycling vehicles are now in the frontline service, and further vehicles are due to arrive in the next 12 months.
Using capital investment in infrastructure in a way that supports climate resilience as well as leaving a social and economic legacy.	Green On track	9 Active travel route development projects underway at various stages of delivery. E-bike chargers and repair stations have been installed at various locations along NCN5. 8 Coastal and flood defence schemes in progress.
Delivering our Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Plan.	Green On track	Approval of the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Delivery Plan 2023 to 2026 has been achieved, along with the appointment of Conwy's first Biodiversity Champion.
Developing and implementing active travel infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling and reduce car use.	Green On track	9 active travel routes in progress: Glan Conwy; Conwy Bridge; Conwy Valley; Dolgarrog; Towyn and Kinmel Bay; Deganwy and Llandudno Junction, Penrhyn Bay; Colwyn Bay; and Craig y Don.
Increasing opportunities for residents, visitors and businesses to reuse and recycle more.	Green On track	We provide a compliant collection service that meets the requirements of new regulations for businesses, and offers a full range of recycling options. In collaborative with Denbighshire County Council, recycling of polystyrene has been introduced across all sites and a 'choose to reuse' area has been set up at the Mochdre site where items that can't be fully reused are made available to anyone who can reuse the remaining parts, such as wood, paint, varnish.

Title	Status	Update
Supporting healthy living by providing a clean and attractive environment.	Green On track	Community support work in beach and urban areas continues across all the existing locations and is growing in number. We currently support 11 lending hubs, allowing local groups to borrow litter picking equipment, and we are regularly working with 23 community groups.
Supporting the development of a tidal lagoon in North Wales and develop green projects to help grow the economy and help protect the environment for future generations.	Green On track	On track with no significant risks or issues. Welsh Government have agreed to feedback on the outcome of the tidal lagoon expression of interest submission.
Developing a strong programme approach, including the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP), to deliver the national target of net zero by 2050.	Green On track	Local Area Energy Plans and wider Net Zero projects are progressing very well, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Build Policy and developer requirement for net zero agreed by Cabinet. • Sustainable transport and active travel policy areas agreed by Cabinet • Off-setting approach agreed i.e. where developers cannot meet minimum requirements on-site a financial contribution can be sought, which can then be used for retro-fit, EV etc. (lower levels will be requested where it impacts on affordable housing).

1.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

1.3.1. Net Carbon Zero

In December 2023, the [Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) were presented with a performance report that demonstrated our progress in achieving net zero. This report provided assurance to members that we are effectively addressing and monitoring our performance against the carbon reduction and decarbonisation plan. Audit Wales also recently reviewed our carbon reduction plans. Their final report, presented to

the [Governance and Audit Committee in September 2023](#), concluded that we have a clear vision and strategic support for our approach to decarbonisation and net zero by 2030, and we have put in place governance arrangements to ensure that we are in a position to meet the challenge of achieving net zero carbon emissions. It was, however, recommended that the action plan be fully costed to ensure it is aligned with its Medium-Term Financial Plan. The action plan was reported to the Governance and Audit Committee, and the service is in the process of implementing this recommendation.

1.3.2. Nature Emergency

A [notice of motion](#) was put forward and adopted by Council in October 2023 to declare a Nature Emergency, in line with the declaration made by Welsh Government. This shows our commitment in Conwy to address the crises at a local level and we are working to respond to this. [A further notice of motion](#) was put forward for consideration by Council in December 2023 relating to urban tree planting in Conwy and it was agreed that consideration be given in relation to urban tree planting in the new 3 year [Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Delivery Plan](#), which was considered by the Economy and Place, Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [September 2023](#), and approved by Cabinet in [October](#).

1.3.3. Eryri National Park

We joined forces with the National Park Authority, Gwynedd Council, Traffic Wales and North Wales Police to encourage visitors to Eryri to experience the National Park responsibly and sustainably during 2023 to 2024. The Park is an area of exceptional natural beauty that attracts visitors from far and wide. However, the surge in popularity also brings challenges to the delicate balance of the environment and local communities. To ensure the preservation of this remarkable area, it is crucial that visitors adopt sustainable practices and adhere to the guidance provided. Traffic Wales and local authorities implemented measures to address congestion and ensure the safety of all road users. Visitors are encouraged to check websites and social media channels for information on dedicated parking availability, alternative transport options (such as the park and ride), and live traffic updates. Visitors were also asked to respect the community of Nant Gwynant by following local guidelines, being mindful of noise, and taking all litter home. The Countryside Code outlines the principles of responsible outdoor behaviour, including respecting others, protecting wildlife and livestock, and leaving no trace. Visitors

are urged to familiarise themselves with the code and follow its recommendations to safeguard the Park's unique landscapes and biodiversity.

1.3.4. Maintaining Public Spaces

At its meeting in September 2023, the [Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) received a petition that called on us to consider frequent clearance of windblown sand from public spaces around Llandudno's West Shore, to prevent the build-up of litter and weeds amongst accumulations of sand, and to ensure that these places remain accessible. It was also suggested that better care and maintenance should be provided to the remembrance benches provided in memory of loved ones. The committee acknowledged the financial situation and that there would not be a perfect solution to this issue. The importance of partnership working with the Friends of West Shore and the Town Council was emphasised. It was agreed that the matter would be discussed further with the Environment, Roads and Facilities Service to determine what action could be taken, the committee asking that it and local members be kept informed.

1.3.5. Memory Garden

A [Memory Garden](#) has been created at Cae Derw Park, Llandudno Junction, in a partnership between us and the Friends of Cae Derw Park. Built with section 106 funding, the peaceful garden is designed as a place for residents to sit and reflect, and includes a pergola and bench seating with solar lighting, raised beds made from recycled plastics, and a Welsh heritage fruit orchard planted with a selection of local apple, plum, damson and cherry trees. The Friends of Cae Derw are an active volunteer group who have worked with us for many years on the development of the park. Without mains power to light the Christmas tree, residents decided to adorn it with hand written baubles commemorating loved ones they had lost. From this came the idea for a place to use all year long, where people could sit and reflect in a more purpose built garden area. The community designed the Memory Garden space, and we provided labour and expertise to create the garden in time for Christmas 2023.

1.3.6. Llanrhos Cemetery

During the summer of 2023, work began to extend [Llanrhos Cemetery](#), off Conway Road. The new extension will allow for double and single grave plots plus burial plots for cremated remains. The work also involves a lagoon and new drainage, landscaping, and

biodiversity features including bat boxes and bird boxes. New paths will link from the current grounds to the new space.

1.3.7. Goat Management

In May 2023, [Cabinet](#) agreed to adopt the Llandudno Feral Goat Management Plan. This plan explains how the goat population is monitored and managed to secure the future survival of the herd and allowing for its co-existence alongside the local community.

1.3.8. Extreme Weather Events

The county was hit by [Storm Babet](#) and [Storm Ciaran](#) during the winter months of 2023. Such extreme weather events put considerable additional pressure on our resources, not least in terms our budget and having to meet the cost of expensive repairs. We continue to work with Emergency services and Local Authority partners across North Wales to ensure a coordinated approach to responding to these extreme weather events. Our efforts focus on protecting our communities, safeguarding homes, and minimising the impact on residents. We are grateful to all our staff and emergency crews for all their hard work in keeping us safe.

1.3.9. Planning Policy

The Welsh Government's revised Planning Policy expects all new development to prevent the causes of climate change, and there will be a requirement on developers of new builds to demonstrate how they will meet these net zero policies. We will have an important role to play in ensuring future development meets these requirements, and in January 2024, [Cabinet](#) discussed and agreed a framework approach and policy recommendations to be included within the replacement Local Development Plan for consultation later in the year.

In April 2023, the [Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) adopted the "Planning Obligations and Viability Guidance Notes". These useful notes summarise the relevant sections of local and national planning policy in a clearer and easily accessible format to enable all parties to fully understand planning obligations.

1.3.10. Energy Strategy

In July 2023, [Cabinet](#) agreed to adopt the North Wales Energy Strategy Action Plan. The overall objective of the Strategy is to develop a strategic pathway that identifies key

interventions to deliver on the region's ambitions for decarbonising its energy system and to ensure that the region benefits from the transition.

1.3.11. Fleet Upgrades

Supporting our net carbon zero commitments, [Council](#) agreed in January 2024 for an element of the proposed capital programme to be used for the purchase of electric recycling vehicles following receipt of a Welsh Government grant offer for £1.5 million. It was approved that £2.6 million from the 2024 to 2025 capital programme be used for the purchase of replacement vehicles. As at March 2024, Conwy had five electric recycling vehicles in daily operation, with an additional ten on order. These upgrades are in addition to existing fleet upgrades planned through our Capital Programme.

1.3.12. Street Lighting

22 [streetlight lamps](#) have been replaced along the Old Highway in Colwyn Bay, meeting the road lighting design safety standards, reducing light pollution, and benefitting the local woodland wildlife. The replacements lamps and installations costs were 100% funded by Welsh Government's Local Places Nature fund. Removed lamps will also be reused elsewhere.

1.3.13. 20mph Speed Restrictions

We implemented the Welsh Government's new default 20mph speed limit, which came into force in September 2023. In October, the Welsh Government announced that they would be reviewing the guidance and exception criteria provided to councils, and Conwy residents were asked to contact the traffic team if they felt the speed limit on certain roads should be changed from 20 to 30mph. Over 200 emails were received and officers were considering all requests. In February 2024, Cabinet were presented with an e-petition on behalf of residents calling on us to consult and listen to the public over which roads should be exempted from the 20 mph limit. The Welsh Government is also undertaking a review of the guidance for road exemptions, which is expected to be submitted in the autumn of 2024. Following this national review, Cabinet will consider a report relating to a further public consultation.

1.3.14. Fflecsi Bus

Fflecsi Dyffryn Conwy is a demand responsive bus service that has been well received by our rural residents. It does not have a fixed route and timetable, but an operating zone,

allowing passengers to be picked up and dropped off anywhere within that fflecsi zone. There has been an extension to the [Dyffryn Conwy Fflecsi bus service](#) in Dolwyddelan and the service will now operate between 6:30am and 7:00pm, Monday to Saturday, and residents will now benefit from improved transport connections. To book a journey, you can use the fflecsi app, or call 0300 234 0300.

2. People in Conwy live in a county which has a prosperous economy with culture at its heart

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

2.1. Measures Update

The number of businesses supported through advice and support (1,939) remains consistent with the previous year's performance (1,978). The number of businesses supported through grant is also steady (59 down to 57). Conwy's Business Support Grant was used to support 29 businesses in the year. During the second part of the year the focus was on delivering the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Business Key Fund, where 25 applications were approved. The percentage of occupied industrial units has also increased during the year, from 91% to 96%.

The number of enquiries to the library and information team has increased from 96,820 during 2022 to 2023, to 110,280 in 2023 to 2024.

Sixteen actions were completed during 2023 to 2024 in support of the Creu Conwy delivery plan. A report on the first year progress of Conwy's Cultural Strategy, 'Creu Conwy, Creating the Spark', was presented to the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in [May 2023](#). To date work has focussed on creating an effective governance model for the strategy that supports both county-wide and community level projects; research, development and the production of a delivery plan; piloting new projects and approaches; and fundraising. During the discussion it was recognised that there was insufficient funding and resources to achieve the plan, and assurance was given that the Culture Team was working closely with external organisations, it being understood that that project delivery is dependent on collaborative working and cultural alliances.

The amount of external funding attracted to support regeneration and recovery fell from £44 million to £41.3 million; however, the amount attracted to support arts and heritage increased by £48,930 to £1.38 million. The amount achieved was positively impacted by the availability of Shared Prosperity Funding.

The number of people attending or participating in creative arts, heritage, museums, libraries, Venue Cymru, and Theatr Colwyn activities has increased considerably owing to

a change in how the measure is calculated, as it now includes theatre audience figures. 251,985 is reported for 2023 to 2024 (as opposed to 36,974 in the previous year).

We have undertaken an assessment of how events impact our economy, looking at the Llandudno Sea Triathlon as an example. This race was encouraged as it attracts overnight stays and high spending visitors and it was selected as the final stage of the Welsh Triathlon Super-Series. For 2023, an estimated 1000 competitors and 3000 spectators attended the event, with over 60% of these coming from outside the North Wales region and most spending at least one night staying in the area. Based on expenditure research with spectators and competitors they collectively spent over £405,000 in the local community. A further £65,000 spend by the organisers increased the overall impact of the event to more than £470,000. In addition, there was television, live streaming and social media coverage, raising the profile of tourism in the county.

We have also analysed feedback from the Night Time Economy. We found that there was distinct seasonality and the need to encourage businesses to open in winter months to help develop the county as an all-year-round destination. Food and drink businesses in Conwy town appear to be the most seasonal, with 60% of hospitality businesses located in Conwy describing themselves as seasonal. Pubs also seemed to face more of a challenge with seasonality across the county compared to cafes and restaurants. Only 18% retailers offer late night shopping. Only 37% of the businesses surveyed host events at their premises. The highest proportion of respondents (37%) noted a lack of evening activities as the main gap in the current evening economy offer. The assessment has identified a number of key actions that could be put in place to help grow the night time economy, and we are working towards achieving the Purple Flag accreditation to enable measurement of impact.

Data for the number of visitors to Conwy County in the winter months is expected in October.

Biannual Measures

Title	Year-end 2022 to 2023	Mid-year 2023 to 2024	Year-end 2023 to 2024
The number of businesses supported through advice and support – Count Only	1,978	658	1,939

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
Number of businesses supported through grants – Count Only	59	57
The percentage of units in our industrial unit portfolio that are occupied – Benchmarked Locally Target 85%	91% Red Worse	96% Green Better
The number of visitors to Conwy in Winter months (October to February) – Count Only	1,033,580	No data Anticipated autumn
The number of enquiries to library and information team – Benchmarked Locally Target 100,000	96,820 Does not apply Baseline year	110,280 Green Better
The number of actions in the Creu Conwy Strategy delivery plan completed during the year – Benchmarked Locally Target 15	9 Does not apply Baseline year	16 Green Better
Amount of external funding attracted and managed by our teams to support regeneration and recovery – Count Only	£44 million	£41.3 million
The level of external funding for the arts and heritage secured by us – Count Only	£1.33 million	£1.38 million
The number of people attending or participating in: Creative arts, heritage, museums, libraries, Venue Cymru, and Theatr Colwyn activities each year – Count Only	36,974	251,985

2.2. Actions Update

There are seven actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. One is complete, and the remaining six are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
To review our procurement strategy to confirm our ongoing commitment to buy local when appropriate.	Complete	The Procurement Strategy has been completed and was approved by Cabinet in June 2023
Create the right environment to support growth and attract new businesses.	Green On track	<p>We have supported local businesses through Shared Prosperity Funding to the value of £3 million.</p> <p>In 2023 to 2024, 25 businesses across a diverse range of sectors were helped, with projects ranging from the development of new visitor attractions, decarbonisation and green efficiency, and new product manufacturing.</p> <p>We continued to offer Conwy Business Support Grant, averaging 10 enquiries a week.</p> <p>Business Forum work continues in key towns.</p>
Work with our public sector partners to regenerate our town centres across the county in order to stimulate growth and create vibrant 'green' towns.	Green On track	Being delivered through partnerships to maximise reach and benefit. This includes supporting the development of Place Plans, Kickstarter Plans and Community Plans.
Develop the night time economy and winter tourism offer making Conwy a year-round visitor destination and support community regeneration across the county.	Green On track	The night time feasibility project was funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund. Savills were appointed as the company and activity is progressing. Site visits have taken place in key towns within the County (Towyn, Abergele, Llandudno, Conwy, Llanrwst and Betws Y Coed).
Work together with communities, implement the Creu Conwy Culture Strategy and further develop libraries into community hubs to improve well-being, support community regeneration and economic impact, making the most of our county's cultural assets.	Green On track	<p>The Strategy has successfully delivered on the Young Creatives and Winter Sounds Ifanc projects and also supported Take pArt (January 2024). This activity has engaged over 1500 children, young people and their families with creative opportunities.</p> <p>Shared Prosperity projects are now in delivery phase, including Taith, Llenwi (Brilliant Basics – Destination Signage).</p>

Title	Status	Update
Maximise funding opportunities to enable a longer-term view of our capital commitments.	Green On track	We continued to work with UK Government and Welsh Government and other external funders to maximise grant funding opportunities and applying for grant funding where appropriate, for example UK Shared Prosperity Funding and Transforming Town.
Explore opportunities to diversify our economy as a result of our experiences from the pandemic.	Green On track	We now have Regeneration and Place Making Plans (also known as Place Plans) for all our main towns and are in the process of pulling together priorities for each and synergies between them.

2.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

2.3.1. Employment Support

In December 2023, our [Employment Hub](#) Team were successful in securing £292,510 for the Pathways to Employment project, funded by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund. The project targets industries with a labour shortage, and in addition to providing job specific training, all courses will focus on increasing confidence, resilience, wellbeing, team building and employability skills. The team will also help with the completion of CVs, application forms, interview skills, sector specific accredited qualifications, and basic IT skills. Attendees will generally be people that are work-ready or close to being work-ready, and every effort is being made to include people from disadvantaged or challenging backgrounds.

We hosted our third annual Job Expo in February 2023, which was attended by over 1,110 people, with some 90 leading organisations exhibiting. The event was organised by the Conwy Employment Hub in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, Careers Wales, Creating Enterprise, and Conwy Business Support. It shone a light on career opportunities and secured permanent and temporary positions for many candidates. You can read more in this [press release](#).

2.3.2. North Wales Growth Deal

The Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on the North Wales Growth Deal at its meeting in [April 2023](#). The report noted that, following the withdrawal of the Bodelwyddan Key Strategic Site and Llysfasi Net Zero Farm projects from the Growth Deal, the Economic Ambition Board made some key decisions regarding the reallocation of the funding within the deal. A Portfolio Delivery Fund for 2023 to 2024 has been established to support mature projects within the portfolio dealing with cost inflation or viability issues to move into delivery. The Board also agreed the criteria for and an allocation of £13m for the project replacement process. The following four projects were reported as red due to either risks to the project scope or significant delays to project timescales:

- Connecting the last few %.
- Low Carbon Energy Centre of Excellence (Egni).
- Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub.
- Centre for Environmental Biotechnology.

Concerns were raised by members as to the robustness of the private investment strategy, it also being noted that job creation from the deal had been slow. Members were also concerned that there did not appear to be much direct investment for the County of Conwy and asked for an update at a future meeting.

2.3.3. Regeneration

In August 2023, [Cabinet](#) agreed the process for the launch of the Conwy Community Regeneration Key Fund, a competitive grant fund for projects between £10,000 and £249,999, which is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Applications from community focussed organisations were welcomed on a range of projects that meet community need and will contribute to make a visible difference in a local area. In total there was £3 million to allocate. 42 projects were successful, projects ranging from a few thousand pounds for the refurbishment of children's play areas, to a quarter of a million pounds for the renewal of the athletics track at Stadiwm CSM in Eirias Park. More information about the successful projects can be found on our website at: [Community Regeneration Key Fund](#).

In October, we launched a consultation on proposed improvement for Colwyn Bay town centre, which include better pavements, planning, cycling and walking routes, car parking and reduced impact of cars. The Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update on progress with the wider Colwyn Bay Regeneration Programme in [January 2024](#), where the report highlights work undertaken on the renewal of housing, Phase 2b of the Waterfront, coastal defences, and the wider investment and recovery plan for the town. The report also provided a breakdown of costs and gave reassurance around governance, there being a Programme Board in place with agreed terms of reference and interdependencies with other projects clearly mapped and understood. Earlier in the year, [Cabinet](#) approved a Traffic Regulation Order for the town, which related specifically to the work being undertaken on Phase 2b of the Waterfront Project.

Following input from Scrutiny in [September 2023](#), Cabinet approved the Llandudno 10 Year Regeneration Plan in [October](#), which seeks to increase opportunities for funding from Welsh Government and other sources to help regenerate and futureproof the town. Welsh Government had previously advised that areas without a clear strategy would not be prioritised for funding in future. The aim of the plan is to create a reinvigorated Llandudno, making it a distinctive and desirable place in which to live, invest, do business, and visit. As a result, a number of projects and initiatives listed within the plan are aspirational, and external funding will be sought in order to deliver them. The importance of collaborative working with private businesses, Town and Community Councils, partners, stakeholders and community groups is recognised for the success of this work. In January we successfully secured further funding to replace five promenade shelters along the North Shore through a combination of the Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics Scheme and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The new structures will replicate Victorian design and offer residents and visitors opportunity to enjoy the views of Llandudno Bay.

Following recent consultation, Cabinet in [August 2023](#) adopted the Towyn and Kinmel Bay Place Plan as supplementary planning guidance for the area. A place plan seeks to address all those issues that affect the prosperity of a local area, such as the use of land, new development, the built environment, building designs and local character, health and well-being, open spaces, local employment and local facilities.

2.3.4. Levelling-Up Funding

At its meeting in [September](#), the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee were briefed on the decision making process behind Levelling-Up bids, it being

noted that we had not been successful in two of the three bids submitted to round 2 of the fund (Eirias development and Aberconwy Futures), but that £18.6million had been awarded for the Transport Scheme. In [March 2024](#), we were successful in securing a further £10 million in Levelling-Up funding for Venue Cymru to deliver enhanced facilities. For more information on Levelling-Up in Conwy, visit [our website](#).

2.3.5. Local Development Plan

A great deal of work has been undertaken during 2023 to 2024 in support of the replacement Local Development Plan. In [April 2023](#), the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a review of the safeguarded and environmental improvement employment sites, where the importance of safeguarding employment land for economic purposes was recognised, as was protecting recreational and leisure facilities. Cabinet approved the recommended approach outlined in the report for the 31 sites it identified.

The Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in [July 2023](#) considered the Llandudno Holiday Accommodation Study, which reviewed the policy in respect of the appropriate level of serviced accommodation for tourism in Llandudno. The policy proposed no loss of services accommodation and provided support for new, improved, or conversions to services accommodation within the town. It was noted that Houses in Multiple Occupation would not be permitted within the Holiday Accommodation Zone. Cabinet approved the policy at its meeting in [August](#), 2023.

The Conwy Employment Land Review recommends that Conwy County needs between 14 to 20 hectares of usable employment land up to 2033. Some of this land is already available (vacant units, undeveloped plots on existing unconstrained employment sites for example), however, there is a need for around 6 hectares of new land to be allocated in the Replacement Local Development Plan. Following Scrutiny in [June](#), Cabinet gave its approval in [July 2023](#) to proposals for mixed use employment and waste management facilities at three sites at Llanddulas Quarry. The proposal is to fill the quarry voids with inert material to create platforms within these areas, which will generate up to 9.5 hectares of usable employment land.

2.3.6. Destination Management Plan

Scrutiny gave input to the revised Destination Management Plan for 2023 to 2029 in [September](#), which was then adopted by Cabinet in [October](#). The plan, produced by the

Destination Conwy Partnership, articulates an updated vision for tourism in the county, aligning with strategies emerging because of the pandemic, including the Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy Strategy 2035. Sustainability is a key theme in the plan, recognising the importance of balancing the needs of residents with those of visitors, as well as working with local businesses and partners. Eleven objectives are outlined in the plan:

- Increasing the value of tourism across the whole year.
- Ensuring the quality of the visitor and resident experience.
- Engagement of visitors with our heritage: cultural, spoken and built.
- Achieving beneficial outcomes for the local community and visitors through greater engagement.
- Support to address skills and workforce issues.
- The sector working together to improve what we have and to attract new investment.
- Influencing the County Planning Framework to meet the needs of the industry and be flexible enough to work with emerging and existing tourism trends.
- Increasing the use of greener travel and transport infrastructure.
- Ensuring that data supports tourism decision making.
- Ensuring the destination meets resident and visitor expectations in terms of cleanliness, facilities and amenities.

2.3.7. Local Culture Events

We play a key role in supporting local events that benefit the prosperity of communities and supports our county's culture. £700,000 was invested in a brand new pitch at Stadiwm CSM during 2023, meaning that the venue can now offer more consistent pitch use over the winter period when many pitches are waterlogged. The hard wearing pitch surface will also allow for sport festivals with repeated daily use throughout the year. It is the quality of the offer that enabled the Stadiwm to welcome and host Wales and USA Senior Women's Teams during the Women's International Rugby Tournament last autumn. Background on the decision making behind the stadium was considered by the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [September 2023](#). For future events planned at Stadiwm CSM, go to www.visitconwy.org.uk.

Conwy Museums Service purchased a spectacular hoard of Bronze Age artefacts during 2023, thanks to funding from the Arts Council England V and A Purchase Grant Fund and The Headley Trust. The hoard was discovered by Colin Rivett in April 2017, while metal-detecting in Abergele, and consists of thirteen artefacts dated to the late Bronze Age (1200 to 700BC), and provides new evidence for Late Bronze Age occupation in Conwy County. There are also links to be investigated with the Great Orme Bronze Age copper mine, which is around 12 miles from the hoard find spot. Once conserved, the artefacts will go on display at the Conwy Culture Centre, and outreach events are planned, particularly with schools and groups from the Abergele area. To find out more visit www.conwyculture.com.

The Great Orme Tramway held its fourth annual community weekend event on Saturday 30 September and Sunday 1 October, offering half price tickets for local residents. The event is an opportunity to welcome back locals who haven't visited in a while, and to encourage people who haven't yet had the chance to visit to come along for the first time.

2.3.8. Motorhome Visitor Strategy Report

The Motorhome Visitor Strategy Report was presented to Cabinet in [August 2023](#). Concerns had been raised in some communities about unauthorised overnight stays by motorhomes, therefore a study was commissioned to inform the development of a strategy. Gaps in provision were identified in Llandudno, the town of Conwy, and in the Betws y Coed and Capel Curig area. It should be noted, however, that the current planning policy of Snowdonia National Park Authority is not to allow any new camping or caravan sites within the National Park. The report also concluded that the income generated from sites would not likely cover operating costs of capital repayment. There being no overwhelming evidence that justified the need for the Local Authority to provide facilities, it was agreed that private sector visitor facilities were sufficient. The results of neighbouring Gwynedd's pilot programme will be considered.

2.3.9. Section 106 Commuted Sums

Housing developments are typically required to deliver a certain number of affordable houses, proportionate to the number of homes they are building. However, on some developments it's not always possible and it may instead be acceptable to take an off-site 'commuted sum' instead through a 106 agreement. The Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a Section 106 monitoring report at its meeting in [October](#)

[2023](#), which made a recommendation that a front facing register of available and committed balances be published quarterly. During the year £530,000 was received, £190,000 was spent and, £490,000 was committed. There was an available end of year balance of £2,500,000. It was confirmed at the meeting that no unspent money had to be returned to developers. At its meeting later that [same month](#), Council adopted an updated Section 106 Spending Protocol.

2.3.10. Rate Relief Scheme for Businesses

We reminded local businesses not to miss out on [rates relief](#) for 2024 to 2025 in March. Businesses could qualify for 40% relief under the Welsh Government's Retail Leisure and Hospitality Rates Relief Scheme. It is estimated that in Conwy County over 860 premises could benefit from the scheme amounting to a value of over £3.7million. Businesses were also sent information about the scheme with their annual bills. For more information visit www.conwy.gov.uk/businessrates.

3. People in Conwy are educated and skilled

Measures: Amber: Within tolerance

Actions: Green: On track

3.1. Measures Update

The percentage of Year 11 leavers in 2023 (academic year end) not in education, training or employment (NEET) has risen slightly from 1.3% to 2%. This equates to 21 pupils (up from 14), and is in line with the Wales figure (also 2%). 2024 data will be available in November. There has been an increase in positive dialogue between families and schools, which has resulted in a number of learners returning to education. We have also seen an increase in the numbers of learners aged 16 to 18 who are transitioning from formal education to further education, employment or training.

All schools within Conwy engage with learners to understand well-being needs. This takes various forms, from surveys to engagement sessions with learners and young people. Schools will then use the feedback to inform their curriculum development and invest in targeted interventions. We are pleased to report that all educational settings are now participating in Well-being Surveys. In terms of analysing the feedback these, we focus on the whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing and assisting schools to manage the audit tool to ensure compliance with the statutory guidance. Schools have identified specific themes and targeted interventions that they will focus on, and the national dashboard will be updated in September 2025 to show trends across Local Authorities – [Children's Health and Wellbeing Dashboard](#). This continues to be a priority area for us and we are working closely with partner agencies to provide a wide range of support for children and young people.

The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools has declined slightly from 87.3% to 86.6%. This continues to be a concern nationally, and we are working closely with schools and our school improvement partner, GwE, to ensure robust attendance procedures are being applied.

With regards to the percentage of pupils accessing Welsh Medium Education, there has been a single percentage point drop from 23% to 22% during 2023 to 2024. However, this is likely within the realms of acceptable statistical variance, as all other measures concerning Welsh language provision (identified in the table below) sourced from the Pupil Level Annual School Survey have remained static.

All schools have now implemented the new Curriculum for Wales. In the secondary sector, 4 schools were 'early adopters' and introduced the new curriculum for Year 7 learners in September 2022. By September 2023, the new curriculum has been implemented for current years 7 and 8 learners across all secondary schools. The new curriculum was implemented and delivered in all primary schools from September 2022. Specific support continues to be in place for schools to support curriculum design, planning and evaluation.

Supporting Additional Learning Needs, we have developed a template for specific groups of learners; however, work is ongoing to finalise an effective way of collating and summarising information for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) across the whole school population. This year's ALN review report focusses on Conwy funded additional learning provision (ALP), and measures have included attendance, exclusions, literacy, numeracy and teacher assessment of progress towards outcomes and progress across the curriculum. This measure is to be replaced with an annual report on the progress of agreed targeted groups of learners with Additional Learning Needs.

Information on the Carbon footprint of Conwy schools will be available from September 2024. Likewise, data for the all Wales Learning Platform; Youth Service impact on healthy lifestyles; and attendance in primary school is anticipated in September.

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment – Count Only	1.3%	2.0%
The total number of hits to 'HwB' – the all Wales Learning Platform – Count Only	940,334	No data Anticipated September
The percentage of educational settings participating in Well-being Surveys – Benchmarked Locally Target 100%	47% Does not apply New	100% Green Better
The percentage of young people who feel that as a result of being involved in youth service activities they have been encouraged to have a healthier lifestyle – Count Only	89%	No data Anticipated September

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of pupil attendance in primary school – Benchmarked Locally Target 95%	91.5% Does not apply Covid-19	No data Anticipated September
The percentage of pupil attendance in secondary school – Benchmarked Locally Target 94.5%	87.3% Does not apply Covid-19	86.6% Red Worse
The percentage of pupils accessing Welsh medium education (based on school census) – Count Only	23%	22%
The percentage of nursery and reception pupils accessing Welsh medium education (as at Pupil Level Annual School Census) – Count Only	29%	29%
The percentage of primary school age pupils accessing Welsh medium education (as at Pupil Level Annual School Census) – Count Only	25%	25%
The percentage of secondary school age pupils accessing Welsh medium education (as at Pupil Level Annual School Census) – Count Only	20%	20%
The percentage of teachers in Conwy schools whose Welsh ability is Advanced level or above (as collected as part of the school workforce collection) – Count Only	50%	50%

3.2. Actions Update

There are eight actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. All are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
Supporting schools in the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales.	Green On track	Schools have made good progress with implementing the Curriculum for Wales. All schools are on track to realise the steps outlined in the 'Journey to 2022' document. The Estyn profile suggests that skills are well embedded, although there is ongoing development of skills across all 4 skill areas identified in reports. Work towards this improvement is planned or embedded.

Title	Status	Update
<p>Implementing the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act to ensure that all learners with ALN are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>On track to have transferred most Primary age pupils to the new system by December 2024 (8 months ahead of deadline), and the remainder within the transfer period (31st August 2025).</p> <p>We continue to work at an individual school, cluster and whole ALNCO Forum level to support schools and settings to be compliant with their new duties.</p>
<p>Implementing the 21st Century Schools programme so learning environments are fit for purpose, including a focus on carbon reduction and renewable energy.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>The new strategic outline plan has been sent to Welsh Government and went to Cabinet in July 2024 for formal approval. This will provide a clear guide on the infrastructure and Conwy's asset development for the next 9 years</p>
<p>Ensuring that young people have a good awareness of employment opportunities and the appropriate skills to access the world of work.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>A number of projects have been delivered under the umbrella of the Youth Engagement Progression Framework, which encourages young people to re-engage with education, employment and training and the Conwy Employment Hub, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conwy Jobs Expo February 2024. • Drop in information sessions on GCSE and A Level results days, in partnership with Working Wales. • Communities for Work Plus Project provides intensive, employability support, mentoring and training. • Pathways to Employment Project delivering a range of pathway training courses, incorporating sector specific accredited qualifications, employability skills and work placements in growth and priority sectors in Conwy. • Young Person's Toolkit, "Empowering North Wales – Pathways to your Future" developed with the North Wales Skills partnership.

Title	Status	Update
Working with schools to deliver a programme which improves learners' digital skills.	Green On track	<p>The Conwy Digital Strategy has been revised for 2024 to 2025, taking consideration of how schools use devices.</p> <p>The latest allocation of HwB grants has been received.</p> <p>With regards to the IT Education Strategic Plan, we await to see how future work, alongside regional consortia, will ensure that schools improve their teacher skill set and standards of IT competency amongst staff and pupils.</p>
Supporting children and young people to improve or manage their Mental Health and Well-being.	Green On track	We have continued and increased participation with the wellbeing surveys in Primary and Secondary schools. They identify actions for schools to take, relevant to the learners on site.
Supporting children, young people and their families to access education and community-based activities.	Green On track	<p>30 community open access youth provisions are delivered per week, together with 3 targeted community provisions and 3 shared accommodation provisions.</p> <p>We deliver community focused schools family engagement support based in 5 secondary schools to promote family and community, building stronger relationships between school, community and other relevant services. Currently there are 111 open family cases and a waiting list of 26.</p> <p>There are 9 wellbeing workers working across all secondary and Pupil Referral Units to engage with those harder to reach learners who are likely to become 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). There are currently 240 learners supported and a waiting list of 67.</p>

Title	Status	Update
Promoting and further developing Welsh medium education whilst encouraging children and young people to be proud of the Welsh language, its heritage and culture.	Green On track	<p>All school clusters have received curriculum for Wales training to support the teaching of Welsh, as well as other bespoke provision. We continue working with key corporate partners currently on supporting the vision for Welsh medium education.</p> <p>We are working with stakeholders to support schools through the Siarter Iaith (supporting incidental use of Welsh).</p> <p>We have produced the Welsh in education policy that supports the need for Welsh within the recruitment process.</p> <p>We will plan appropriately with our Welsh in Education Grant from Welsh Government to ensure that provision matches the need to improve the use of the Welsh language in all Conwy schools.</p>

3.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

3.3.1. Local Authority Estyn Inspection

Following inspection in November 2023, we were delighted to receive a positive report from Estyn Inspectors. The report's findings were: that we provide strong support to improve the quality of teaching and leadership in our schools and settings; that we work well with the regional school improvement service to deliver an appropriate range of universal and targeted support for leaders and staff; that school leaders have a good understanding of how to access local authority specialist support and welcome the timely advice and guidance officers provide; there is a well-established and effective culture of cross-service working, exemplified clearly by the services offered in Conwy Family Centres; and that the Youth Service provides a broad range of beneficial activities for young people. Two recommendations arose from the inspection:

1. To sharpen processes to improve attendance in the authority's schools and Pupil Referral Units.

2. To refine approaches to improvement planning and ensure that ongoing monitoring and evaluation focuses on the impact of the local authority's work on learners' outcomes and progress.

The report was discussed in greater detail at the Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [March 2024](#). The final report may be read on [Estyn's website](#).

3.3.2. GwE – School Improvement

In [January 2024](#), the Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the annual report from GwE, the regional school improvement consortia. It was noted that a lot of progress had been made within Conwy's Education Service over the last 10 years, and improvement plans were in place for those schools who required additional support. Indeed, we have one of the best inspection profiles in Wales. Through our partnership with GwE, we know our schools and settings well and provides robust and appropriate challenge, as well as effective support and interventions. It was further noted that four secondary schools had successfully adopted the new Curriculum for Wales in 2022, and the remaining secondary schools have adopted the new curriculum for Years 7 and 8 from September 2023. The following areas have been identified as key priorities that need further input from GwE:

- Support to further address the impact of poverty and reduce inequality.
- Continue to support secondary schools using the six-step approach to progressively develop the cross curricular skills.
- Support new, inexperienced and interim headteachers.

3.3.3. School Amalgamation

Between June and August 2023, we consulted upon the proposals for the amalgamation of Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin. The two schools had already been federalised since 2017 under the leadership of the present Headteacher. The results of the consultation were presented to the Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny committee in [September 2023](#), where 26 responses were received, including from pupils and Estyn and all but eight being positive. The amalgamation was formally approved by Cabinet in [January 2024](#), and a revised transitional funding methodology was put in place to support the stability of the amalgamation.

3.3.4. School Transport

In [August 2023](#), we wrote to schools and parents, and issued a press release to remind about the requirement for bus passes to be shown on all school bus journeys. The ‘no pass, no travel policy’ would be enforced from September 2023. This ensures that every eligible child is provided with a seatbelt and can travel safely in their own seat, avoiding overloading or overcrowding where possible. Any questions about school transport arrangements can be answered by Conwy’s Home to School Transport team by emailing home2school@conwy.gov.uk or calling 01492 57 7899.

£6.8 million is spent on school transport, and it is one of the fastest growing costs in our annual budget. Half of this amount relates to discretionary provision, and as such it was necessary to launch a review of services, with a public consultation being launched in February 2024. People were asked for their opinions on discretionary (non-statutory) arrangements, including transport to denominational schools; Gypsy Roma Traveller children school transport within the statutory distance; course continuation following a change of address; dual residency; and post 16 transport. The outcome of the consultation and review will be presented to committees later in 2024.

At its meeting in [March 2024](#), Cabinet considered a report by the Lead Member for Environment, Roads and Facilities and approved the urgent award of contracts pertaining to school transport.

3.3.5. School Loan Requests

In June 2023, [Cabinet](#) approved a loan of £67,344 to Ysgol Cynfran to help the school address financial pressures. The request was first considered by the [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#). Further to this, Cabinet also gave approval for a review of our school loan process, with input from the Schools Budget Forum, and Scrutiny in [December 2023](#). A revised school bridging loan process was approved for 2024 to 2025 by Cabinet in [January 2024](#), with a Schools Loan Application Panel being put in place.

3.3.6. School Catering

In [November 2023](#), our school menu was awarded the Welsh Local Government Association’s (WLGA) ‘Gold Approval Certificate of Compliance’. The food and drink provided in all maintained schools must meet The Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales)

Regulations 2013, which set out nutritional standards and specify values for energy and nutrients for food and drink requirements throughout the school day. Visit [Food in Schools](#) for more information.

Our catering team was also awarded the prestigious Local Authority Caterers Association 'Recognition of Excellence' award in [February 2024](#), sponsored by Welsh Government. This award is for the roll out of the Welsh Government Food in Schools initiative. Since September 2023, seven months ahead of the target date, all children in Conwy County primary schools have been offered [free school meals](#) under the Welsh Government's Universal Primary School Free School Meals initiative, serving some additional 1,500 meals daily. To achieve this, all school kitchens had to be upgraded, including the installation of larger combination ovens, bigger fridges and freezers, conversion from gas to electric, or in some cases a full refit. The total capital investment totalled nearly £2million. In addition, every school kitchen is now paperless.

3.3.7. Sustainable Communities for Learning

At its meeting in [October](#), Cabinet considered and approved a report by the Lead Member for Education for the revised Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. This is a Welsh Government initiative to invest in the physical infrastructure of education facilities to reduce buildings in poor condition. The Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report at its meeting in [September](#). Members were asked to consider our strategic priorities against a scoring matrix, as well as budget availability for the programme.

3.3.8. UK Government Funding

We have worked with the UK Government to deliver a number of key initiatives to support residents, firstly through the Conwy Skills and Employability Programme, which fell under the Community Renewal Fund (see update provided to Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [April 2023](#)), and later the Shared Prosperity funded projects (discussed at [Scrutiny](#) and later approved by [Cabinet](#) in April 2023) that promote adult numeracy, enhance the employability of people with a sensory loss, support volunteering, physical wellbeing, and improve community facilities. In total, [31 projects](#) are set to benefit in Conwy, having been awarded an allocation of over £20m to invest and spend by March 2025.

3.3.9. Youth Support

Our Conwy Youth Service was recognised for the quality of its provision during [September 2023](#), being awarded the gold Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales. Presented to the team at a special event at Coed Pella, Colwyn Bay, the national award demonstrates strength of partnership working, effective use of management information, and creative use of resources to meet the needs of young people. It also recognises and celebrates young people's achievements, as well as the impact youth work and youth workers have made on their personal journeys.

In [September](#), Cabinet approved the demolition of the existing Llandudno Junction Youth and Community Centre and to construct a new Youth and Family Centre. A bid to recover full demolition and construction costs would be submitted to the Welsh Government's Integrating and Rebalancing Capital Fund. The proposal was supported by [Scrutiny](#).

3.3.10. ePetition Against School Cuts

At its meeting in [February 2024](#), Council received an ePetition in relation to stopping cuts to Conwy schools for the financial year 2024 to 2025. The petition received 1,400 signatures. A written response was provided to the Lead Petitioner.

3.3.11. Music Service

Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the sustainability of the Conwy Music Service at its meeting in [March 2024](#). The update provided a brief history of budgetary changes since 2019 and highlighted the service's current dependence on the National Music Plan and grant of £142,275, which had allowed the offer to develop significantly. There would need to be a review of the service should the current grant cease, but for the time being the intention is to continue with the service's development and growth. The report highlighted the excellent work of the service in recent years, which included more varied and valuable options available for young people to engage in music.

4. People in Conwy have access to affordable, appropriate, good quality accommodation that enhances the quality of their lives

Measures: **Amber: Within tolerance**

Actions: **Green: On track**

4.1. Measures Update

We have made good progress with bringing empty properties back into use. In total 78 empty properties that had been vacant for more than 6 months were returned to occupation through our intervention (up from 35). 15 affordable housing units were created by bringing empty dwellings and non-residential property back into use, up from 10 the previous year. This measure will be reported annually going forward owing to the amount of time it takes to bring houses back to occupation.

The number of applicants on the social common housing register is consistent with last year, currently sitting at 1,951.

There has been a positive increase in the percentage of cases where homelessness was prevented, from 68% in 2022 to 2023, to 77% during 2023 to 2024. So too has there been a decrease in the number of days that homeless households spent in alternative accommodation (down to 616 from 703). However, the number of days spent in bed and breakfast accommodation remains fairly static at 146 days (up slightly from 142).

The number of new affordable housing units funded through Conwy's Affordable Housing Development Programme and Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme for intermediate and social is 10 (down from 35) and 37 (down from 57) respectively. The percentage of intermediate and social affordable units secured through Local Development Plan policies has also fallen slightly from 43% to 38%; and the overall percentage of affordable units delivered (of all new housing units) has fallen from 38% to 33%. Although a high number of housing approvals have been issued planning permission, they were not all completed within the period. Additionally there have been issues with contractors going into administration, leading to delays in schemes being delivered. There have also been some delays with acquisitions as Registered Social Landlords had not anticipated the amount of work required to properties. The next reporting period is likely to see an increase in delivery.

Data is pending for the number of intermediate and social affordable housing that have been secured through Local Development Plan policies; and for the number of new affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all new housing units.

Biannual Measures

Title	Year-end 2022 to 2023	Mid-year 2023 to 2024	Year-end 2023 to 2024
Number of applicants on the social common housing register – Count Only	1,964	1,922	1,951
The average number of days that all homeless households spent in bed and breakfast – Count Only	141.9	152.6	145.6
The average number of days that all homeless households spent in other forms of accommodation – Count Only	703.4	669.4	616.5
The percentage of cases where homelessness has been prevented – Count Only	68%	82.43	77%

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The number of new affordable housing units provided during the year as a percentage of all new housing units during the year – Count Only	38%	33%
The number of new affordable housing units (funded through Conwy’s Affordable Housing Development Programme and Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)) provided by size and tenure – Social (including supported housing for vulnerable people) – Benchmarked Locally Target 75	57 Red Worse	37 Red Worse

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The number of new affordable housing units (funded through Conwy's Affordable Housing Development Programme and Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme (TACP)) provided by size and tenure – Intermediate (low-cost home ownership or rent) – Benchmarked Locally Target 40	35 Red Worse	10 Red Worse
The percentage of affordable housing units (secured through Local Development Plan policies) – Intermediate and Social – Count Only	43%	38%
The number of private sector empty properties that had been vacant for more than 6 months that were returned to occupation during the year through direct action by the local authority – Benchmarked Locally Target 20	37 Green Worse	78 Green Better
Number of affordable housing units created by bringing empty dwellings and empty non-residential property back into use – Benchmarked Locally Target 10	10 Green Better	15 Green Better

4.2. Actions Update

There are five actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. All are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
Working to increase the supply of affordable and accessible accommodation.	Green On track	<p>£20,122,835 total funding claim has been received from Social Housing Grant Programme.</p> <p>£832,312.00 secured in Welsh Government grant funding to acquire 3 open market properties and refurbish 2 council assets into housing stock.</p> <p>Land transferred to Registered Social Landlords at Dwygyfylchi and Llandudno.</p> <p>We have established an Affordable Housing Working Group.</p>

Title	Status	Update
<p>Working in partnership we will review our services to further strengthen our homelessness prevention approach, whilst planning for a shift towards rapid rehousing for those experiencing homelessness so that is rare, brief and unrepeated.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>A Housing and Homelessness Board was established in April 2023 to support and monitor the implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. The action plan was agreed and lead for projects shared across partners, including alternative accommodation for single households and creating supply within existing social housing stock through aligned asset management plans. The Head of Strategic Housing commenced in post in February 2024.</p>
<p>Working in partnership to support the stability and quality of the care home sector.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>We have made good progress through the implementation of the market supplement in 2023 and the work on fee setting for 2024 to 2025. Many homes have accepted our fee, and the use of top-up fees has reduced significantly.</p> <p>The biggest concern currently is the residential Elderly Mentally Infirm (EMI) sector which does not have capacity to meet current demand. We are working with several local providers to increase capacity.</p>
<p>Working to encourage and support respectful tourism that protects our most popular locations and promotes all areas of our beautiful county in order to broaden the positive impacts of visitors to the area.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>We are making positive steps with the following already having been approved or coming forward to inform the Deposit RLDP in late 2024:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Holiday Accommodation and Attractions promotion policy. 2. Landscape Assessment and Tourism Implications. 3. Green Wedge Assessment and Tourism implications. 4. Coastal Belt Assessment and Tourism implications. 5. Joint settlement approach with Eryri with regards to tourism promotion and protection. 6. Holiday Accommodation Area protection and promotion.

Title	Status	Update
Working with property owners and private landlords to return empty properties back into use.	Green On track	There is now a fully resourced Empty Homes team in place who have implemented improved approaches. 78 long term empty dwellings have been returned to occupation during the year because of direct action by the team.

4.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

4.3.1. Housing Strategy

In [April 2023](#), Cabinet approved Conwy's four year Housing Support Programme Strategy, which sets out the strategic direction for its housing related support and homeless prevention services. The Housing Support Grant (HSG) Programme is the policy and funding framework for delivering housing related support to vulnerable people in different types of accommodation and across all tenures.

This was followed in [July 2023](#) by approval to consult on the draft Local Housing Strategy 2024 to 2029, which is aligned to the development of Conwy's Local Housing Market Assessment. The consultation on the Local Housing Strategy was approved by [Cabinet in January 2024](#), and launched through a [press release](#) in September 2023. We also invited feedback from the public on the draft Local Housing Market Assessment in [January 2024](#).

4.3.2. Second Homes

Between June and July 2023, we asked the public their opinions about council tax premium on second homes and long-term empty properties. [373](#) responses were received. These, together with an understanding of the experiences of other authorities, formed part of the consideration at [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and then at [Cabinet](#) in October 2023, prior to making a recommendation to [Council](#), which agreed:

a) To charge a 100% Council Tax Premium for both second homes and long-term empty homes from April 2024; and

b) That an indicative level of premium of 200% on both categories from 1 April 2025, with the introduction of an increased premium of 300% for long-term empty properties that have been empty for 5 years or more, subject to review during 2024 to 2025.

These changes will help contribute to bringing long-term empty homes back into use; increase the supply of affordable housing; enhance the sustainability of local communities; and helping meet local housing needs.

In [March 2024](#) Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Leader and Portfolio holder for Finance and Finance Strategy introduced a report in relation to the new planning powers to help manage the level of second homes and holiday lets. The purpose of the report was to consider the five options available to the local planning authority regarding these new planning powers and whether to progress them. The recommendation to Cabinet was to include a new policy approach in the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), with a potential Article 4 Direction in future. Article 4 Direction limits the works that can be carried out without needing planning permission from the council.

4.3.3. Disposal of land and Affordable Housing

As part of the approach to increasing the number of affordable homes, land at Maes y Llan, Dwygyfylchi was transferred to Cartrefi Conwy (see [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in June 2023), and at Cwm Road to a Registered Social Landlord partner (see [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) followed by [Cabinet](#) in February 2024).

Additionally, as part of the Housing and Homelessness Programme, one of the objectives is to focus on acquiring property of strategic importance, which in turn would increase the supply of affordable homes in Conwy. In [October 2023](#) Cabinet resolved that delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Finance in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer to approve purchases or other transactions identified as part of the Housing and Homelessness Programme Board, up to the value of £500,000.

4.3.4. Adaptations

At its meeting in [July 2023](#), Cabinet resolved that the Draft Adaptations Policy be approved for public consultation. The policy sets out the various mechanisms and funding streams to deliver adaptations to the homes of people with a disability. The consultation

was highlighted in a [press release](#) in December 2023 and responses were overall positive. The draft was considered and supported by the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in [January 2024](#), and adopted by Cabinet in [February 2024](#).

4.3.5. Houses in Multiple Occupation

Since the Local Development Plan was adopted there have been a number of policy and legislation changes relating to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and increased pressures on affordable housing supply. In [April 2023](#), the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report proposing a new policy approach for HMOs and for the research briefing paper to be considered as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan. The Committee supported the recommendations and these were then approved by [Cabinet](#) in August 2023.

5. People in Conwy are safe and feel safe

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

5.1. Measures Update

The percentage of staff who have completed mandatory safeguarding training has improved markedly, up from 56% last year and now at 70% for 2023 to 2024. We will continue to promote and monitor this with staff to improve this figure further through 2024 to 2025. The percentage of staff commencing in post with two references continues to be at 100%.

The percentage of staff who have completed cyber essentials training has also increased to 76% (up from 65% in 2022 to 2023). The status remains as amber, however, owing to the importance of this training to help mitigate significant risks around cyber security and safe online use and the need to improve further.

The percentage of people that have avoided the adverse consequence of a fall through Telecare services has increased from 391 to 424. Telecare services are used by over 2000 people. To meet budgetary challenges, Council agreed during 2023 to 2024 to a slight increase in the charge the service by 18p per day, giving a total cost of £7.21 per week. This was discussed by the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in [March 2024](#). It is not possible at this stage to report on the number of people who, by having telecare services, have avoided the adverse consequences of unattended falls for 2023 to 2024.

We are working on a collaborative Formal Response service across North Wales to better safeguard people we support, providing an appropriate response when needed. Multi-agency meetings have taken place raising the issue and benefit of a falls response service. Initial meetings have also taken place between Galw Gofal (North Wales' regional bilingual call monitoring service) management and management at Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and Welsh Ambulance service to discuss current requirements, pressures on the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust and hospitals, and how a falls response team may be funded.

10 publically accessible buildings continue to be designated as 'safe spaces'.

In the past 12 months we have received feedback from residents at 11 different care settings, reflecting upon their experiences within the setting and the way that the service is

supporting them to achieve their well-being goals. Feedback was largely positive and always shared with the Care Provider. All the feedback received has informed our annual social care monitoring process where it is collated alongside other information, and if necessary, used to prepare a detailed improvement plan for the Care Provider.

Biannual Measures

Title	Year-end 2022 to 2023	Mid-year 2023 to 2024	Year-end 2023 to 2024
The percentage of new staff who have completed mandatory safeguarding training – Benchmarked Locally Target 100%	56% Red New	56% Amber Same	70% Amber Better
The percentage of staff commencing in post with 2 references – Benchmarked Locally Target 100%	100% Green Good	100% Amber Good	100% Green Good

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
Number of people who, by having telecare services, have avoided the adverse consequences of unattended falls – Count Only	391	424
Number of publically accessible buildings that are designated 'safe spaces' – Count Only	10	10
The percentage of eligible staff who have completed Cyber essentials training who are required to complete it – Benchmarked Locally Target 100%	65% Amber Better	76% Amber Better

5.2. Actions Update

There are four actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. Three are on track, and one is within tolerance.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
Continuing to train staff and raise awareness that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.	Amber Within tolerance	Safeguarding remains a priority for all services. To ensure staff awareness and the ability to recognise abuse, harm or neglect, we ask that all staff complete mandatory safeguarding training, which promotes safeguarding as everyone's responsibility. Each year we actively promote and raise awareness through safeguarding week and support the White Ribbon awareness campaign for eliminating violence against women domestic abuse and sexual violence.
Working to ensure the safety and quality of care provision and work with providers to remove the need for unregulated care.	Green On track	We achieved an increase in the number of available residential beds in Conwy through negotiation of reasonable fees. We continued to develop a bespoke residential home to accommodate 3 young people with disabilities (Sylva Gardens), and we are also continuing with the remodelling of Glan yr Afon. Work is progressing on developing a specialist smaller placement to accommodate children with critical emotional dysregulation needs. We also worked in partnership with BCUHB to develop the Bwthyn y Ddol Assessment Centre for Children's services, to enable us to work with children to try to avoid long term admission into care.
Working towards making all of our public buildings 'Safe Places'.	Green On track	We met with the National Scheme co-ordinator to progress the implementation of the scheme, which is now dependent on securing funding for the registration fees to allow access to training materials and logging of sites on the national interactive Safe Places online map and App.

Title	Status	Update
Ensuring measures are in place to protect personal and sensitive data on our systems. Raise awareness of and promote cyber security with IT users across the council.	Green On track	We have a good number of security measures in place. We carry out annual testing of IT and Digital Disaster Recovery processes, and annual penetration testing exercises to review security protection measures. We have independent assurance through annual accreditations and certifications, including by the Public Service Network, Payment Card Industry and Cyber Essentials. There is mandatory cyber security and data protection training for all IT users; and an in-person induction for new IT users covers all essential IT policies, security and configuration matters. There was also a Cyber incident workshop training for senior management.

5.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

5.3.1. Public Awareness Campaigns

We regularly raise awareness about specific issues and share information with the public. In July 2023, Conwy's Council Tax Team reminded residents to be vigilant and beware of [phone scams](#) and to remember to protect personal information. In August 2023, Trading Standards issued a press release informing people of new £10,000 fines introduced to tackle [illicit tobacco](#). During the year we also acted on complaints received and carried out [raids on premises](#) targeting sellers of illicit tobacco and vapes.

5.3.2. Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an important priority for us and in November 2023 Conwy issued a [press release](#) highlighting its support for National Safeguarding Week during November 2023. We chose to extend our events to a fortnight of seminars and training to spread information widely between staff and councillors across all services. Our Youth Service also participated in the week with a 'What makes me feel safe' themed art focus. The [winning artwork](#) was recreated in a digital format and displayed in various council owned buildings with public access.

Also in November 2023, the [Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) received the Corporate Safeguarding Board's Annual Report for 2022 to 2023. The report summarised the work completed alongside the Safeguarding Work plan for 2022 to 2023, and outlined safeguarding activity, achievements, and priorities.

5.3.3. Protecting Public Spaces

In August 2023, we announced that, together with North Wales Police, we had extended two [Public Space Protection Orders](#) (PSPOs) for a further three years. The PSPOs are for The Dingle, Eirias Park Bowling Green, and the area known as 'The Donkey Path' in Colwyn Bay. It was felt that there was a continuing need for the orders to prevent crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in these areas. There are four [Current Public Space Protection Orders](#) in place across the county.

5.3.4. Dog Control Protection Orders

The quality of the local environment and our open spaces together with responsible dog ownership are very important to residents and visitors alike. Having legal requirements in place to help ensure responsible dog ownership contributes towards reducing anti-social behaviour and create safer and more welcoming outdoor spaces for dog owners and non-dog owners alike. During 2023 to 2024, we had the opportunity to review the existing Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order, and in August 2023, [Cabinet](#) authorised officers to consult on the proposed Order with the Chief Officer of Police, the local policing body, and appropriate community representatives. The [consultation](#) was launched in September 2023 and the proposal was amended following feedback. These proposals, which included the option to consult further on Dog Control Order at Colwyn Bay Beach, were scrutinised by the [Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and then approved by [Cabinet](#) in October 2023.

5.3.5. Community Safety Partnership Performance

In [October 2023](#), the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the Community Safety Partnership Performance and Statistical Update for 2022 to 2023. The report summarised the activity against the priorities identified by the Regional Safer North Wales Board. Members noted that youth re-offending and anti-social behaviour had increased in some areas, therefore, a review in 6 months of the data would be welcomed. Members also made reference to the importance of youth diversionary activities to assist in combating anti-social behaviour and boredom.

6. People in Conwy are healthy

Measures: **Green: Target met**

Actions: **Green: On track**

6.1. Measures Update

We have seen a 32% increase in visits to our sports and leisure centres (up from 6,475 per 1,000 population during 2022 to 2023 to 8,525 during 2023 to 2024). There has also been a 27% increase in the overall number of Ffit memberships (from 6,047 to 7,708 during 2023 to 2024); but particularly a 50% increase in the take-up of junior Ffit memberships (up from 488 to 732).

The total number of new young carers' needs assessments undertaken during the year has fallen significantly during 2023 to 2024, from 121 to 38. The reason for this was due to a capacity issue within the service earlier in the year. The service has since recruited staff and there should be an improvement in the number of assessments completed going forward.

The definition for our measure around the number of services provided for adults in residential care has changed to reflect the total number of services provided by category, rather than just services that commenced during the year, and is therefore not comparable to the previous year's data. During 2023 to 2024, 983 services were provided to adults in an adult care home setting; 1,674 to those in domiciliary care; and 219 in respite care.

With regards to reablement, 311 packages of support were provided that mitigated the need for support during 2023 to 2024 (up from 213 the previous year), and 75 packages reduced the need for support (up from 57). 164 maintained the need for the same level of support (up from 136), and 198 neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support (down slightly from 203).

Data for measures pertaining to the National Exercise Referral Service is anticipated in November, 2024.

Biannual Measures

Title	Year-end 2022 to 2023	Mid-year 2023 to 2024	Year-end 2023 to 2024
The number of young people (11 to 16) who have a Ffit Junior Membership – Benchmarked Locally Target 750	488 Green Better	550 Amber Better	732 Amber Better
The percentage of National Exercise Referral Service clients who complete the programme – Benchmarked Locally Target 60%	64% Green Better	No data Anticipated November	No data Anticipated November
The percentage of National Exercise Referral Service clients whose health had improved on completion of the programme – Benchmarked Locally Target 75%	68% Green Better	No data Anticipated November	No data Anticipated November
The total number of new young carers needs assessments undertaken during the year – Count Only	121	7	38
The number of visit to local authority sports and leisure centres during the year (cumulative) where the visitor will be participating in physical activity, per 1,000 population – Benchmarked Locally Target 7,343.74	6,475 Green Better	3,815 Green Better	8,525 Green Better

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The number of people who have Ffit Memberships – Benchmarked Locally Target 6,600	6,047 Green Better	7,708 Green Better
The total number of services for adults provided during the year – Adult Care Home – Count Only	No data New to 2023 to 2024	983
The total number of services for adults provided during the year – Domiciliary Care – Count Only	No data New to 2023 to 2024	1,674

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The total number of services for adults provided during the year – Respite care – Count Only	No data New to 2023 to 2024	219
The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year that reduced the need for support – Count Only	57	75
The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year that maintained the need for the same level of support – Count Only	136	164
The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year that mitigated the need for support – Count Only	213	311
The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year that neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support – Count Only	203	198

6.2. Actions Update

There are eight actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. All are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
Working together through our universal and community-based services to alleviate poverty and support people in poverty.	Green On track	A draft poverty-reduction strategy has been developed and is being consulted on. We are exploring the potential of participating in the National Data Bank scheme to assist individuals who can't afford access to digital data. The Conwy Food Partnership (CFP) has been born out of the Sustainable Food Partnership. We have also delivered a Eat Smart, Save Better session. Demand on food banks continues, with referrals for support made through a variety of teams including benefits, welfare rights, family centres and social work teams. Planning has started for the local roll-out of changes to the universal credit system for those who receive child tax credit or working tax credit.

Title	Status	Update
Ensuring that all public facing services identify a champion for poverty and social inclusion.	Green On track	A Poverty Leads Group has now been established. This group is identifying gaps and developing a vision and a strategy for Conwy.
Becoming an Autism Spectrum Condition Aware organisation and maintain our Dementia friendly status.	Green On track	<p>A new autism specific webpage has been developed providing information about autism, local services and activities for autistic people. There is also a new autism staff-training and development programme. Online (eLearning) courses have been added to the learning platform and webpage, and promoted with staff and the public.</p> <p>A neuro-divergence celebration and information event was held in Coed Pella for staff and the public where over 200 people attended.</p> <p>The autism reality experience bus has visited sites across the county, offering autism training and sensory experiences. Over 300 people have accessed the bus during 2023 to 2024.</p> <p>We have funded a number of autism specific projects, supporting local 3rd sector organisations. These include music, art, swimming and social events for autistic children and their families.</p> <p>Conwy Family Centres have also made good progress on being more autism aware with training and learning events. There are weekly sensory play sessions held and networking opportunities for guardians of autistic children.</p> <p>In December 2023, the Alzheimer's Society ceased their Dementia Friendly Communities recognition scheme. However, in North Wales the 6 local authorities are working with partners to develop and establish a North Wales Dementia Friendly Communities Scheme.</p>

Title	Status	Update
<p>Supporting the mental well-being of unpaid carers so that they are able to carry out their important role, and can access help in times of crisis and avoid breakdowns in care.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>There are over 1200 individuals in Conwy who are recognised as unpaid carers. Contracts are in place with a range of providers to support unpaid carers to access support and appropriate respite. A contract with one provider enabled over 8000 hours of short break support during 2023 to 2024. Our third sector carer organisations also provide regular information to carers to raise awareness of well-being resources within their communities and online. The authority website has a section for unpaid carers providing local information, advice and a range of other places to access support.</p> <p>There were 59 active unpaid carers Direct Payments packages during 2023 to 2024. The average cost of a carer package in 2023 to 2024 was £7,663 per annum. This enables carers to take respite. In our rural locality a small group of unpaid carers have pooled their funding to enable their cared-for persons to be supported at home by a sitting service whilst they meet to undertake activities, such as tending allotments, cooking lessons, and in some cases learn new skills. This group has supported attendees to create new friendships and a peer support network at a time of need.</p>
<p>Developing training for staff and members about poverty and social inclusion.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>A member development session has been held to raise awareness of the anti-poverty work taking place across the Local Authority. This was led by the Anti-Poverty Champion.</p> <p>Once the Poverty Strategy is agreed, an action plan will be developed and will include awareness raising and training for both staff and members.</p>
<p>Asking all public facing services to review their offer and check against feedback from complaints or consultation regarding inclusion (pricing, access, and offer).</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>The annual report on complaints and compliments has been published. Themes, areas for improvement and plans for 2024 to 2025 have been identified. We also reviewed feedback on pricing for services to inform future decisions, for example telecare price increases and charging for day services.</p>

Title	Status	Update
<p>Developing a strategy to support the sustainability of the children and adults care sector. This will focus on working with Welsh Government to address funding, parity of esteem with health, and putting in place early interventions that focus on prevention and re-enablement.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>We have a clear strategy and programme of work established to address the sustainability of the Children's Residential Care sector. This includes Bwthyn y Ddol, the remodelling of Glan yr Afon, and further residential placements in progress.</p> <p>Our strategy for disability services is progressing with the developments at Bron y Nant and Sylva Gardens. Partnership work is on-going to establish a range of pathways to support people with learning disabilities to access paid employment.</p> <p>There have been various workshops on a local and regional level to develop a joint strategy for older people with the Local Health Board.</p> <p>We continue to use core funding alongside grant funding to commission a range of support to carers across the county, including much needed respite services. Work is underway to review all services to carers to inform a clear strategy going forward.</p>
<p>Working to make our leisure and cultural teams financially sustained and address barriers to exercise and well-being, so that we can retain affordable community provision for all and provide communities with a wide variety of well-being and exercise choices.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>Investments and improvements to the leisure service continue to yield increases in attendances, membership sales and good engagement and feedback. Income generated from Ffit Conwy memberships achieved over £2 million for the first time and attendances reached over 1 million for the first time since 2012.</p> <p>The leisure app has been downloaded over 35,000 times. Over 55% of all bookings are made online. Social Media engagement has improved significantly since the appointment of a marketing officer to develop this area of our communication with the public.</p> <p>A new inclusion model is in development, which will help identify partially and fully inclusive activities for residents who need it. This model is already seen as good practice by partners such as Active North Wales and Sport Wales.</p> <p>We are working closely with Actif North Wales to deliver more leisure opportunities in communities.</p>

6.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

6.3.1. Recognising Social Workers

During the week commencing March 18, 2024, a series of online events were organised by WeCare Wales to bring people together to celebrate social work and focussed on collaboration, well-being and areas of practice improvement. In Conwy, a further two sessions were arranged for social workers to celebrate International Social Work Day. Social Work is an incredibly rewarding and challenging area of work, so it's important that we take time to recognise everything that our staff do to improve lives in our communities, and to express our thanks for their hard work and dedication.

6.3.2. Sports and Leisure

[Colwyn Bay's Tennis Centre](#) celebrated its 20th anniversary in October 2023. This centre is open to the general public, with 'Pay and Play' sessions of tennis or badminton bookable throughout the week.

The thirteenth [Conwy Sports Awards](#) took place at Venue Cymru in November 2023 to recognise and honour the talented sports people, sports clubs, coaches and volunteers from the county. The event was sponsored by Sport Conwy and was attended by over 320 people from a variety of sporting backgrounds. Ysgol y Gogarth won School of the Year for their wide range of inclusive sporting, health and well-being activities both in school and extracurricular.

We are proud of the fact that we have four of only five remaining free paddling pools in North Wales and we recognise their importance. In [April 2023](#) we issued a press release to inform the public that the paddling pools at Craig y Don, Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr and Rhos on Sea would not be opening in May, in order to undertake necessary anti-slip work. Further updates were released throughout the maintenance schedule to advise on our progress with engaging contractors and undertaking the work, which was reliant on a number of consecutive dry days. Following significant investment and completion of the essential work, the paddling pools reopened in 2024 summer season.

In [January 2024](#), Cabinet approved a 21 year lease extension to Kinmel Bay and Towyn Sports and Recreation Association, which will allow them to secure grant funding for

improvement works to Y Morfa Leisure Centre. The centre is run by the trustees, and community volunteers and provides a wide variety of leisure provision to the local community.

Also in March 2024, we held an information sharing session at Ysgol y Creuddyn about the proposed development of a new 3G artificial sports facility on the existing grassed sports area at the school. The Design Team, the council and Football Association Wales were on hand to answer any questions.

6.3.3. Conwy Excellence Fund

At its meeting in [May 2023](#), Cabinet approved arrangements for the Conwy Excellence Fund, which seeks to talented individuals on their journey to achieving excellence in their given sporting or artistic field. The fund supports access to training, education and resources leading to opportunities to represent county, region, country or the UK. It was agreed that the fund be apportioned into three equal parts, with a maximum cap on the amount awarded at £800. The age limit for applications was set at 30.

6.3.4. Family Centres

Following consideration in [September 2023](#) by the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the future of Llanrwst Family Centre, [Cabinet](#) resolved that we should acquire and refurbish the Church House located on Watling Street, submitting a bid to the Welsh Government's Integrating and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF). At the same Cabinet meeting it was also agreed that the existing Llandudno Junction Youth and Community Centre be demolished and replaced with a purpose built facility, with a further bid to the IRCF for the full demolition and construction costs.

6.3.5. Care facilities

Following the award of the tender in May 2023 by [Cabinet](#), we were pleased to announce in [July 2023](#) that work had started on a new children's assessment centre, Bwthyn y Ddol. This is a partnership project between Conwy, Denbighshire County Council, and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and is aimed at increasing support in North Wales for children with complex needs and their families. The project is funded through the Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund and Housing Care Fund.

The brand new disability respite centre at [Bron y Nant](#) opened its doors in September 2023. The purpose built development in Rhos-on-Sea is home to disability respite services

providing planned respite breaks and an inclusive support centre offering high quality day opportunities. In December 2023 we also announced that we had awarded the contract to build the new Children's Home at [Glan yr Afon](#) in Mochdre.

In September 2023, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Safeguarding sought approval for the development of Sylva Gardens. Following input from [Scrutiny](#), [Cabinet](#) approved the delivery of the regulated residential home services at Sylva Gardens with in-house support provision as the favoured option. In [March 2024](#) Cabinet approved the staffing structure and agreed to the commencing the employment of the first Residential Childcare Workers as soon as possible.

6.3.6 Corporate Parenting

In [June 2023](#), the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee was presented with the Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Team, 2020 to 2022. The report highlighted the achievements across eight distinct themes. Whilst members expressed dissatisfaction in the delay presenting the report to democracy (due to the impact of Covid-19), they thanked the Corporate Parenting team and praised the many projects in place seeking to transform residential and in-house foster care.

6.3.7. Fostering and Adoption

Foster Carers provide a significant and important role for young people. In [August 2023](#), Cabinet agreed to increase fees paid to local authority foster carers alongside increasing levels of support to increase capacity. Despite intensive recruitment campaigns, we have seen a fall in the number of enquiries about becoming a foster carer. There are more than 7,000 children in the care system in Wales but only 3,800 foster families. In October 2023 it was announced that foster carers from Conwy had won a prestigious [Fostering Excellence Award](#), recognising their exceptional contributions. As part of its drive to recruit new foster carers, in February we highlighted a new campaign called '[Bring Something to the Table](#)'. This shared positive stories from existing foster carers and encouraging people to get in touch. For more information about foster caring visit fosterwales.conwy.gov.uk or email fostering@conwy.gov.uk.

During 2023 to 2024 the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the annual Adoption Panel reports covering both [2021 to 2022](#) and [2022 to 2023](#). These reports provided Members with information about the activity of the Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Adoption Panel, and highlighted the challenges and financial impact of

referrals to the Adoption Register for Wales, and subsequent placements made outside of the North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS). Members also expressed concern regarding the Welsh Government Adoption Register for Wales and the financial and resource pressures it places on Local Authorities when placing children. The continuing hard work of staff and carers was acknowledged, providing excellent standards of care and support to children and young people.

6.3.8. Supporting veterans

At a meeting in [January 2024](#), Council voted unanimously to continue the long standing arrangements to provide discretionary support to Armed Forces veterans and their families on low incomes through its existing [Council tax Reduction Scheme](#).

6.3.9. Housing with care (HFC) and Integration and rebalancing capital fund (IRCF)

At Cabinet in [September 2023](#), the Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult and Community Services sought approval of projects to include in Conwy's 10 year Strategic Capital Plan, required by Welsh Government for their Housing with Care Fund (HCF) and Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) funding streams. The Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report in [September 2023](#) and supported the recommendations. The Social Care and Education Capital Programme Board will take responsibility for the submission and oversight of the individual bids for the Capital Projects and present an overview to Scrutiny of its work as part of its normal reporting procedure.

6.3.10. External Regulatory Reports

At its [meeting in May](#), the Governance and Audit Committee welcomed the Care Inspectorate Wales Llys Gogarth Inspection Report. An Inspection had taken place at Llys Gogarth Children's Home in June 2022 to look at well-being, care and support, environment and leadership and management. The inspection's conclusions were very positive and did not identify any areas for improvement or areas of non-compliance. The conclusions highlighted enthusiastic and experienced staff supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes and make progress.

In June 2023, we also received a [letter from Care Inspectorate Wales](#) following its national review of care planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline

(PLO) pre-proceedings. The letter is overall very positive about our procedures, recognising that we take a pro-active approach to incorporating best practice and innovation, and have a systematic approach in place to ensure that the threshold for PLO has been met. Families are always supported to stay together, assisted by an extensive range of bespoke support, and overall the standard of assessments is satisfactory. We have identified the need to further develop and refine our quality assurance processes and systems, and some improvement to record keeping. Monitoring systems overseeing legal aspects also require some development. Feedback from parents was variable, with some not satisfied, but others very complimentary, particularly in relation to communication with the social worker. Care and support planning was acknowledged as timely, and there is evidence of effective partnership working within the safeguarding process. Overall, prevention was seen as a key area of strength. The letter was shared with the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting in [September 2023](#) and an action plan has been developed.

6.3.11. Community Care Information System

Social Services had to respond to the Welsh Government decision to test the market for an alternative solution for an information management system to record all information and interventions pertaining to individuals in receipt of care and support. Following [Scrutiny's](#) consideration of the options in January 2024, [Cabinet](#) approved working with the national team to procure a new system, accepting concerns around costs, on which further detail is expected to follow.

6.3.12. Local Development Plan

Continuing its significant work on the replacement Local Development Plan, the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee was presented with a paper at its meeting in [July 2023](#) that assessed land use in terms of meeting social care needs. It provided an update to the policy approach for care homes and made recommendations for linked policy areas, such as for new developments to be more age and disability friendly. The committee noted the shortage of care homes in some areas and the recent closures of some in the east of the county. Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the paper at its meeting in [August 2023](#).

6.3.13. Children and Communities Grant

At its meeting in [July 2023](#), the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee was presented with a report that highlighted the good work and excellent services available to support families that has taken place during 2022 to 2023, utilising the Welsh Government's Children and Communities Grant. The grant supported Childcare and Play; Communities for Work Plus; Families First; Flying Start (and its expansion); the Child Development Fund; Early Help; Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People at Risk of Offending; and the St David's Day Fund. The report also provided an outline of what was planned for delivery during 2023 to 2024, but noted that grants for Early Help and the Child Development Fund has been discontinued. Where possible we have incorporated elements of these programmes into the main Children and communities Grant, while others have been scaled back or stopped entirely. The report also highlighted a significant risk with regards to the delivery of the phased expansion of Flying Start Childcare. The Welsh Government ring-fenced £638,188 for the delivery of phase 2A (Llandudno) and 2B (South Conwy) of the expansion, and we have done all that we can to recruit staff, child care providers and advertise the service to the families within these communities. The main concern was a lack of child care providers within these communities to meet the need. The Service will continue to liaise with Welsh Government over these issues as expansion progresses.

6.3.14. Social Care and Education Service Development Programme

An update was provided to the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [January 2024](#) on progress with the Social Care and Education Service Development Programme. The programme seeks to deliver a number of service change projects and tasks covering business support to front line service areas, and are based on a mix of staff ideas, responding to service pressures, budgetary challenges, legislative changes, reviews, and national agendas. Developments are varied and focus on Additional Learning Needs transformation; service integration; commissioning of domiciliary care; support for looked after children; and Responsible Individual (RI) regulations.

7. People in Conwy live in a county where the use of Welsh is thriving and people can participate in all aspects of community life through the medium of Welsh

Measures: No status

Actions: **Green: On track**

7.1. Measures Update

The number of Cymraeg (Welsh) promotional activities undertaken has increased significantly during 2023 to 2024 to 1,167 (up from 612). We undertook a wealth of Cymraeg promotion activities throughout the year, both for staff through opportunities for informal conversational Cymraeg, and for the public, including weekly bilingual Story-time, one-off events to promote services to the community (for example with Merched y Wawr), historical societies and school visits, and activities in conjunction with the Creu Conwy programme.

Whilst Conwy aims to fill all 'Welsh Essential' designated posts with people who can speak various levels of Cymraeg, and has been successful at this for a number of years, for 2023 to 2024 93% was achieved. Of the 139 Welsh Essential posts recruited to, Welsh speakers (level 4 and above) were appointed to 129 of them. Additional steps have been put in place to support post designation and recruitment, and the offer of learning support. We always advertise twice before appointing a non-Welsh speaker, and this performance measure does not capture Welsh speakers appointed to Welsh desirable posts.

Welsh language ability is an individual self-assessment, and we frequently see people underscoring their ability owing to their confidence. The percentage of staff who reported they can speak Cymraeg fluently remained static at 26%, whereas the number who can speak some Cymraeg increased one percentage point to 51%. The number of staff who partake in the Welsh in the Workplace offer has increased from 75% to 78%. We actively encouraging everyone to use the Cymraeg they know and not to worry about making mistakes.

We most recently reported on progress towards the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan through the Annual Review Report 2023 to 2024 to the [Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#). The report details the progress made against our targets across seven outcomes and notes that there has been an increase in the number of pupils

accessing Welsh-medium education. The plan sets out how we will carry out our education functions to improve and increase the use of Cymraeg in Education over the next 10 years. We will next be looking to progress Playgroup Cymraeg provision in a number of settings, and supporting category T2 schools further to enhance their Cymraeg provision. We will also look to support English medium secondary schools with improving their Welsh ethos and culture, and improving access to Welsh learning support for staff across the sector.

Biannual Measures

Title	Year-end 2022 to 2023	Mid-year 2023 to 2024	Year-end 2023 to 2024
The number of Welsh promotion activities – Count Only	612	601	1,167

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of posts designated as 'Welsh Essential' which were filled by a Welsh speaker – Benchmarked Locally Target 100%	100% Green Better	93% Red Worse
The percentage of staff who are able to speak Welsh fluently (excluding school-based staff) (levels 4 and 5) – Count Only	26%	26%
The percentage of staff who are able to speak some Welsh (1, 2, 3) – Count Only	50%	51%
The number of staff who take up the Welsh in the Workplace offer – Count Only	75%	78%

7.2. Actions Update

There are two actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. Both are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
<p>Improving the planning and development of Welsh-medium education provision in the County by implementing the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>The first year report has been submitted, and in our letter of approval from Welsh Government, the Minister noted exercises and information that need to be completed within the Second year of the WESP Action Plan. The main focus areas are mapping and scoping exercises to be reviewed within the second year; continue to identify and address shortage and pressure areas in all sectors; continue to analyse school workforce annual Census findings to identify training needs in all sectors.</p> <p>The Welsh in Education policy is currently with schools to endorse and fully adopt, this is expected to be in place by September 2024.</p>
<p>Continuing to promote Welsh language learning opportunities and Welsh language promotion to support Cymraeg 2050, the million Welsh speakers Welsh Government target.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>A range of intensive courses have been available to staff during work hours since June 2019, either to learn Welsh or to improve their language skills. There are currently 8 classes on various levels being held every week.</p> <p>Through the Sgwrsio Scheme (where a learner on intermediate level is paired with a fully conversant Cymraeg speaker in order to chat informally) we now have over 30 pairs who meet regularly.</p>

7.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

7.3.1. Work Welsh Scheme

We are proud to be a bilingual authority and the work we do contributes towards helping the Welsh Government achieve its target of 1 million Welsh speakers. The [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) most recently considered the Work Welsh Scheme's Evaluation Report for 2023 to 2024. Work Welsh is a programme designed to strengthen Welsh language skills in the workplace and has been developed by the National Centre for Learning Welsh and is funded by the Welsh Government. The report

demonstrates the success of the scheme among our workforce during 2023 to 2024, including the introduction of a Hybu Hyder (Confidence Building) course, access to several Blasu (Taster) courses, introduction of combined fifty-fifty course, and the relaunch of the Sgwrsio Scheme (Chatting in Welsh). The committee acknowledged the success of the scheme along with the excellent Welsh language exam results achieved by staff.

7.3.2. Welsh Language Standards Annual Report

[Cabinet](#) were recently presented with the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2023 to 24. Many other council strategies contribute to the standard, including More Than Just Words, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, and the Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. We are pleased to report that we comply with all of the 167 Welsh Standards and have introduced several initiatives to make it easier for people to use Welsh skills in everyday life, including the establishment of a Cymraeg Language Strategic Forum and Welsh Newsletter; sharing of “Word of the Week”; appointing a new Champion for new Welsh speakers; and the development of a new education landing page, called ‘The Welsh Language: A Living Thriving Language’.

7.3.3. Mwy Na Geiriau – More than Just words

At its meeting in [April 2023](#), the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a progress report on the five year More Than Just Words Plan for 2022 to 2027, which is the Welsh Government’s strategic framework to strengthen Welsh language provision in health and social care. Its aim is to support Welsh speakers to receive services in their first language. The More than Just Words Steering Group was established in December 2022 and takes a lead role in ensuring all Social Care services, including commissioned services, are involved in implementing the five year plan, working closely with the Welsh Language Officer to support employees who wish to learn Welsh or use their skills in the workplace.

8. People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to and can actively contribute to a community where their background and identity are valued and respected

Measures: No status

Actions: **Green: On track**

8.1. Measures Update

During 2023 to 2024 we developed a new Strategic Equality Plan: Inclusive Conwy Action Plan (2024 to 2028). Actions relating to Anti-Racist Wales and the LGBTQ+ Plan are captured within this, and will be reported following the conclusion of its first year of delivery (2024 to 2025 financial year).

We continually monitor the accessibility of all webpages and online information using a combination of person based and technical reviewing systems, making improvement where possible.

As part of our Diversity in Democracy Action Plan we are working on a suite of videos to explain the role of a councillor.

Annual Measures

Title	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024
The percentage of actions completed within the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan – Count Only	Does not apply New to 2024 to 2025	Does not apply New to 2024 to 2025
The percentage of actions completed within the LGBTQ+ Plan – Count Only	Does not apply New to 2023 to 2024	Does not apply New to 2024 to 2025
The percentage of Inclusive Conwy actions delivered that should be delivered by year – Count Only	Does not apply New to 2023 to 2024	Does not apply New to 2024 to 2025

8.2. Actions Update

There are four actions listed within this priority in the Corporate. All are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
<p>Continuing to make our communications accessible. We will use plain English and Cymraeg Clir (plain Welsh) and provide translation and interpretation support to ensure people understand what their Council is doing and how they can contribute.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>Digital Accessibility Training has been developed and is now available as part of Corporate Training. However capacity within team to deliver needs reviewing.</p> <p>Projects have been undertaken to restructure and re-write new web page content that is easier to understand, easier to navigate on mobile devices, and complies with Digital Accessibility regulations.</p> <p>We are also exploring free AI software that will support plain English, Welsh translation and Easy read. The software was created by Swindon Council who are providing to all as open source.</p>
<p>Continuing to build our relationship and collaborative initiatives with Town and Community Councils.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>We have been able to source funding and Planning Aid Wales (PAW) consultants have drawn up Kickstarter plans for Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr, Conwy and Llanrwst. All four established a team that PAW worked with to produce a plan for community identified priorities.</p> <p>Bay of Colwyn Town Council have also led on the Place Plan for their area and have supported them to draw down Welsh Government funding to assist with finalising the plan.</p> <p>Owing to a vacancy, a Community Development and Engagement Manager has also been appointed during 2023 to 2024.</p>
<p>Developing plans to support the Diversity in Democracy commitment, public participation strategy, and accessibility and transparency of decisions.</p>	<p>Green On track</p>	<p>Our Diversity in Democracy Action Plan is monitored by the Democratic Services Committee. A draft Public Participation Strategy has also been prepared.</p> <p>All agendas and reports are published on time. 'Open' formal meetings are livestreamed and recorded for public viewing. Decision Notices are published within 7 working days. Minutes are published within 15 working days. The webcasting protocol has also approved by Council.</p>

Title	Status	Update
Ensuring we embrace and support diversity by implementing our Strategic Equality Plan and other equality action plans such as the Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales and LGBTQ+ action plans.	Green On track	The new Inclusive Conwy Plan has been written and was published by the required legislative date of April 1, 2024, along with an action plan, including Anti-Racist Wales and LGBTQ+.

8.3. A round up of news and committee items

The following additional news and committee items took place in this last period in support of this priority.

8.3.1. Anti-Racism Charter

Following a notice of motion at its [meeting in October 2023](#), the Council resolved to adopt the UNISON Anti-Racism Charter, integrating its pledges into its Inclusive Conwy Plan. We were congratulated by the UNISON regional organiser on being the first North Wales authority to sign up to the charter, reaffirming its commitment to equality and social justice.

8.3.2. Debate Not Hate

A further notice of motion was introduced at its [meeting in December 2023](#), following which the Council signed up to the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign. The importance of remaining at all times respectful of others and having no tolerance for abuse was highlighted.

8.3.3. Strategic Equality: Annual Report 2022 to 2023 and Employment Monitoring

We produced our annual Strategic Equality Plan report for consideration by [Scrutiny](#) and [Cabinet](#) in March, alongside the annual Employment Monitoring Report. The annual report highlighted that 15 of 24 identified actions had been completed during the period, and a further seven had started. Two actions had not yet started due to capacity pressures. Annual strategic equality reports may be found on our [website here](#).

8.3.4. Inclusive Conwy

Following the approval of the [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in December 2023, we launched a consultation on our new Strategic Equality Plan. Following consideration of the draft plan by [Scrutiny](#) in March, [Cabinet](#) approved the newly titled, [Inclusive Conwy Plan for 2024 to 2028](#). Through this plan we aim to embed a culture of awareness and individual responsibility amongst staff, that no matter your background or experience, we all have a collective responsibility to promote equity, diversity and inclusion. The plan also incorporates actions from the Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

8.3.5. Review of Polling Districts

At its meeting in [October 2023](#), Council agreed to a review of polling districts and polling places, and for the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary changes to accommodate the new parliamentary constituency boundaries. Pending resolution on a couple of stations where their suitability was questioned by local members, the list of districts and places was approved during Council's meeting in [December 2023](#).

8.3.6. Single Transferable Vote

Council was requested at its [meeting in October 2023](#) to consider the recommendation of the Democratic Services Committee to initiate a consultation on the proposal to change the Council's voting system to a Single Transferable Vote. This is a proportionately representative electoral system in which a person's vote can be transferred to a second or further competing candidate according to the voter's preference. We were required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to make a decision on this issue at least 3 years prior to a local election. Having considered the costs associated with carrying out the consultation, the required amendments to electoral boundaries, and the potential for the change to reduce the number of Independent Elected Members, Council did not support the recommendation.

8.3.7. Democratic Involvement

At its meeting in [May 2023](#), Council received and approved recommendations from the Democratic Services Committee around our Multi-Location Meeting Policy, Webcasting Protocol and Best Practice Guidance. Council also accepted amendments to its Petitions

Scheme, which is a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act, 2021.

Residents were reminded in March of the recent change to legislation that now required people to show a valid photo ID at polling stations to be able to vote. We issued [this press release](#) in support of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May 2024.

8.3.8. Volunteering

Funded by the Spirit of 2012, we collaborated with Community and Voluntary Support Conwy and Disability Arts Cymru to recruit volunteers and connect them with opportunities in the county. 50 volunteers were successfully recruited during 2023, and the project geared up for a fresh recruitment wave in the spring of 2024. If your culture or community organisation is looking for a boost of people power, then become a Volunteer Host with Amdani! Conwy. For more information, visit www.conwyculture.com.

8.3.9. Library Survey and Opening Times

A survey was launched during November 2023 to ask customers for their opinion on library services. This was promoted in all 10 of Conwy's libraries and mobile service. 1,734 adults completed the survey, reporting high levels of satisfaction with the library as an enjoyable safe and inclusive place (95%), and satisfaction in the standard of customer care (96%). 88% of customers said the choice of books was 'very good' or 'good'. 267 children completed the survey and 90% felt the library helped them learn and find things out. The overall rating from children was slightly higher than in our previous survey at 9.1 out of 10. Areas to address due to a decline in satisfaction include opportunities to develop new skills at the library; the helpfulness of health information provided; and ICT facilities.

In February 2024 a consultation was launched to gather opinions on a reduction in opening hours to prevent the closure of any libraries, and to help the service plan for the future. The Education and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet considered the options available in [January](#) and [February](#) respectively, namely: 1. One closed day a week; 2. Compressed opening hours with later opening and earlier closing. An update will be provided to committee later in 2024.

8.3.10. Local Development Plan: Public Consultation

Between November 2023 and January 2024, we launched an extensive [consultation exercise](#) across the county to engage local communities in proposals for site inclusion

within the revised Local Development Plan. A mixture of online and in-person events were held, and were facilitated by Planning Aid Wales. We will be launching formal public consultation events on the replacement Local Development Plan during 2024, dates for which will be promoted on our website.

8.3.11. Local Voice – Gritting

At its meeting in [March 2024](#), the Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a Councillor Call for Action (CCFA) that asked that we reconsider the current provision of gritting on Ty Gwyn Road on the Great Orme. Ty Gwyn is a second priority gritting route, and the road is unsuitable for the winter gritting fleet and could pose a risk to both vehicle operator and residents. Should winter weather be prolonged, other contracted resources would be deployed, such as a tractor. The committee supported a recommendation to Cabinet that further consideration be given to prioritising Ty Gwyn Road and that a broader review be undertaken to re-assess gritting routes and access in order to combat isolation in rural parts of the county.

9. Conwy County Borough Council is resilient

Measures: No status

Actions: **Green: On track**

9.1. Measures Update

There are presently no measures identified as part of our Corporate Plan framework in support of this outcome. Further consideration will be given to key measures as we take forward discussions during 2024 to 2025 on Corporate Plan priorities and the resilience of the council, more closely aligning this priority now to our Conwy Resilience Plan.

Consideration will also be given to some key financial measures around budget variance, savings achieved and our reserve balances.

9.2. Actions Update

There are four actions listed within this priority in the Corporate Plan. All are on track.

Actions

Title	Status	Update
Recognising that our employees are our most important resource, we will inspire great performance as well as support their health, well-being and personal and professional development through a new employee performance management framework (The Conwy Conversation).	Green On track	The Conwy Conversation Project was implemented to strengthen our culture and improve performance by creating more regular 1 to 1 staff discussions and providing all managers with coaching skills. We want an environment where working relationships are more meaningful, where employees feel valued and are listened to. We will monitor the implementation and impact of the Conwy Conversation over the next 12 months.

Title	Status	Update
Implementing our Workwise Framework and hybrid working model, which aims to build and maximise upon the beneficial ways of working realised during lockdowns and to do things differently to the benefit of carbon reduction, staff welfare, service delivery to the public and efficiency across the organisation.	Green On track	The Workwise Project has successfully rolled out the hybrid working model to office based staff and delivered a safe return to the office in line with Welsh Government Guidance. Team Agreements are in place that ensure a good balance between office and remote working that meets both business needs and the worldwide shift to more flexible working. Post project implementation benefits realisation work still continues to ensure that the benefits of the project were fully realised and are on track.
Continuing to develop ways to talk with and listen to our staff.	Green On track	Conwy Conversation check-ins have been developed and are being digitalised through Conwy's HR management system. We also offer opportunities in groups such as Time to Change Champions, the new Equalities Steering Group, and through Managers Forum events. Regular team meetings are also an important mechanism for keeping in touch and listening to staff.
Implement the corporate recruitment project in order to improve our approach to recruitment and retention	Green On track	Phase 1 of the project is now complete. Phase 2 will continue in 2024 to 2025 with a focus on diversity and accessibility in recruitment.

10. Governance Functions

In support of Conwy County Borough Council being resilient, the chapters that follow considers improvement actions and developments (including news and committee items) that have been undertaken during 2023 to 2024 in support of the seven governance areas, namely Corporate Planning, Financial Planning, Performance Management, Risk Management, Workforce Planning, Asset Management and Procurement.

10.1. Corporate Planning

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Corporate Planning is about how we set out and make arrangements to deliver on our strategic objectives.

10.1.1. Senior Management Structure

At the start of the financial year we welcomed the new Head of Law and Governance, which includes the responsibilities of Monitoring Officer. The post had become vacant owing to the appointment of a new Chief Executive.

Further to the deletion of the vacant Strategic Director post, the Chief Executive notified Council in July 2023 of his intention to restructure the Senior Management Team to help address increasing demands. A paper outlining the establishment of a Head of Strategic Housing and subsequent realignment of Head of Service responsibilities was considered by [Scrutiny](#) and [Cabinet](#) in September 2023. Following a recruitment process, the Head of Strategic Housing commenced in post in February 2024.

10.1.2. Annual Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement was presented for approval to the Governance and Audit Committee in [July 2023](#). Accompanying the document were the Local Code of Governance and the Governance Framework. The document is a self-assessment, and seeks to provide assurance of sound governance processes and presents the highest priority issues being managed by us as a council. Although the report presented no significant governance issues, concerns were raised around resource difficulties and the well-being of staff. The statement identified the following self-assessed improvement actions:

1. Implement the Medium Term Financial Plan's actions, including improving the alignment of business and financial planning processes, to help realise our vision.
2. Build on the member induction programme and develop an on-going member training and development plan.
3. Ensure mechanisms are in place to monitor the delivery of key strategies.
4. Ensure that all aspects of governance training are included within our learning and development plan.
5. Review and improve our approach to risk management.
6. Implement the Governance and Audit Committee self-assessment action plan.

10.1.3 Audit Wales Reports

At its meeting in [September 2023](#), the Governance and Audit Committee received a report by Audit Wales on the way in which we had set our Well-being Objectives in 2022. It was a positive report that captured the breadth of work that had taken place to develop the Corporate Plan. The report made only one recommendation, encouraging us to more explicitly consider how we support and works with partners to deliver objectives. It was agreed to map out how our objectives link to those of partner organisations.

At the same meeting, members also considered the annual Assurance and Risk Assessment report, which recognised that we were putting in place arrangements to assure ourselves that we were meeting the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The report also noted that we have a clear vision and strategic support for our approach to decarbonisation and to achieve net zero by 2030; however, to meet that ambition, we need to fully cost our action plan and ensure it is aligned to the Medium Term Financial Plan.

10.1.4. Democratic Arrangements

The elected Council began its year in [May](#) with the election of its Chair and Vice-Chair, with both Councillors Ifor Lloyd and Susan Shotter being respectively re-elected to their roles. Appointments were made to key committees, and agreement reached around the remuneration of committee chairs, following the advice of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales. Council also agreed the timetable of committee meetings for the year, subject to further consultation with appropriate Chairs, Vice-Chairs and the Leader to avoid any clashes with the National Eisteddfod being held in August 2023. Further appointments were made in [July](#) and [October](#) to the Standards Committee, which included the appointment of an independent member. Finally in [December](#), Council reviewed the political balance of its committees, and increased the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Planning Committee and the Democratic Services Committee to 17, and the membership of the Licensing Committees, Senior Employment Committee, and Senior Investigation Committee to 11. New appointments to the Democratic Services Committee and Governance and Audit Committee were subsequently agreed.

In [January 2024](#), Council adopted, pending final proofing and consistency checks, an updated version of the National Model Constitution, which included an update to the

ordinary language guide as required under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

The Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted in [March 2024](#) on scrutiny arrangements for the North Wales Corporate joint Committee. It was acknowledged that effective scrutiny was vital for the success of the Corporate Joint Committee, as its decisions would directly affect local authorities. Scrutiny agreed that a joint committee made up of constituent councils would be the preferred model.

10.2. 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.

10.2.1. Statement of Accounts 2022 to 2023

Every council has a statutory duty to produce a statement of accounts that complies with approved accounting standards. The annual Statement of Accounts reports on our position at the end of the financial year and transactions during that year. The draft Statement of Accounts was reported to Governance and Audit Committee in [September 2023](#), with the final version being formally approved in [May 2024](#) following consideration of the Auditor General's Report on the Financial Statements, which reported his intention to issue an unqualified audit opinion. The delay in the completion of the external audit was as a result of resource issues at Audit Wales.

10.2.2. Budget Pressures 2023 to 2024

We were the first Council in Wales to invite the Welsh Local Government Association to facilitate a Peer Review following the 2023 to 2024 budget setting cycle. The review took place in May 2023 and the report acknowledged that the setting of the 2023 to 2024 budget was universally seen as a difficult and challenging process, especially given the cost of living crisis, inflation, increase in demand and subsequent need to set a 9.9% Council Tax increase and deliver £11.6m of budget reductions. The report recognised that we are keen to learn from the approach that we took in setting the budget and have a determination to improve resilience and deliver change to support financial sustainability. The report and action plan were approved by [Cabinet](#) in October 2023, and we have now largely implemented the action plan.

In [August 2023](#), [November 2023](#), and [February 2024](#), Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet were presented with monitoring reports on revenue activity for the financial year to date. The reports explained that like other councils across the UK, we are continually facing significant budgetary pressures as a result of ongoing inflationary and demand led pressures. Earmarked reserves had been established; however, reserves were limited and the outlook for the year remained challenging. Services were instructed to slow or pause expenditure.

The Governance and Audit Committee were presented with further financial updates in [September 2023](#) and [February 2024](#) to inform them of the financial challenges faced and the work being undertaken to respond to these.

10.2.3. Outturn 2023 to 2024

At the end of the year our expenditure exceeded our income by £1.4m and this was funded by using our reserves. Whilst it would have been preferable not to use our reserves, given the significant financial pressures we faced, including unforeseen costs as a consequence of Storm Babet, it is a credit to the Council that services took appropriate action to contain service expenditure within the budget overall. The excess expenditure was as a result of one off costs.

10.2.4. Budgeting for 2024 to 2025

In September 2023, [Cabinet](#) approved a report that provided the planned timetable and governance arrangements in relation to the Business Planning Framework for 2024 to 2025, which sets out the overall approach to setting the annual budget. It allowed for the submission of business cases to address budgetary pressures, as well as the identification of budget reduction proposals based on the financial outlook. In December 2023 the Leader of the Council issued a [press release](#) emphasising disappointment at the provisional Local Government Settlement 2024 to 2025 for Conwy. The press release explained that yet again Conwy's settlement is the lowest in Wales and it was anticipated that we would receive only a 2% increase, where as other councils received up to 4.72%, with the average across Wales being 3.1%. There followed some very busy months of engagement with local members, officers, partners and communities in order to consider a range of budget proposals. A report to [Cabinet](#) in January 2024 explained that our estimated funding shortfall for 2024 to 2025 was £25.3 million.

A public consultation was held on the 2024 to 2025 Budget position between January 8 and February 2, 2024. The consultation asked our residents which services were most important to them and their communities, and we received 1,652 responses. The detailed results were included as part of the appendices that were presented to [Council](#) in February 2024, where Councillors agreed the budget for the year ahead. A further [press release](#) was issued by the Leader in February that responded to the Welsh Government's consultation on the settlement, explaining the detrimental impact it would have on the range and level of services that we provide.

Setting the budget for the 2024 to 2025 was extremely challenging given the significant pressures as a result of pay and price inflation, increases in interest rates, and increasing demands on services. The revised Medium Term Financial Plan was included as part of the report and sets out our anticipated budget requirement for the next two financial years, and details how we will manage resource requirements within available funds. Following approval of the budget, a [press release](#) was issued explaining that we still faced a significant funding gap, even with the unpalatable Council Tax increase of 9.67%. Council also approved the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024 to 2025 to help those on a low income. For more information on this, [visit our website](#).

The difficulties faced in managing and resourcing our provision of services has been identified as a critical corporate risk and is monitored thorough the political process. This is a critical issue being faced by all of Local Government across the UK.

10.2.5. Reserves and Balances

Our Reserves and Balances Policy was approved by [Cabinet](#) in August 2023, and elected members supported the aim to hold general fund reserve balances at 5% of the net revenue budget. As at March 31, 2024, we hold £4.288m in our general fund, and £57.789 in overall reserves and balances.

10.2.6. Minimum Revenue Provision

Where a Local Authority funds capital expenditure by debt it is a requirement that it sets aside resources each year to repay that debt through a charge to the revenue account (the Minimum Revenue Provision). In accordance with regulatory requirements, Council approved its Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2024 to 2025 at its meeting in [February 2024](#).

10.2.7. Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy, 2024 to 2025

Throughout the 2023 to 2024 financial year, the Governance and Audit Committee were presented with regular updates on Treasury Management activity ([July](#), [September](#) and [November](#) 2023, and [February](#) 2024). The Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet were also presented with regular monitoring reports on the Capital Programme (during [July](#), [September](#) and [November](#) 2023, and [February](#) 2024), noting changes to the overall programme. A report was also taken to Council in [December](#) 2023 recommending a variation to the programme, adding two car park resurfacing schemes in Llanrwst and Llanfairfechan totalling £1.2 million, funded from an external grant and borrowing.

Following the consideration of the [Governance and Audit Committee](#), the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy for 2024 to 2025 were approved by [Council](#) in February, 2024. At the same meeting, following input from Scrutiny, Governance and Audit, and Cabinet, [Council](#) also approved the proposed capital programme for 2024 to 2025. The report recommended a capital programme of £15.7 million. The capital programme will continue to be reported to members reflecting any amendments to the programme throughout the year.

10.2.8. Technology One

The successful implementation of Phase 1 of the New Technology One Financial system went live in October 2023, and successful completion of the year-end processes were delivered. A significant amount of work is taking place to develop Phase 2, which will include contract management, purchase cards, budgeting and forecasting. This will strengthen the long-term resilience of our core financial systems.

10.3. 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 organisation and from our residents.

10.3.1. Corporate Plan Monitoring

We have presented a number of reports throughout the year on Corporate Plan progress. Proposals for Corporate Plan performance measures and targets was presented to the [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and [Cabinet](#) in June, and to [Council](#) in July. The Annual Performance Report and Self-Assessment was presented to the [Governance and Audit Committee](#) in September, and to [Scrutiny](#), [Cabinet](#) and [Council](#) in October 2023. Our six-monthly monitoring reports were then presented to [Scrutiny](#) and [Cabinet](#) in March 2024.

It was agreed at Scrutiny that the format of the latter six-monthly report in particular would be reviewed to include case studies and an evaluation of outcomes. This present performance report is the first of a revised format that will support our approach to an 'ongoing' self-assessment, as encouraged under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, and also better meets accessibility guidelines. The intention is that this report will be updated every six-months, covering April to September and October to March, and will be the vehicle for capturing any in-year regulatory activity and progress, scrutinising measures and their thresholds, and capturing improvement activities raised through the report or our Service Performance Reviews. The report will also capture opinions from a prescribed list of stakeholders under the Act (including residents, staff, businesses, Trade Unions, Town and Community Councils, and Partners) as to how we are performing against our key functions (our priorities and governance areas). The Performance and Improvement Team will be looking to implement a process for this over the coming months, bearing in mind the capacity available of such a small team. Taken as a whole, this body of evidence will form our self-assessment and will be accompanied by an executive summary that draws out key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We will also be looking to bring our reporting timetable forward so that they are more timely, with the end of year report going through committees in summer, and the six-monthly report in the winter.

10.3.2. Director of Social Services Annual Report, 2022 to 2023

The Director of Social Services presented her Annual Report for 2022 to 2023 to the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [July 2023](#), and to Cabinet in [August 2023](#). The report provided information on areas of new development and evaluated performance in relation to achieving our Social Care duties. It was noted that there have been some significant developments over the year that have contributed to our strategic

direction as a council, and that we have good endorsement from service users and carers with the number of complaints falling and receiving over 100 compliments. We continue to make considered efforts to make sure that our services are as efficient as possible; however, this can come at a cost to quality as resources diminish. Nevertheless, we look forward to progressing with our plans, and the most significant programme of work ahead will involve transforming children's care experiences, especially those in high cost placements. The final report may be read on [our website](#).

10.3.3. Programme and Project Management

At the request of the Governance and Audit Committee, a report by our Corporate Modernisation Manager on project and programme management arrangements was presented in [November 2023](#). Assurance was given that our processes were strong, having a clearly defined framework in place, supported by a small dedicated corporate team and tailored software. The framework is reviewed annually to take account of best practice and changes to council policies, procedures and structures. The latest review recommended that the frequency, size and focus of the Management of Programmes and Projects Forum is changed, also putting in place a more formal cycle of 'Health Checks' for significant projects and programmes. The Corporate Modernisation Team also meet regularly with programme and project managers to share good practice and provide mentoring. Recommendations made by [Audit Wales](#) have been incorporated into the framework.

10.3.4. Regulatory Activity Updates

Updates on our progress against external regulatory recommendations were presented to Governance and Audit in [May](#) and [November](#) 2023, giving assurance that agreed actions were being monitored, progressed and reported adequately. Also in May, the Governance and Audit Committee reviewed Audit Wales' [Annual Audit Summary](#) of what they had delivered during 2022 to 2023, and an outline audit plan for 2023 to 2024.

10.3.5. Internal Audit

In [May 2023](#), the Head of Internal Audit presented the team's Annual Report, Annual Plan, and Internal Audit Charter to the Governance and Audit Committee. In total, Internal Audit gave 36 audit opinions during the year, with 22 being of High Assurance, twelve Satisfactory, and two of limited Assurance. No reports returned with a No Assurance rating. It was noted that the number of audit staff (6.3 full time equivalent) was in line with

the all Wales average and was sufficient to deliver planned audits for the year. Further progress reports were presented to the committee in [November](#) and [February](#), including at the latter, a Self-Assessment of audit performance. The report provides assurance that Conwy's Internal Audit Service is now fully compliant against 99.6% of the 305 individual requirements, identifying only one area of partial conformity (impairments to independence or objectivity).

10.3.6. Youth Offending Teams: Joint Inspection

Ofsted, Estyn and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation undertook a joint inspection of education, training and employment services in youth offending teams in England and Wales. The Inspection took place during December 2021 and January 2022. They examined the quality of work delivered by youth offending teams in Conwy and Denbighshire, Camden, Doncaster, Leicester City, Bristol and Salford. The report was published in June 2022, and presented to the Governance and Audit Committee in [February 2024](#). Examples of effective practice work at organisational and case levels were identified together with areas for improvement. The final report can be [accessed here](#). Recommendations are included in the report and an action plan to address these is in place.

10.3.7. Committee Annual Reports

Our Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report was presented to the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [October 2023](#), and to Cabinet in [December 2023](#). 89 reports were considered across 37 meetings, making 134 recommendations to Cabinet or Council and one formal call-in of a decision. 15 policies were developed, and 36 monitoring reports were considered. The report was on the whole a positive one, though there was concern as to the length of meetings and, agreeing with the recent Peer Review, the effectiveness of committees. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs have been tasked with exploring options to make scrutiny more efficient.

The Annual Report of the Governance and Audit Committee was considered by committee members in [July 2023](#) and presented to Council in [October 2023](#). 2022 to 2023 was a year of transition for the committee as its membership adjusted to include eight elected members and four lay members, with one of the latter acting as chair. Changes to the presentation of key documents have been made to give the committee the relevant assurance that they requested around governance. The report highlights the need for the

committee to further improve the effectiveness of professional working relationships and to establish a meaningful partnership with Scrutiny committees. The need for further training and clarification of differences between the role of the committee and that of the scrutiny function was also highlighted during discussion of the report.

In [October 2023](#), Council received the first annual report of the Standards Committee, which provided some background to the committee. During 2022 to 2023 it was noted that the committee has set a programme for independent member visits to town and community council meetings; reviewed the Members' Register of Interested and Registers of Gifts and Hospitality; considered complaints lodged with the Ombudsman; received feedback from the first National Standards Forum; oversaw a comprehensive programme of training on the Members' Code of conduct; and was assured of the work of Group Leaders to promote ethical behaviour.

10.3.8. Complaints and Compliments

At its meeting in [September 2023](#), the Governance and Audit Committee reviewed the combined annual report on Corporate and Social Services Complaints. This was the first report that brought together Corporate Complaints and Compliments and the Social Services Representations, Complaints and Compliments reports, hopefully allowing for greater consistency in complaint procedures. 346 corporate complaints were received during 2022 to 2023. 98 were upheld, 223 not upheld, 15 discontinued, and seven where investigations were not merited. 68% of Stage 1 complaints were dealt with in 10 working days, and 47% of Stage 2 complaints were dealt with in 20 working days. 321 compliments were received during the year, which is consistent with the previous year.

In terms of Social Services there were 22 formal complaints, 100% of which were resolved at Stage 1, and 80% being completed within 15 days – an improvement on previous performance. However, two complex Stage 2 complaints requiring independent investigation were not completed within the year, exceeding the 25 working day timescale. 5 complaints were escalated to the Ombudsman but were either not investigated further or were deemed premature. 151 compliments were received within Social Services, which is an increase on 122 for the previous year.

The most significant lessons resulting from complaints during 2022 to 2023 include the importance of recognising any dissatisfaction; that all communications and procedures are clear and understood by officers; and the need to ensure that all complaint information is

captured and any agreed actions are followed up. The report was approved by Cabinet at its meeting in [October 2023](#).

10.3.9. Panel Performance Assessment

A requirement of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act is to arrange a peer 'Panel Assessment' of council functions, to take place once within the electoral term. We will be discussing these arrangements shortly with managers and elected members (including the Governance and Audit Committee), so that they may help determine the scope of the assessment. Provisionally the scoping document will need to be agreed and the panel appointed by July 2025, with the assessment proposed to take place in the early autumn, 2025.

It is worth noting that a number of managers in Conwy are supporting peer and inspectorate assessment work in other local authorities through the WLGA, Estyn and CIW. This will help inform our Panel Performance Assessment scoping work and preparations, but it is also important for supporting Conwy's own learning from others.

10.4. Risk Management

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

10.4.1. Corporate Risk and Issues Registers

During 2023 to 2024 the Corporate Risk and Issues Registers has continued to be routinely reported to the Governance and Audit Committee (in May and November) and Scrutiny and Cabinet (in April and November). The most recent review took place between November 2023 and January 2024, and was reported to the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [April 2024](#). Risks and issues are identified and monitored through our twice annual service performance review process, internal and external audit reviews, and other internal strategic meetings. Whilst not a requirement, we also invite our external regulators to provide support and challenge to the registers annually.

As part of the most recent review the following amendments were made:-

- An issue was escalated from an existing corporate risk to highlight that Conwy County Borough Council received the lowest Welsh Government settlement in Wales for 2024 to 2025 as part of the Funding Formula.
- Three new risks were identified relating to the inability to replace vehicles, the effective management of contracts, and preparation for end of Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) lines.
- One risk was removed from the Corporate Risk Register relating to member training as a result of management controls being effective.
- It was agreed the risk of increased violence towards elected members and officers should be separated as different control and action measures were identified.

The Corporate Risk and Issues Registers were subsequently approved by [Cabinet in July](#).

10.4.2. Data Protection Audit Action Plan

At its meeting in [September 2023](#), the Governance and Audit Committee received an update from the Head of Regulatory Services on outstanding actions relating to a previous audit on data protection. Ongoing pressures within the department and efforts to recruit to a vacant post was highlighted as a concern, but that agency support had been recruited to assist. Approximately half of the 21 recommendation arising from the audit had been completed, and assurance was given that all recommendations would be addressed prior to the follow-up audit in December. It was also noted that Information Governance and Compliance groups were now in place.

10.4.3. Corporate Health and Safety Report

Our corporate health and safety processes continue to be effective in keeping people safe. In the annual report, presented to the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [October 2023](#), it was highlighted that no interventions were required by the Health and Safety Executive during 2022 to 2023, demonstrating that good levels of health and safety compliance were achieved. The Health and Safety Team had also delivered 95 mandatory training courses with 760 delegates attending face-to-face, and a further 367 undertaking on-line training.

10.5. 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.

10.5.1. Workwise Project

During 2023 to 2024 we reported on the delivery, and subsequent closure of our Workwise Project. A report highlighting progress was shared with the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [April 2023](#), followed by a project closure report in [October 2023](#). The Workwise Project was initiated in June 2020 with a number of objectives focussed on transforming the way we worked during and following the pandemic. The project has successfully delivered on those objectives, but there remained some follow-up actions following its closure, including monitoring and reviewing hybrid working through staff and councillor engagement; making arrangements for customer service improvement; and for the Office Accommodation Project to be set up. The progress of follow-up actions will be reported to the Conwy Opportunities Board.

10.5.2. Hybrid Working Policy

The Hybrid Working Policy was updated and discussed at [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) in October 2023. The policy seeks to provide structure and guidance to employees on how they can work in a flexible and remote way, maximising the advantages, improve recruitment, whilst ensuring that customer service and a 'Team Conwy' ethos are maintained. The policy contained an updated definition of hybrid working to place increased emphasis that staff are office based but have the flexibility to work remotely, and clarifying the role of managers in setting the model for expected office attendance. The policy was approved by [Cabinet](#) in October 2023.

10.5.3. Standby Policy

Standby refers to a payment made to staff for agreeing to be on a Standby rota, so that if there is an emergency, they can be called upon to respond. There are 63 standby arrangements in place and our Standby Policy aims to have a consistent approach to all such arrangements. The policy was supported by [Scrutiny](#) and approved by [Cabinet](#) in December 2023.

10.5.4. Pay Policy

Pay Policy statements must be prepared and approved by the elected Council for each financial year and published on the relevant website by March 31. Council considered and

approved the Local Pay Policy Statement for 2024 to 2025 and the accompanying Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Discretionary Pension Statement at its meeting in [February 2024](#).

10.5.5. Job Evaluation

In [December 2023](#) the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviewed the draft Job Evaluation policy, which brought together an updated Job Evaluation Scheme, operational procedures, frequently asked questions, and role responsibilities. Job evaluation is a recognised scheme that ensures public organisations follow a fair and objective process for determining the depth and breadth of a job role and allocating an appropriate score and protecting the authority from the risk of equal pay claims. Scrutiny supported the policy and it was subsequently approved by [Cabinet](#) in December 2023.

10.5.6. Corporate Redundancy and Restructuring Policy

Following a review of the existing Redundancy Policy, a revised policy was considered by the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [January 2024](#). Members of the committee supported the recommendation subject to clarity in relation to redundancy pay if the 4 week trial period was not successful, and requested that every effort be made to offer staff an Exit Interview. These recommendations were adopted and the policy approved by [Cabinet](#) in January 2024.

10.5.7. Member Development and Training

Member Development and Training was considered in several key committees during 2023 to 2024. In [October 2023](#), Council approved the Member Training and Development Programme for 2023 to 2024 (as recommended by the Democratic Services Committee) and that the following training modules be made mandatory for members:

- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk.
- Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 (The Wales We Want).
- General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2019.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Cyber Security (also for lay members issued with a Council IT device).

The Democratic Services Committee will receive update reports on Member attendance at training and development events on an annual basis.

At the Governance and Audit Committee in [November 2023](#) members considered the Training Needs Self-Assessment. Committee members are required to demonstrate commitment to continual improvement through ensuring the committee has a balance of knowledge and skills to perform all functions, with any skills or knowledge gaps being substituted through a training programme. Members were asked to self-assess each area of core knowledge as outlined in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) training needs checklist. Results of the self-assessments were fed into the committee's Forward Work Plan.

10.5.8. Agency Worker Framework

In [April 2023](#), Cabinet approved the appointment of a temporary worker managed service supplier through the National Procurement Service Provision of Temporary Workers and Supply Teachers Framework Agreement. It was recognised that the contract would provide greater control, a rigorous approach to the governance of agency staff, and a consistency of approach across all services. Members resolved that the direct award to the preferred supplier for a contract period of three years with the option to extend for a further one year.

10.5.9. Social Partnership

Under the Social Partnership and Procurement (Wales) Act 2023, a new Social Partnership Duty comes into force from April 2024. The requirements are intended to ensure that recognised Trade Unions or other representatives of the staff of public bodies are fully and properly involved when a public body sets its Well-being Objectives, or when making strategic decisions about the reasonable steps the body is taking to meet those objectives. This new legislation provides us with an opportunity to formalise the already good work and practice that we have in this area. Within Conwy there is already a strong working relationship between officers and recognised Trade Unions through:

- Quarterly meetings of the Corporate Joint Consultative Committees
- 6 weekly HR meetings with Trade Unions
- 6 weekly Education meetings with Trade Unions
- 6 weekly Environment, Roads and Facilities meetings with Trade Unions

- Attendance at twice yearly Joint Council for Wales meetings
- Joint working on Job Evaluation Panels
- Liaison and informal negotiation regarding conduct matters
- Formal discussions and support for staff regarding formal conduct matters

The formal launch of the Act provides an opportunity to reflect on our current partnership working model and work collaboratively to self-assess if it is still fit for purpose.

10.5.10. Attendance Management

Following a request by the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, an update on the management of staff attendance was presented to the committee in [February 2024](#). This report provided an overview of the mid-year outturn for 2023 to 2024 and an overview of the various measures that are in place to support staff health and well-being. The estimate for 2023 to 2024's number of days lost per full time equivalent member of staff was 10.50 days, with stress and anxiety being the predominant cause of absence. The report noted £2.5 million had been spent on agency staff. The committee requested an annual report to be presented in June 2024, to include information on cost control measures and cost impact.

10.5.11. Audit Wales Report – Springing Forward

At its meeting in [September 2023](#), the Governance and Audit Committee considered an Audit Wales report entitled 'Springing Forward', which sought to examine how we had learned from the pandemic and were strengthening our ability to transform, adapt and maintain the delivery of services, looking specifically at assets and workforce. The report acknowledged that we had a clear Asset Management Plan in place, and a vision for our future workforce. It made the following recommendations for improvement:

1. That we develop a long-term approach to our assets and workforce, which is integrated with other key plans and supported by costed delivery plans; and
2. Further develops the use of benchmarking to inform planning, budget setting and to measure the longer-term success of its asset and workforce initiatives.

The management response to these and action plan was shared with the committee. Work to address both recommendations remain ongoing.

10.6. Asset Management

Below are updates on the governance of our assets. The term assets refers to the management of our estate portfolio (including office buildings and highway infrastructure owned or controlled by us) and digital assets.

10.6.1. Office Rationalisation

During 2023 to 2024, we moved forward with the next phase of rationalising our office accommodation. Discussions were held at both the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in [May](#) and [September 2023](#), and in Cabinet in [June](#) and [September 2023](#) to take forward the outline business case for a one-office strategy and to establish a Project Board to oversee the move. £255,000 was allocated from capital reserves to allow for the development of the full business case. The one-office solution will help us reduce costs, optimise the use of our assets, and reduce our carbon footprint.

In March 2024 we invited [expressions of interest](#) around the future occupation and use of our Bodlondeb Offices. Reassurance has been given that the surrounding woodland, war memorial, and leisure facilities are not included within this. At the time of writing work to progress the sale was still in progress.

At its [meeting in July 2023](#), Cabinet also gave its approval to vacate and seek the disposal of our Mochdre Offices, with Trunk Road and Response Units relocating to the Old Brickworks at Llandudno Junction. The closure report for the Brickworks Regeneration Programme was also presented to the committee in [July 2023](#). Members expressed disappointment that no employment opportunities had been delivered as a result of the programme and as to the lack of strategic vision for the site. However, assurance was given that work would continue on identifying future development opportunities. It was also recognised that the delivery of a number of the expected benefits was linked to the completion of the Waste Transfer Station Project, which would be continuing a number of actions from the programme.

10.6.2. Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

As news emerged during 2023 about concerns surrounding the safety of structures made from Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete, we assured the public that we have a regular inspection programme in place for all properties. Prior to the publication of the Department for Education's revised guidance, we had already supplemented our regime

for all properties that could potentially be affected, by commissioning independent engineers to undertake further testing. The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors, Leader and Cabinet Members closely monitored the situation, and it was eventually confirmed that one of our schools, Ysgol Maes Owen in Kinmel Bay, had RAAC present in its structure. Although the material was found to be in good condition, the school was closed on September 13 as a precaution, and to allow further investigations. Remedial work on two affected areas quickly began, with some classrooms being temporarily moved to the school hall. The school re-opened to all its pupils on October 9, 2023.

10.6.3. Public Toilet Strategy

In September 2023, we invited feedback from the public on the draft Public Toilet Strategy. Although not legally required to provide public toilets, we are committed to finding solutions to delivering a sustainable public toilet service for the benefit of the public and the local economy. The strategy was reviewed by the [Economy and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) in November 2023 and its adoption recommended to [Cabinet](#), with a review to be carried out in six months detailing financial information and expected shortfalls.

10.6.4. Asset Management Task and Finish Group

In [May 2023](#), the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee re-established the Assets Management Task and Finish Group. The purpose of the group is to look at all our assets, both buildings and land, to see whether a commercial approach could be undertaken to maximise their benefit, making recommendations where necessary to improve the efficiency of the portfolio's management.

10.6.5. Property Portfolio

At its meeting in July 2023, following [Scrutiny](#) consideration, [Cabinet](#) approved the sale of the Market Hall site in Colwyn Bay on terms and conditions approved by the County Valuer and Asset Manager. At its meeting in [September 2023](#), Cabinet also approved the sale of land adjacent to Awelfryn on Mount Road, Llanfairfechan.

The former Abergele Youth Centre was in need of significant investment to bring it up to modern standards, and it did not meet the needs of our present youth service provision. The Youth Club was relocated to the Canolfan Dinorben Family Centre, which provides more modern facilities and is better located for activities at Abergele Leisure Centre. The

move has strengthened the youth provision offered in the area, and ensures that our youth service budget is spent on youth activities rather than maintaining an old building. The building was closed at the end of September 2023 and our asset disposal process will be followed to secure the future of this Grade II listed building.

At its meeting in [May 2023](#), Cabinet granted the lease of Plot 7 at Parc Menter Tre Morfa on terms and conditions agreed by the County Valuer and Asset Manager.

10.6.6. Sappers Bridge

[Sappers Bridge](#) was closed on safety grounds, with the timber deck, deck supports, main suspension cables and towers all needing to be replaced. Essentially the entire bridge had to be dismantled and rebuilt. Public consultation took place during November 2023 and we commenced work on this project having secured UK Government's Levelling up Fund.

10.7. Procurement

Below are improvement actions that have been identified in support of this area of governance. Procurement is the process by which councils meets their 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.

10.7.1. Corporate Procurement Strategy

We spend more than £200 million a year with suppliers and third parties on a diverse range of works, goods and services. It is imperative that we manage this spend responsibly and that value for money is achieved. A new Corporate Procurement Strategy was considered by the [Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and approved by [Cabinet](#) in June 2023. It sets out the following key procurement priorities between 2023 and 2028:

- Obtain value for money when procuring all goods, works and services.
- Promote more social value and community benefits through our procurement activity.
- Support our local economies by making procurement more accessible to local businesses and third sector organisations.

- Promote ethical standards and safeguarding amongst our suppliers.
- Contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions in the supply chain as part of Conwy's Decarbonisation Plan.
- Ensure compliance with governance arrangements across the Authority.

A delivery plan has been produced and will be monitored and reported annually to Scrutiny.

10.7.2. Procurement Legislation

The procurement landscape in Wales has changed following the introduction of [three areas of legislation](#) that will affect the way public procurement is undertaken in Wales.

These are:

- The Procurement Act 2023
- The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023
- The Health Service Procurement (Wales) Act 2024

These pieces of legislation require those involved in public sector procurement to do things quite differently. A great deal of work has gone into preparing for implementation and upcoming changes will drive behavioural and cultural transformation across all our services to improve the way contracts for works, goods and services are procured. This change will be a challenge, owing to insufficient capacity, and has been identified as a corporate risk. However, we are working on ways to reduce the risk.

10.7.3. Routine Maintenance Framework

At its meeting in June 2023, [Cabinet](#) approved the procurement approach to Environment, Roads and Facilities Service's annual routine maintenance, awarding contracts to successful suppliers within a single framework that had been split into six lots to ensure best value and surety of cost.

11. Improvement Actions

Throughout the above chapters in this report we have provided a narrative on improvement actions that we are working on. We will continue to work on many of these over the months and years ahead to address the complex challenges that we are facing. Where work is ongoing, we will continue to report on our progress in those areas through

future editions of this report; as well as through our Corporate Risk and Issues reporting, which captures the most significant areas of pressure for us and records the actions we are taking.

Six additional improvement actions have been identified through the production of this annual report:

1. Complete the annual review of the Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2027.
2. Revisit the Performance Management Framework for the Corporate Plan to better explore opportunities for benchmarking.
3. In support of the Annual Self-Assessment, strengthen our processes to gain and consider user perspectives (i.e. from statutory consultees under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021) about our performance against our functions.
4. Review our Service Performance Review process for 2025 to 2026 (strategic actions arising from these will be reported through this Self-Assessment report in future).
5. Review and update our overall Performance Management Framework.
6. Review and update our Risk Management Framework.

Updates will be provided on these actions in future performance reports. We will also include any in-year identified actions from Service Performance Reviews and external regulatory work.

12. Close

We hope that this report has demonstrated that, overall, we are performing well and under difficult circumstances. We continue to face significant budgetary pressure because of a lack of government funding, despite growth in service demand, particularly for our most vulnerable residents, additional responsibilities, and continued inflationary pressures. The scale of the problem cannot be underestimated and seeking a path to financial resilience, whilst best protecting the services that our residents value, remains our key focus. In closing this report, we must gratefully acknowledge and thank staff for their continuing commitment and hard work in striving to deliver excellent quality services for our communities.