

FOCUSED ON OUR PERFORMANCE 2020-2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN WELSH

CONTENTS

WHAT IS WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL?	3
WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH?	3
WHAT IS THE COUNCIL PLAN?	3
WHAT IS THIS?	4
COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND OUR SIX COUNCIL PRIORITIES	4
DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY	5
ENSURING A MODERN AND RESILIENT COUNCIL	6
ENSURING EVERYONE IS SAFE	7
IMPROVING SECONDARY EDUCATION	8
IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT	9
PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (WITH A FOCUS ON IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SERVICES)	10

WHAT IS WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL?

It's the organisation in charge of a whole range of key services for everyone in Wrexham County Borough – things like education, social services, highways maintenance, planning and housing. Every time your recycling is emptied; you walk, cycle or drive on a local road; or you go to school you are using a council service.

The Council is made up of 52 Councillors who are elected every five years in local elections by you as voters. Councillors decide how the council is run and what it will do. Most of their meetings are public, so you can go along and watch or read the records of meetings on the council website.

WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR WREXHAM COUNTY BOROUGH?

Our vision for Wrexham County Borough is that all the people that live here are supported to fulfil their potential, prosper and achieve a high standard of well-being. We will be a strong and inclusive community leader to help make this happen.

Through our vision we are also working towards achieving Wales Well-being Goals. There are seven well-being goals for Wales set out in law through the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We along with other public bodies such as the police, health services and fire work together as a Public Services Board (PSB) to agree objectives for improving the well-being of the County Borough. The things we do as a council must help to achieve our vision and Wales Well-being Goals.

If you want to find out more about the Future Generations (Wales) Act or the work of the Wrexham Public Services Board then follow these links:

Future Generations (Wales) Act

<https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

Wrexham Public Services Board

<https://www.wrexhampsb.org/>

WHAT IS THE COUNCIL PLAN?

Our Council Plan is where we present our well-being objectives and improvement priorities and explain how our activities and programmes will help us to achieve our vision for Wrexham County Borough and Wales Well-being Goals. The Council Plan is focused around six Council Priorities that we think are the most important things we should focus on in improving the County Borough. If you would like to read our full plan then please follow this link:

<https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/service/council-plan-2020-2023>

WHAT IS THIS?

Every year we produce an annual report on our performance against the Council Plan called 'Focused on Our Performance'. This is our report back to you about whether we have done what we said we would do, and if we've met our targets. This report covers the time period of April 2020 to March 2021.

The full report sets out an overall judgement and summary of progress against each of the six Council Priorities, based on performance against our milestones and measures. We have rated our six Council Priorities against our RAYG rating scale below:

- Green meaning our progress is on track.
- Yellow meaning our progress is slightly off track but we do not believe this will impair the outcome.
- Amber meaning our progress is slightly off track and there is a risk that this may impair the outcome.
- Red meaning our progress is off track and there is a risk that the outcome will not be achieved.

What you are reading now is a short and readable version of the full report. If you would like more information on any of the six Council Priorities then the full version of the Focused on Our Performance report is available on Wrexham County Borough Council Plan webpage.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND OUR SIX COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This year was unlike any other year we have seen and therefore progress made is not where we expected it to be when we reviewed the Council Plan. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on all aspects of the County Borough and our sympathies are extended to all our residents of Wrexham County Borough who have been impacted by Covid-19. No one could have predicted the enormity of the pandemic.

We are immensely proud of our communities, our workforce and the thousands of volunteers who encapsulated the 'team spirit' in ensuring our communities were supported through the pandemic.

The pandemic has meant that a lot of our resources were redirected away from our Council Priorities in ensuring our critical services still functioned. We had to redesign our services and pool our resources to respond to the new challenges we faced. Many of the highlights we have drawn upon in this Executive Summary reflect the tireless work and effort undertaken in responding to the pandemic and redirection of our resources.

Examples of actions we took to redirect our resources include:

- Provided accommodation to people who were homeless or rough sleeping during the pandemic.
- Maintained and delivered key critical services with continued face-to-face delivery for Streetscene / Highways and Waste services.
- Prioritised the delivery of the council property emergency repairs scheme to ensure that a 24hr response service was maintained.
- Worked with local businesses and companies giving advice and helping them access Government finance with a total of £3,689,000 paid out in grants.
- Supported schools and childcare settings to remain open to provide childcare to the children of key workers and for those who met the criteria for provision due to vulnerability.

DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY

WE WANTED TO:

- Implement our Wrexham Town Centre Recovery Plan which outlined our planned activity over three themes: Safety, Promotion and Regeneration.
- To be recognised as a hub of industry and commerce in North Wales and a world leader in advance manufacturing, energy and digital sectors.
- Implement our master plan of a small town centre with a mix of retail, entertainment and residential.

Overall performance is: AMBER

WHAT DID WE DO?

- Assisted over 24 businesses in the town centre with over £800,000 property improvement grant funding, secured from Welsh Government.
- Assisted 177 people to undertake 244 online courses, with 173 qualifications being gained.
- We relocated and developed a new Visitor Information Centre in Chester Street complementing the regeneration and investment taking place in this part of the town centre.
- Through the successful work of the Wrexham Gateway Partnership which comprises of Wrexham County Borough Council, economic development, Welsh Government and Wrexham Glyndŵr University we secured £25m through Welsh Government to invest in the Wrexham Gateway Project.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

- The Physical Regeneration Team secured £108,000 for a small grants scheme to support mainly hospitality businesses adapt to social distancing requirements by making use of outdoor space.
- Our Business Team paid out a total of £3,689,000 in Covid-19 Economic Recovery Funds.
- We assisted over 4,500 organisations, representing 36% of the businesses in the County Borough, during what has been an exceptionally challenging period for many enterprises.

WHAT NEXT?

- We intend to move forward as lock down eases with the Wrexham Town Centre Master Plan.
- We are working with Welsh Government to secure funding and acquire unused commercial properties in the town area.
- We have secured further funding to carry out further Green Infrastructure including more innovative and biodiversity projects including Green roofs and walls.
- With the news of new investment from the United States in Wrexham Football Club, it is hoped that this fresh involvement and investment will help support us with the Mold Road corridor regeneration plans.

ENSURING A MODERN AND RESILIENT COUNCIL

WE WANTED TO:

- Deliver the 'Modern Ways of Working' programme to transform our working practices.
- Deliver a new ICT & Digital Strategy and our Organisational Development and Workforce Strategy.
- Ensure the Welsh language continues to thrive within Wrexham County Borough.

Overall performance is: GREEN

WHAT DID WE DO?

- Continued to improve ICT resilience with the completion of a new data centre and upgraded connectivity between office buildings.
- Approved our ICT and Digital Strategy which has set direction for further modernisation and will underpin many new developments in service delivery.
- Continued to improve availability of on-line services, with 24 additional services available online and more than 60,000 service requests received online during the year.
- We have continued our review of office building requirements, and despite inevitable delays during Covid-19 lockdown, construction work has continued to progress well on the development of our modern Community Health and Wellbeing Hub at Crown Buildings.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Throughout the pandemic, vital services have been maintained as a result of the determination and flexibility of our workforce to adapt to new ways of working, underpinned by improved technology and digital systems.
- As a response to the pandemic, our Modern Ways of Working programme has gathered pace, as officers and elected members have adopted new and innovative ways of working throughout the year.
- Customers have used our online MyAccount system to access council services throughout the pandemic, and we have added 15 new services to our online provision, resulting in a 40% increase in the number of service requests received via our website.

WHAT NEXT?

- Continue to prioritise the long term planning of digitisation of services and processes based on customer demand and business impact.
- Continue to evolve our customer service team to ensure optimal use of modern technology.
- Continue to improve digitalisation of internal processes such as our HR systems to increase efficiency in the way we work.

ENSURING EVERYONE IS SAFE

WE WANTED TO:

- Work in collaboration with our partners to tackle crime and disorder.
- Provide access to the right housing for our most vulnerable.
- Place emphasis on our responsibility to tackle equality issues and promote and celebrate the ethnic diversity of our communities to ensure that they are inclusive and welcoming.
- Contribute to our Corporate Safeguarding Strategy, which sets out how we will meet our duties to protect vulnerable adults and children from harm.

Overall Performance is AMBER

WHAT DID WE DO?

- Worked towards the eradication of homelessness and rough sleeping through the purchase and development of a new triage centre and the future development of the Ty Nos site.
- The multi-agency Vulnerable at Risk Management group has continued to work collaboratively to implement solutions to protect the vulnerable and reduce the impacts of anti-social behaviour.
- Used creativity and innovation in the co-delivery of interventions focusing on knife crime, alternatives to exclusions, and anti-social behaviour within the community.
- Secured Home Office funding for a community safety project to reduce acquisitive crime in Queensway, Caia Park.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- Continued to work collaboratively with partners regionally and nationally to deliver the 'Test, Trace and Protect' programme.
- We made over 35,000 welfare calls to tenants to ensure they are safe and supported.
- Ensured early provision of food and supplies issued for children and vulnerable adults delivered through volunteers from our current workforce.

WHAT NEXT?

- Address the backlog of reactive repairs impacted by the pandemic through a new IT system to enable easy identification of backdated and outstanding jobs.
- Deliver a public engagement plan to deliver key messages aiming to promote health and wellbeing, prevent harm, reduce alcohol related and sexual violence and improve public safety.
- Add to council-housing stock through the build and buy programme which has been impacted by Covid-19 through a reviewed approach and the completion of Nant Silyn, the 13 units now on-site at Plas Madoc, and the securing of planning permission for 6 units in Johnstown and 4 in Llay.

IMPROVING SECONDARY EDUCATION

WE WANTED TO

- Ensure all young people in Wrexham County Borough have access to high performing secondary schools.
- Improve secondary school outcomes and to address the recommendations of the 2019 Estyn inspection.
- Implement our Post Inspection Action Plan

Overall performance is: AMBER

WHAT DID WE DO?

- The Youth Work in Education Team, the Youth Justice Service and Active Wrexham, continued to work collaboratively within schools and provide direct support for learners focusing on wellbeing, attendance and providing accredited opportunities that supplement formal qualifications.
- The Healthy Schools team support schools to develop plans to support the health and wellbeing of learners, as part of the School Health Research Network.
- Following additional funding from the Welsh Government, the Counselling Services have been proactive in contributing to the reduction of waiting lists.
- Two secondary schools that were in Estyn Review were both judged by Estyn to have made good progress and therefore removed from category in February 2021.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

- As part of a grant, the service purchased 50 new Chromebooks to support families in immediate need.
- Alongside this, a number of corporate laptops and older laptops were refurbished and made available and 200 mobile 4G internet devices were procured to support families and learners who do not have an appropriate Internet connection at home.
- The primary TRAC team supported 115 pupils with 462 calls made to families. The secondary team made 3108 calls to pupils in Years 7-11 (and often their parents) between April and June 2020.

WHAT NEXT?

- Ensuring that Inspection judgements in secondary schools in Wrexham County Borough compare well with those of secondary schools across Wales.
- Ensuring that the Local Authority and all schools have an improved understanding of pupils' health and well-being will be reviewed on the basis of an evaluation of the impact of Covid-19 and activity adjusted in line with this.
- It is anticipated that a number of learners will require additional support as they reintegrate back in to formal education. A range of potential concerns have been identified and prioritised.

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

WE WANTED TO:

- Play our part in being a globally responsible Wales and as a leader in delivering carbon saving initiatives.
- Develop a Decarbonisation Plan through the Carbon Project Board.
- Continue to focus on maximising connections between communities, balancing looking after our green spaces, habitats and natural environment.
- Commit to ensuring that we continue to manage our waste and involve households, to support meeting our statutory recycling target of 70% by 2025.

Overall performance is: AMBER

WHAT DID WE DO?

- Continued with our ambitious project that has seen the replacement of street lighting across the County Borough to LED, generating significant carbon and financial savings.
- Successfully collected over 5.6 million categories of waste from households, despite having to restrict the opening of our HWRCs due to Welsh Government restrictions.
- We have continued to respond to the worst highway defects and have kept the highway network open and as safe as possible.
- Became one of the leading Welsh local authorities with regard to the installation of electric vehicle charging points in publically accessible car parks. We installed charging points across fourteen of our publically car parks and seven points within our council offices, installed the first 100kw charger in North Wales and established a charging hub in the town centre, with a rapid charging unit and three fast charging stations.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-10 PANDEMIC:

- We successfully delivered and maintained key critical services in an unprecedented global health pandemic to ensure refuse collections continued.
- Continued to deliver waste services despite disruption to our workforce either through illness or isolation.
- Suspended car parking charges as a way of encouraging people back into our town centres.

WHAT NEXT?

- We will continue to explore options for further trials to develop an electric HGV fleet after a successful trial of a refuse wagon.
- Despite setbacks, we continue to increase the number of modern and environmentally responsible fleet vehicles.
- We will continue with our ambitious active travel initiative.

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (WITH A FOCUS ON IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

WE WANTED TO:

- Focus on prevention and early intervention services.
- Prioritise improving children's social care services.
- Promote good health and well-being.

Overall performance is: YELLOW

WHAT DID WE DO?

- The Accelerated Improvement Board delivered sustained improvement over the year. Positive improvement trends in performance were achieved, in line with the milestones set in the AIB action plan.
- We continued to develop and prioritise our offer to people living with dementia and their families. We retained recognition from Alzheimer's Society as 'Working towards being a Dementia Friendly Local Authority.
- The Corporate Health Programme continues to support the health and well-being of our employees, with a particular focus on supporting mental well-being and involvement activities.
- We have seen our young people's attendance at case conferences grow. Our young people have demonstrated that they prefer to attend virtually and are familiar with using virtual apps.

RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

- The Active Wrexham Team developed a range of online opportunities for people to remain active through lockdowns.
- We distributed iPads to care homes to support virtual visiting with families, GP appointments and intergenerational projects.
- The Family Information Service continued to provide support to families of pre-school age and vulnerable school aged children through their Rainbow Scheme. Rainbow Activity Bags were provided to support resilience and well-being during periods of self-isolation.

WHAT NEXT?

- Develop and implement our Looked after Children Reduction Plan, which includes the Special Guardianship Offer, and the new Prevention Framework.
- Continue to work hard to recruit more foster carers. A number of assessments are underway for new foster carers and there is a clear plan going forward.
- Develop local plans and initiatives to strengthen and provide sustainability to the domiciliary care market.
- Our Workforce Development Team continues to provide a wide range of training opportunities for the social care sector. The regional Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme grant application was confirmed in April 2021.

**Thank you for reading our annual Focused on
Our Performance Report - Executive Summary**

Tell us what you think

We welcome your views and suggestions about how we might improve. If you think we've missed something, or that we're focusing on the wrong things, tell us. We want our plans to focus on the things that matter to local people.

Email: telluswhatyouthink@wrexham.gov.uk