

Wrexham County Borough Council

Self-Assessment

2021/22

This document is also available in Welsh



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1. Introduction

Self- assessment is important to any organisation and is a way of critically, and honestly, reviewing the current position in order to make decisions on how to secure improvements for the future. New legislation in Wales (Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021) requires councils to keep under their performance under review through self-assessment. At its simplest level it ensures we are asking annually:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What and how can we do better?

This report reflects our findings from our first self-assessment and in line with the new legislation considers whether we are:

- exercising our functions effectively;
- using our resources economically, efficiently, and effectively; and
- using governance that is effective for securing the above.

It also identifies areas for development, progress against which will be reported in the 2022-23 report.

2. Our approach to self-assessment 2021-22

Self-assessment is already an integral part of our performance management framework which helps us to identify areas where support for improvement is most required in order to be able to deliver against our priorities, whilst remaining flexible and innovative in order to respond to the changing environment in which we operate.

Self-assessment as an improvement tool is embedded across the council – from self-assessment at individual service level, to cross-cutting and thematic levels, such as when we assess our performance against our Council Plan or the effectiveness of our governance framework.

In developing our approach to the new Self-assessment requirement as defined in the legislation, we have drawn on the Act's Statutory Guidance. As such, it is structured around the following governance themes:

- **Performance outcomes:** The council's commitment to its vision and achieving performance outcomes across the council, whilst considering the progress made in achieving the Council Plan Well-being Objectives and Improvement Priorities.
- **Corporate planning:** The council's capacity to define and plan sustainable outcomes. Considering if decisions made include views from all stakeholders, further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources.
- **Leadership & organisational culture:** The appropriateness of the council's structures and leadership capacity to enable the council to fulfil its own mandate while continually developing the skills and experience of the leadership to respond to future demands.
- **Performance management:** The effectiveness of the council's performance management system in facilitating a process to ensure the achievement of intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions.
- **Financial planning:** The proficiency of the council's system of financial management in underpinning and setting the context of decision-making, implementation of policies and achievement of intended outcomes.
- **Risk management:** The council's risk management processes as an integral part of a performance management system and considering how well risk is addressed as part of all decision making.
- **Workforce planning:** The extent to which the council has systems in place to develop the workforce to ensure it has the capacity to respond to change over time and has the skills and experience of leadership and the workforce to fulfil its functions.
- **Assets:** The effectiveness of the council's assessment management to ensure effective service provision and value for money.

- **Procurement:** The efficiency of the council's procurement process in being sustainable, achieving value for money and generating benefits for local people and the local economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.

Our assessment process is underpinned by an assessment against the good governance principles set out in CIPFA/SOLACE's 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' and our own governance framework, and we have used this framework to define what good performance in each of these areas looks like. Our process has included a review of available evidence and challenge sessions with our Senior Leadership Team, key officers and our elected members.

The Statutory Guidance states that the Self-assessment report should be accessible and succinct, therefore it offers a high level and strategic summary of our performance against the nine themes. It identifies those areas in which the council is progressing well, as well as areas for development and these are set out in each of the themes (section 4).

3. Summary of our self-assessment 2021-22

In undertaking the assessment, we have judged our performance using the following rating:










GREEN: Consistently good performance with minimal areas for development.

YELLOW: Good performance with strengths outweighing areas for development.

AMBER: Satisfactory performance, but investment and increased capacity may be required in a number of key areas.

RED: Weak performance and actions to improve unclear.

A summary of our self-assessment against the nine themes for the year 2021-22 is set out below.

-  Performance outcomes (Amber)
-  Corporate planning (Green)
-  Leadership & organisational culture (Yellow)
-  Performance management (Yellow)
-  Financial planning (Yellow)
-  Risk management (Yellow)
-  Workforce planning (Yellow)
-  Assets (Amber)
-  Procurement (Yellow)

Details of how we have reached these judgements, along with the areas we have identified for development are contained in the next section. A list of some of the key sources of evidence we have used in reaching these judgements is available at appendix 1.

4. Assessment against our self-assessment themes

Theme: Performance outcomes

The council's commitment to its vision and the Well-being Objectives and Improvement Priorities are reflected in the progress made in achieving the agreed outcomes. New actions and interventions should be agreed, to adapt and respond where progress in achieving outcomes is off track or impacted by external challenges. Outcomes that are not on track are highlighted through the performance management framework. In light of the challenge of the pandemic, evidence of progress and decision making in respect of the developing landscape should be evident in pursuing the council's vision.

Our current well-being objectives are set out in the Council Plan (2020-23) which was agreed by Council in 2020, and reviewed in 2022. The Council Plan also demonstrates how our well-being objectives help deliver on Wales' Well-being Goals.

We report on our performance against the objectives quarterly to elected members, twice a year to the Executive Board, and annually to the public via our annual performance report. A summary of our how we have assessed our performance against these objectives in terms of being placed to achieve the objectives in the final year of the Plan (2022-23), is set out below. Full detail can be found in the most recent annual performance report.

The achievement of the outcomes of the six Council Priorities has shown significant improvement at the end of 2021/22:

- Two priorities assessed as green (progress is on track)
- Two priorities assessed as yellow (our progress is slightly off track at the time of reporting but we do not believe this will impair the overall outcome)
- Two priorities assessed as amber (our progress is slightly off track at the time of reporting and there is a risk that this may impair the outcome)
- No priorities assessed as red (our progress is off track and there is a risk that the outcome will not be achieved)

As a whole, as we enter the final year of our current Council Plan, achievement against the Plan is judged to be Yellow: slightly off track at the time of reporting with the judgement that we do not believe this will impair the overall outcome at the end of 2022/23.

WELL-BEING OBJECTIVE / COUNCIL PRIORITY	RAYG Rating 2020/21	RAYG Rating 2021/22
Developing the Economy	Amber	Amber
Ensuring a Modern and Resilient Council	Green	Green
Ensuring Everyone is Safe	Amber	Amber
Improving the Environment	Amber	Green
Improving Secondary Education	Amber	Yellow
Promoting Good Health and Well-being (with a focus on improving children's services)	Yellow	Yellow

Four priority areas have sustained progress and two improved. No priorities have declined in the likelihood of achieving the outcomes at the end of the Council Plan. 'Developing the Economy' and 'Ensuring Everyone is Safe' are both rated as Amber, however these two priorities have been significantly impacted due to lockdown with many projects and activities suspended and resources redirected. Housing have been particularly impacted because of supply chain issues and availability of contractors. Ensuring a Modern and Resilient Council has seen a number of success with the Modern Ways of Working programme accelerated as a result of the pandemic.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Amber

We have reached this conclusion because we demonstrate satisfactory performance, but investment and increased capacity may be required in a number of key areas.

Strengths

- Continued improvements seen in improvement areas, with those regulated by outside agencies seeing an improvement in key areas identified.
- External Regulatory Bodies, CIW and Estyn both concluded that both Chief Officers are raising ambitions and driving improvement towards a satisfactory level.
- Improvement seen in Council Priorities overall from 2020/21 to 2021/22.
- Equality objectives overall have seen good progress with particular success achieved in schemes supporting vulnerable people within the County Borough and events to support community cohesion.

Areas for development

- Continue to deliver on our Council Priorities and improve progress of Council Priorities assessed as amber.
- Continue our corporate and service improvement journeys evidenced in priorities linked to external regulatory bodies:
- Achieve adequate/satisfactory ratings from Estyn (to improve secondary school education) outcomes.
- Maintain and continue with improvements to achieve a good standard of service in children's social care in accordance with CIW expectations to ensure the needs of children are met.
- Continue our improvement journey in those corporate or service areas with agreed improvement plans or senior restructures in place – De-carbonisation (corporate); Planning (service); and Housing (service).

Theme: Corporate Planning

The long-term nature and impact of many of local government's responsibilities mean that it should define and plan outcomes and that these should be sustainable. Decisions should further the authority's purpose, contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, and remain within the limits of authority and resources. Input from all groups of stakeholders, including citizens, service users, and institutional stakeholders, is vital to the success of this process and in balancing competing demands when determining priorities for the finite resources available.

We have a clear vision, for the County Borough, which informs our ambition, our well-being priorities and our corporate planning processes.

- We publish our Council Plan which sets out clearly our well-being objectives and identifies how they contribute to Wales' Well-being Goals. The Plan sets the context and focus of the objective, defines what success will look like and sets our clear milestones and measures. The Plan includes a section on our finances which clearly reflect the challenges the council is facing and helps set the context within which we are operating.
- We work regionally and in partnership to ensure that our corporate planning reflects regional issues and priorities – for example Public Services Boards, North Wales Economic Ambition Board and Mersey Dee Alliance and as Chair of the Regional Leadership Board.
- We have effective performance management processes in place to develop and deliver our objectives – this is underpinned by six Priority Boards who have responsibility for challenging performance and enabling the achievement of our aims and objectives.
- We have comprehensive service planning guidance to support services in their own planning processes.
- Our Personal Review and Development (PRD) processes ensure that service activities are focussed on achieving objectives and service requirements.
- We involve the public and our stakeholders in our planning, and understand the intended impact of achieving our outcomes upon them.
- Our Strategic Equality Objectives have been embedded in our well-being objectives to ensure we remain focussed upon them in the way we deliver our services.

We take a long-term view and plan sustainable outcomes within resources and manage risks to the achievement of our outcomes.

- Our current Council Plan is a three year plan which we review and agree annually. Our next Plan will be developed with our new Council in 2022 and will be for a five year period. This recognises the long term nature of our objectives, but also gives us the flexibility to re-focus as necessary – in the 2021/22 review we re-focused our 'Improving the Environment' objective to 'Developing and Decarbonising our Environment' to reflect our commitment to addressing the climate emergency.

- Decisions about budgets and resources are aligned to the achievement of priorities and have a clear narrative for our stakeholders about the resources available to us.
- Priority Boards consider risks to the achievement of our objectives.
- The sustainable development principle is embedded within our approach to corporate planning and we recognise that making the best use of our resources requires a broader definition than 'finance' – we need to balance economic, social and environmental impact of our policies and plans.

We invite and facilitate constructive challenge and debate on priorities, outcomes and targets, including consulting with the public and our stakeholders.

- Our well-being objectives are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain realistic and achievable – this involves target challenge sessions with Priority Boards and elected members. Our six Priority Boards provide challenge on a quarterly basis ensuring interventions are identified and opportunities maximised and performance information is available to elected members quarterly.
- We have a clear, high level Involvement Strategy in place which emphasises the importance of working collaboratively with our residents, stakeholders and partners through engagement, consultation and co-production. Our Strategy will be reviewed in 2022-23.
- We use information from our and our partners' involvement activities, as well as consulting specifically on our proposed objectives. We are working regionally through the Public Services Board to improve the co-ordination and use of involvement activities across North Wales and the Wrexham Public Services' Board's Well-being Assessment which was completed in 2021-22 will be a key source of evidence we will use to inform the development of our next Council Plan and our service planning more broadly.
- Our involvement activities with the public are returning to pre-Covid levels and our 'Modern Ways of Working' programme, which accelerated during the pandemic, has expanded the opportunities for remote access to involvement activities. Going forward we recognise the need to improve the co-ordination of our involvement activities across the council.
- Our Strategic Equality objectives include a focus on improving diversity in local government and ensuring under-represented groups are able to play a full role in supporting and representing their communities' voices.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Green

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate consistently good performance with minimal areas for development.

Strengths

- Our vision for the County Borough provides a clear focus for our well-being objectives and services.
- We are active at a regional level in key partnership bodies and our corporate planning reflects regional issues and priorities.
- We have robust corporate planning processes in place, which are long term, but which are flexible to enable us to be responsive.
- We use intelligence from a range of sources to inform our corporate planning and involve our stakeholders.
- We have effective performance and risk management processes in place.

Areas for development

- Enabling organisational and community resilience.
- Improve the coordination and evaluation of involvement activity to ensure the public and stakeholders are effectively involved in our corporate and service planning.
- Improve information and evidence available to decision makers to make it clear how decisions will contribute to intended benefits and outcomes, including the climate and carbon implications of all decisions.

Theme: Leadership and Organisational Culture

Local government needs appropriate structures and leadership. The council should ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its own mandate and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. As both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, the council should continually develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual employees. Leadership in local government entities is strengthened by the participation of people with many different types of backgrounds, reflecting the structure and diversity.

We are a strong community leader – at both local and regional levels. Recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic benefitted from our proactive engagement at both a regional and local level, and our planning and decision-making processes showed strong, and consistent collective leadership.

We have maintained our focus on our corporate and service improvement journey – including the development of improvement plans, senior management restructures and the commissioning of independent reviews. There is an ambitious approach to ensuring that current and future economic opportunities are maximised, with a focus on community resilience.

We have ensured that we have appropriate structures and leadership in place to operate efficiently and achieve intended outcomes and there are effective relationships between senior leaders and Lead Members.

- Succession planning for Senior Leadership Team (SLT) – skilled leadership team to be fully implemented in 2022. Structured to drive forward Council Plan and priority areas.
- Senior leaders and elected members SLT and Lead Members work closely to agree direction – expectations of respectful working relationships set out in clear principles and terms of reference.
- Officer / Elected Member Protocol, encouraging effective relationships and leading with integrity, reviewed and in place and supported by the Monitoring Officer role.

Our decision-making processes are clear and we are committed to developing the capabilities of elected members and senior management to achieve effective leadership.

- The council's Constitution sets out the council's decision-making processes. A forward work programme of upcoming decisions is published on the website.
- There is a recognition of the importance of ensuring the new Council (post local government elections scheduled for May 2022) is provided with clear messages in respect of values and behaviours and a positive and effective working culture between officers and elected members. Focused work undertaken to ensure a comprehensive induction programme for new and returning elected members.

- Member Development Strategy promotes a clear and shared understanding of elected members' roles and provides for an ongoing skills and knowledge programme of development opportunities for all members. Core training includes ethics and standards, adherence to the rule of law.
- The Council's Standards Committee completed a comprehensive review of the standards framework which was reported to Council.
- Workforce Development provide support and development to ensure leaders have the right skills to implement change and achieve outcomes – including the delivery of a Leadership Academy for senior leaders and a focus in key areas e.g. Social Care Leadership Development Programme.
- External regulators' recognition of improved leadership in service areas identified as requiring improvement – Estyn / CIW.
- Focus on developing a coaching management culture to ensure capabilities are developed to support succession planning.

Our leadership is committed to an open culture, has a strong commitment to ethical values and achieving improved outcomes.

- Robust policies, induction and training regarding expectations of and codes of conduct for employees and elected members. Employees' Performance Review & Development (PRD) processes provide an opportunity for the council's cultural expectations to be communicated with the workforce on an individual basis via its behavioural competencies, as well as demonstrating how an individual contributes to the achievement of the council's priorities.
- Organisational Development and Workforce Strategy (OD&WS) in place to support us in developing a culture where employees and elected members feel involved, valued and empowered and have the right skills to enable them to deliver efficient services.
- Mandatory training for all employees on key areas of legislation (such as equalities and diversity, Welsh Language Standards, etc.) Evidence shows the majority of PRDs are completed within expected timeframes.
- Our leadership is committed to openness and constructive feedback. The latest available employee survey in 2020 shows an overall positive response to senior leadership: it shows an improving trend in overall employee engagement with the survey and sustained improvement in relation to the workforce's view that the Council has a clear sense of direction and that senior management is interested in listening to employees and keeps them informed about key issues.
- We work in partnership with the Trade Unions, meeting monthly, regularly sharing, discussing and consulting on our workforce policies and practices.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Yellow

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate good performance and our strengths outweigh our areas for development.

Strengths

- A strong, stable and skilled Senior Leadership Team who are committed to improving outcomes.
- Improved leadership and direction from new Chief Officers and Heads of Service in service areas requiring improvement, as evidenced in external regulator reports.
- Expected behaviours and values are led from the Senior Leadership Team and communicated through the PRD process.
- The council is committed to the development of an effective new Council and this is evident in planning for post-election period, with a focus on both new and returning members.
- Continually improving leadership and effective management of teams to ensure resources are deployed to focus on priorities.
- A commitment to develop the capabilities of Members and Senior Management to achieve effective leadership.

Areas for development

- Foster a supportive and respectful culture.
- Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities (elected members and officers).
- Ensure all elected members are supported to develop skills and knowledge to support them in their roles.
- Meet the requirements of the Local Government & Elections (Wales) Act to ensure an effective new Council.
- Continue to develop the capabilities of senior management to achieve effective leadership.
- Manage demands and capacity across services and ensure leaders have the capacity to lead.
- Further develop workforce planning arrangements to ensure leadership capacity supports council priorities.

Theme: Performance management

The performance management system facilitates a process to ensure that local government achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory, and practical interventions. Local government needs to ensure that the organisations and governance structures that it oversees have implemented, and can sustain, an effective performance management system that facilitates effective and efficient delivery of planned services. Decisions made need to be reviewed continually to ensure that achievement of outcomes is optimised.

Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system, along with a strong system of financial control. It is also essential that a culture and structure for scrutiny is in place as a key part of accountable decision-making.

We have effective governance structures in place to sustain effective performance.

- Audit Wales have confirmed that the council has clear arrangements in place to support improvement and actions to address recommendations arising from 2021 reviews of financial sustainability and performance management are either completed or underway.
- We reviewed and refreshed our performance management arrangements and guidance in 2020-21 and these improvements in our performance management arrangements continued to be embedded in 2021-22.
- Priority Boards (including two Chief Officers, two Lead Members, and key officers) are in place to ensure the achievement of each of the well-being objectives and are accountable to Senior Leadership Team, Lead Members, Executive Board and Council.
- Our 2021-22 annual performance report concludes that achievement against the Council Plan is judged to be yellow, slightly off track at the time of reporting with the judgement that we do not believe this will impair the overall outcome at the end of 2022/23.
- Priority Board Terms of Reference were reviewed in 2021-22 to ensure they addressed areas for improvement highlighted by internal audit and external regulation, including the consideration of risk.
- Performance scorecards include an 'interventions' card which ensures that corrective action are required to address any underperformance. This provides a clear link between the performance indicators and actions and supports Priority Boards in focusing on sustainable performance improvement.
- We recognise the need to more effectively link performance and financial information – updated guidance requires that financial implications of any underperformance or required interventions are recorded on interventions cards.
- We have improved the governance of our project management arrangements, and projects aligned to the work of the Priority Boards are included as standard agenda items.

We report regularly on progress towards achieving our objectives.

- Priority Boards meet quarterly to review progress against the well-being objectives. Quarterly reporting to elected members was introduced in 2021-22, with 6 monthly reporting to Executive Board and annual reporting to Council.
- Senior management, Lead Members and scrutiny undertake a valuable challenge function. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs review performance reports at their co-ordinating group meetings to inform their work programmes, and processes are in place for elected members to refer performance concerns for scrutiny challenge.
- Work is underway to procure a new corporate performance and risk management system in 2022-23, which will improve our ability to analyse and report on achieving our priorities and determining necessary interventions.

We use a 'golden thread' approach to performance management and review interventions at all levels when progress is not on track.

- Our performance management framework toolkit supports a consistent service planning approach. The performance management framework toolkit provides comprehensive guidance to all services in the planning for service improvements, ongoing performance monitoring and the review and self-assessment process.
- Our Performance, Improvement & Partnerships Team support our services in embedding these approaches.
- Our well-being priorities and service plan outcomes are used to frame Performance Review and Development objectives for our workforce.
- Our Annual Governance Statement notes the reduced availability of comparative performance information following Covid-19 and the discontinuation of Welsh Government's Public Accountability Measures – and recognises the need to ensure that we continue to use available comparative performance information to understand our performance and secure value for money.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Yellow

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate good performance and our strengths outweigh our areas for development.

Strengths

- Continued improvements seen across the Council in performance management arrangements including at corporate level and service level.
- The council has maintained its focus on its corporate and service improvement journey, including the development of improvement plans, senior management restructures and the commissioning of independent reviews.
- The internal control environment for performance operated as planned during the year. The council maintains its transparency in its reporting throughout the year and within timescales.
- Audit Wales recommendations arising from the 2021 reviews of performance management are being implemented.
- Recognised the need to automate performance systems, with the commencement of the initial stages of the procurement of a new corporate and risk management system.

Areas for development

- Continue the improvement seen in good practice so far, linking all plans together including team plans and PRDs and ensure this is consistently applied across all services, departments and teams.
- Procure and implement a new Performance and Risk Management System to improve data collection and recording arrangements to improve their effectiveness, minimise risk of data errors and improve accessibility of information.
- Ensure that our new Council Plan priorities are performance managed using outcome focussed indicators and that we continue to use comparative performance information to identify and drive improvement and deliver value for money.

Theme: Financial Planning

A strong system of financial management is essential for the implementation of policies and the achievement of intended outcomes, as it will enforce financial discipline, strategic allocation of resources, efficient service delivery, and accountability.

We take a long term view and ensure that our medium term financial strategies, as far as possible, set the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues and changes in the external environment.

- We are focussed on meeting future demands and building sustainability, through working to identify future trends, risks and opportunities, however Welsh Government funding frameworks and the impact of unanticipated external factors (e.g. Covid-19, Ukraine crisis and cost of living increase) make long term planning difficult.
- Our current medium term financial plan is for 3 years (2022-25) and includes indicative figures from Welsh Government for 2023-24 and 2024-25 funding.
- The council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) approved by Council on 23th February 2022 shows a balanced position for 2022/23 but highlighted a potential revenue shortfall of approximately £4m by 2024/25. However, this estimated shortfall has since increased significantly. As at 31 March 2021, the Council had £41.9m of useable financial reserves. This is equivalent to 16.2% of the Council's annual spending on services, 17th out of the 22 unitary councils in Wales.
- We are already undertaking proactive work to anticipate and prevent future pressures and need to continue to develop our arrangements in this area of work, e.g. social care, preventative investment programmes in highways and repairs.
- We work collaboratively at a regional level to ensure early identification of regional factors.
- Financial risk is incorporated into all risk assessments.
- We recognise that we need to manage service pressures effectively to secure long term financial resilience and sustainability.
- The medium term financial plan includes an assessment of key pressures across the council to ensure a closer alignment of activity and funding, as well as the potential to invest in council priorities going forward. Over the last two years, the council has seen a significant increase in the demand and cost of its social care provision for children, as well as an overall increase in social care provision for adults. This is recognised in the medium term financial plan – the 2022/23 budget includes significant additional funding for social care as part of a longer term strategy to ensure demand can be met within a sustainable financial position for the wider council - but is an ongoing financial risk.
- We review budget pressures identified through budget monitoring processes.

- We recognise the need to 'future-proof' and underspends are set aside in reserve for future budget mitigation.

We have sound financial management and reporting arrangements.

- A review of our compliance with the Financial Management (FM) Code (which aims to improve the financial resilience of organisations by embedding enhanced standards of financial management) was undertaken in 2021 with an overall assessment that compliance is good. Full compliance will be complete by early 2022-23.
- We are undertaking a review of our core financial system and related processes over the next two years and have recognised the need to review our financial team support arrangements and structures to support both this work and ensure the necessary level of resource to priority service areas.
- We report to Council, Executive Board, scrutiny committees as required, Governance & Audit Committee and Senior Leadership Team. Improved budget monitoring for Executive Board (quarterly) will be introduced for 2022-23. This will also improve the potential to link budget information with performance reporting.

We have an inclusive budget process that ensures budgets are prepared in accordance with intended outcomes.

- We involve our stakeholders and the public in our budget setting decisions and the Council Plan priorities which the budget is aligned to. The timing of Welsh Government settlements sometimes prevents or impedes our ability to do this in a meaningful way.
- The Council Plan is not costed however financial priorities, commitments and pressures are linked to priorities and feed into proposals in relation to budget pressures and to determine final budgets.
- Reserves are reviewed annually as part of the budget process, and additional workshops are held with elected members in-year. Reserves and balances are included in budget monitoring reports to the Executive Board and Council.
- Improved budget monitoring for Executive Board (quarterly) will be introduced for 2022-23. This will also improve the ability to link budget information with performance reporting.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Yellow

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate good performance and our strengths outweigh our areas for development.

Strengths

- Robust financial governance framework always been in place.
- We are good at managing our overall budget position and have made significant improvements to the MTFP to allocate the right resources into services.
- Successfully managed the transition of new staff into senior management positions this last year across several functions.
- Strong working relationships with external bodies and departments.
- Good relationships with members.

Areas for development

- Ensuring the council is financially resilient and dynamic in meeting the post-Covid financial risks and improving budget reporting to elected members.
- Ensure our processes and finance team resources are integrated at all levels of financial planning and support good financial management.
- Continue to ensure that we are sustainable in key areas such as social care.

Theme: Risk Management

Risk management and internal control are important and integral parts of a performance management system and crucial to the achievement of outcomes. Risk should be considered and addressed as part of all decision making activities.

We evaluate and monitor risk management and our risk management arrangements on a regular basis and report on these regularly.

- Our risk management arrangements are formally reviewed every 5 years (the current Risk Management Policy (2020-25) along with updated supporting risk management advice and guidance and reporting timetables was agreed in 2020. An annual and ongoing review is undertaken via the ongoing governance review work which informs the Annual Governance Statement, and by the Head of Internal Audit via the Annual Opinion.
- The governance review confirms that our risk management arrangements operated as intended during the year and the Head of Internal Audit Opinion for 2021-22 provided assurance that in the areas examined, the council's framework of governance, risk management and control is generally adequate and effective in achieving the council's objectives.
- In 2021-22, all policies and strategies identified as mitigation for corporate risks or listed in the governance framework were checked to ensure they were up to date, and / or that reviews would be undertaken in agreed timescales.
- We report comprehensively on our risks – risk registers are updated quarterly and reported to Senior Leadership Team, Lead Members and Governance and Audit Committee twice a year.
- Additional reporting in relation to identified areas of risk is also undertaken in-year: Health & Safety Governance Framework is reported to Senior Leadership Team and Lead Members, health and safety as a corporate risk is reported to Senior Leadership Team, Lead Members and Governance & Audit Committee twice, and there is additional reporting to Executive Board as required.
- Improved culture around health and safety, evidenced by increased awareness of 'near miss' reporting (evidenced in our employee survey) and increased reporting.

We have a robust and integrated risk management system, which includes clear accountability for risks.

- Chief Officers are responsible for the management of their service area risks; each corporate risk is assigned a responsible Chief Officer. Our processes require risks to be discussed with appropriate officers and within departmental management teams.
- We undertake an annual Chief Officer peer review challenge of our risk registers.
- Our processes are robust, however we recognise the opportunity to make the management and reporting of risks more efficient and have identified the need to procure an integrated performance and risk management system.

We consider and address risk as part of all decision-making activities and we ensure risks to the achievement of our priorities are identified.

- Risk is embedded in the decision making process via the inclusion of a standard paragraph in our report templates.
- The identification and management of risk is embedded in the project management process and the partnership approval process and is included in the established reporting processes supporting these.
- Our equality impact assessments identify and assess potential risks of inequality arising from our decisions and require mitigation to be put in place – however, there is scope for better links to be made between the risks identified through the equality impact process and our broader risk management arrangements.
- In 2021-22 we introduced risk registers for each council priority, which are those risks within departmental risk registers which relate to the achievement of the council's priorities, to enable these to be reviewed and managed.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Yellow

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate good performance and our strengths outweigh our areas for development.

Strengths

- Detailed and robust risk management arrangements.
- We have raised the profile and understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to health and safety risk management.
- There is an open culture around near miss and risk reporting.
- Use expertise well across the Council to identify and mitigate against risks.

Areas for development

- Improve efficiency and quality of risk management reporting.
- Strengthen the management of risks related to equality protected characteristics and the socio-economic duty.
- Fully embed service leads' responsibilities around proactive identification and management of health and safety risk.

Theme: Workforce Planning

A local government organisation must ensure that it has both the capacity to fulfil its functions and to make certain that there are policies in place to guarantee that its management has the operational capacity for the organisation as a whole. Because both individuals and the environment in which an authority operates will change over time, there will be a continuous need to develop its capacity as well as the skills and experience of the leadership of individual staff members.

We have an effective workforce plan that is reviewed regularly and that is focussed on ensuring we have the necessary capacity and skills.

- We understand the challenges around the recruitment of staff and the potential impact on service delivery. The workforce planning framework is reviewed annually and our workforce planning process launched this year now includes the provision of pro-forma guides for services and the requirement to identify initiatives to support succession planning for certain roles.
- Action taken to address the findings, including introducing a 'Grow Your Own' approach, to address recruitment difficulties in certain service areas, such as social services, and delivering a Leadership Academy for Heads of Service and Chief Officers.
- We use employee monitoring information and our workforce planning process to review the effectiveness and fairness of our employment policies and practices, to help us identify key equality issues with services and to review whether our workforce reflects the local community. We are taking steps to improve our equality monitoring to better target actions to promote workforce diversity.

We recognise the need to 'do more with less' and we are changing our working arrangements to support this.

- Our 'Ensuring a Modern & Resilient Council' priority ensures we retain our focus on our commitment to our 'Modern Ways of Working' (MWOW) programme – this aims to transform working practices by providing improved working environments, adopting new technology and digital solutions and making our work more sustainable in the long term.
- We have a strong overview of our workforce, but we need to ensure that our workforce planning fully assesses the impact of the pandemic on our future service plans and that this is reflected in our Organisational Development and Workforce Strategy (OD&WS), asset strategies and financial planning.
- MWOW Champions are in place across departments. Our employee survey planned for 2022 will help us assess our progress.

We have a framework in place to ensure that we have the people with the right skills, appropriate qualifications and mind set and we ensure the workforce has a strong awareness of and commitment to good governance and the rule of law.

- Organisational Development and Workforce Strategy (OD&WS) in place to support us in developing a culture where employees and elected members feel involved, valued and empowered and have the right skills to enable them to deliver efficient services.
- A framework of policies exists to support our expectations of our workforce – this includes induction, performance review and development (PRD) arrangements which include values and behavioural competencies.
- Our induction arrangements were comprehensively reviewed and updated in 2019-20, and include a probationary period to ensure any early concerns are addressed, and the requirement to complete mandatory training modules which focus on compliance with key legislation and policies. These requirements have been reviewed and refresher timescales introduced for all employees. Our training offer includes development opportunities from entry level to degree level.
- However we recognise that we need to continue with work to ensure that inductions, PRDs and training are used effectively, and to improve reporting on these.

We are committed to the health and well-being of our workforce.

- The well-being of our workforce has been paramount during the Covid-19 pandemic and we not only continued, but enhanced our health and well-being support to the workforce during this period, offering additional well-being mechanisms for those services recognised as being under significant pressure. This was recognised by our ongoing Gold Corporate Health Assessment award – held since 2015 and most recently reassessed in 2021 – and reflects our long-term and preventative approach.
- Most departments saw an increase in the percentage of days lost to sickness absence at the end of 2021-22, however this was in line with Covid-19 rates.
- The percentage of voluntary leavers saw an increase in all departments in 2021-22, however this was consistent with the workforce movement nationally following Covid-19 and the level of supply and demand for new positions.
- The percentage of days lost by absence has been consistently higher for stress, depression and anxiety in 2020-21 and 2021-22 than for other reasons with Covid-19 as the second highest reason. While these figures may reflect increased confidence in reporting, our overall support initiatives recognise and respond to this.

Our assessment 2021-22 - Yellow

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate good performance and our strengths outweigh our areas for development.

Strengths

- Workplace health and well-being support is good, as evidenced across external reviews.
- We have maintained our Gold Corporate Health Standard Award.
- Delivery of the ICT and digital strategy.
- We have a clear approach to our Modern Ways of Working Programme and this has seen good progress during 2021/22.
- The council has good resources, policies and processes in place to support high standards of behaviour.
- Health and Safety is being embedded across the organisation as everyone's responsibility.
- Our latest employee survey shows an 11% point increase in engagement and confidence in the survey.

Areas for development

- Work towards ensuring the workforce is sustainable, working in a modern and resilient way, working as one council, having honest and enabling conversations.
- Timely interventions and appropriate pay structures are in place for services where necessary to improve recruitment and retention.
- Continue to improve training and development opportunities to ensure a highly skilled and motivated workforce including a robust induction process. Effective PRDs support the development of a skilled and highly motivated workforce.
- Integrated workforce planning, modern ways of working and office accommodation reviews that work more efficiently and support the Modern Ways of Working programme and 'Ensuring a Modern and Resilient Council' priority.

Theme: Assets

Local government ensures good asset management to ensure effective service provision and achieve value for money. Asset management is central to local government priorities with assets reviewed regularly and recommendations for improvement made. Current and future service needs of the local population are considered as part of an appropriate asset management strategy.

The value of the Council's Assets as at 31 March 2021 is £452 million as per Audited Statement of Accounts (Notes 20 & 24) – this figure relates to Council Fund assets and includes Land & Buildings, Infrastructure Assets, Surplus Assets, Assets Under Construction and Assets Held for Sale, and excludes Council Dwellings, Heritage Assets, Vehicles, Plant & Equipment & Community Assets.

The Value of the Council Dwellings as at 31 March 2021 is £457 million as per 2020/21 Audited Statement of Accounts (Notes 20 & 24).

For further explanation as to how these values are calculated, please see Appendix 2 – Glossary of Terms.

Corporate assets

We support service delivery by ensuring asset management strategies are driven by service need and future service requirements.

- Our current Corporate Land & Buildings Strategy (CLABS) emphasises the importance and significance that the council's property portfolio plays in the activities it undertakes in delivering its services. The Strategy is currently overdue for review as a result of the impact of the emergency response to Covid-19 on the department's resources, but this work is programmed in for 2022-23.
- Our CLABS review will need to take account of learning and areas for improvement from the pandemic, and as far as possible, clarify the council's vision for the shape and size of its building assets, whilst retaining flexibility.
- Our approach to corporate asset management supports our 'Ensuring a Modern & Resilient' well-being priority and as such the council has been undertaking a rationalisation of its assets for several years. The impact of Covid-19, the council's Modern Ways of Working principles and improvements in digital technology have influenced the way we view our assets. We remain mindful of the impact of our office accommodation review on Wrexham town centre and our recent refurbishment of Crown Buildings has provided a modern facility capable of accommodating approximately 625 staff.
- We work in collaboration with national consortiums and regularly explore options around working in collaboration with our partners and/or sharing assets. This is considered from a service improvement as well as a financial perspective – for example North Wales Police now occupy part of Wrexham Library and the 'Well-being Hub' in the recently refurbished Crown Buildings provides an opportunity for us to offer integrated services with our partners.

We are taking steps to improve the quality of our asset information and our support for departments in reviewing their asset management plans.

- Each department produces a service asset management plan, which identifies the service need for its assets and is the result of internal challenge and review of alternative options for asset use and service delivery within our stringent budgetary framework.
- We have procured new asset management software which provides an integrated and proactive approach which will support set processes for acquisitions and disposals and provide better reporting functionality. We aim to have migrated fully to this new system by the end of 2022-23.
- There are opportunities to improve processes and consistency relating to the management of assets across the Council. The council previously had an Asset Management Implementation Group (AMIG) consisting of departmental contacts/representatives. The emergency response to Covid-19 meant that this group has not met since prior to March 2020. There has been a turnover of AMIG officers and we have recognised that we now need to seek appropriate representatives from department to re-establish this group.
- AMIG will support a consistent approach across departments to deliver the principles set out in the CLABS; clarity of the asset review and asset planning process; clarity of roles and responsibilities; and provide a forum for our stakeholders to meet and provide feedback, etc.

We recognise the need to obtain best value for money and to work towards improving long term sustainability and reducing energy use.

- We have contract frameworks in place which include mechanisms to review prices using nationally recognised indices – however the recent sharp rise in building materials has meant that some contractors have left the frameworks. Price adjustments are now considered on a shorter frequency to help mitigate these risks to the supply chain.
- We recognise the need to consider not only financial and physical resources in terms of value for money and best use of resources: the council's commitment to contributing to the national de-carbonisation agenda must be taken into account in all decisions and strategies and this will need to be included in our CLABS review.
- Our Community Asset Transfer policy supports the long term sustainability of assets.

Our governance controls are good, but we recognise there are opportunities to improve on clarity around our decision-making.

- Decisions about assets are often contentious and there is a reputational risk to the council if our processes are not clear and understandable to elected members, the public and our stakeholders.

Housing Stock

We support service delivery by ensuring asset management strategies are driven by service need and future service requirements.

- Effective management of our housing stock supports the council's 'Ensuring Everyone is Safe' well-being priority to ensure that people, particularly the most vulnerable, have access to the right housing.
- We are working with partners to increase our housing stock with on-going build and buy programmes.
- The Local Housing Strategy 2018-23 establishes the priorities and actions for our housing services. It is informed by the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) which identifies local housing need. The LHMA will be reviewed in 2022-23.
- Our Housing Allocations Policy ensures that accommodation is provided to meet the housing needs of all groups in local communities and we gather equality monitoring data in support of this.
- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan acknowledges that Wrexham's tenants are key stakeholders and play a prominent role in informing and shaping key elements of the capital investment programme.
- We have achieved compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) 1 and maintenance of this standard is now embedded.
- Future service requirements will be informed by WHQS2 which is currently out for consultation. Decarbonisation will be the focus going forward, with work likely to commence in April 2023.

We are taking steps to improve the quality of our asset information and planning processes.

- We have identified the need to restructure our housing service to adopt a more integrated strategic approach across the investment and maintenance teams for the future. The alignment of our capital investment and housing repairs will support the development and delivery of a wide range of programmes, including carbon reduction and energy, repairs, planned works, voids and property and investment services.
- Our new asset management software will support this approach, offering an integrated, flexible and user friendly approach for our officers and our tenants. It is used for business planning, the production of future programmes of work and the calculation of associated costs.

We recognise the need to obtain best value for money and to work towards improving long term sustainability and reducing energy use.

- We manage the HRA effectively to ensure we maximise the income available to improve our stock – we have achieved a reduction in rent arrears, an increase in lettings and improvements in tenancy sustainment despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

- Regular procurement exercises are undertaken – most recently the re-procurement of the voids framework and procurement of the new windows and doors programme. Increases in contractor rates and materials prices have been noted in the past 2 years.
- We recognise the need to improve
- The WHQS programme has been used to support social value / community benefits and our contracts are used to promote social, economic and environmental well-being in communities.
- Our De-carbonisation Plan includes actions for the Housing Service in relation to the housing stock and our future Housing Business Plan will need to reflect WHQS2.

We report regularly on how well we manage our housing stock and the associated finances.

- We report to the council's Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee as required, and submit quarterly and annual returns to Welsh Government.
- We prepare comprehensive quarterly performance reports for the Tenant Membership Partnership – rent (revenue and arrears); lettings and voids management, updates on housing stock; repairs and planned maintenance; tenancy management and sustainment; and statutory compliance with gas servicing.

We involve our stakeholders and tenants in designing our services and regularly seek feedback to improve our services.

- We employ a dedicated Tenant Participation Officer who promotes and encourages involvement across a range of initiatives – Tenant Member Partnership, Tenant Forums, Tenant and Resident Associations, Service Improvement Groups, surveys and questionnaires, annual tenant events.
- We actively consider ways of ensuring that there is representation across a fully diverse tenant demographic and consult on all proposed changes to policies which affect the management of tenants' homes.
- We carry out bi-ennial surveys of tenants and residents as required by Welsh Government and will be re-introducing 'new tenant' surveys.
- Considerable work has been undertaken to reduce Voids and we have worked alongside tenants to develop a number of initiatives which contributed to reduce arrears (including revisions to the content and delivery process for communications, the introduction of pre-court interventions and pro-active work by Financial Inclusion Officers and Estate Officers.)

Our assessment 2021-22 - Amber

We have reached this conclusion because we demonstrate satisfactory performance, but investment and increased capacity may be required in a number of key areas.

Strengths

- We have established corporate asset management processes in place.
- Audit Wales recognised that we are proactive.
- Our Office Accommodation Review is underway.
- We have already been working to rationalise / re-purpose to meet our future requirements and this has been accelerated by Covid-19 and our Modern Ways of Working programme.
- Compliance with WHQS1 achieved and maintaining – maintenance will continue as ‘business as usual’ activity
- Work undertaken and ongoing towards decarbonisation (solar voltaic panel installation, energy efficiency programmes)
- Effective management of the HRA – reduction in rent arrears and voids to maximise available income, improvements in tenancy sustainment.
- Maintaining the condition and value of the housing stock - responsive repairs, planned works, in house workforce, refurbishment to a high standard, statutory compliance
- Working to increase stock and meet the local authority’s requirements (e.g. homelessness and resettlement programmes), effective working with Welsh Government and with other Local Authorities on grant funded initiatives.

Areas for development

- Improve strategic management and reporting about how we manage our corporate assets.
- Improve consistency of approach to management of corporate assets across departments and services.
- Ensure our approach to managing our corporate assets addresses our future ways of working and service requirements and meets the requirements of our decarbonisation commitments and reflect this in our Corporate Land & Buildings Strategy.
- Ensure accurate HRA asset management informs effective business planning and financial management.
- Manage HRA effectively to maximise income and deliver value for money and improve contract management and compliance. .
- Ensure the Housing Service structure supports a strategic approach across investment and maintenance teams.

Theme: Procurement

Effective procurement that is underpinned by commissioning, that improves productivity and efficiency to deliver better outcomes for local people. The procurement process is sustainable in meeting the needs of local people in a way that achieves value for money and generates benefits to the local people, the local economy and the organisation whilst minimising damage to the environment.

Options appraisals and decision-making is based on analysis and advice and there is evidence of clear reasoning and decisions.

- The procurement team follow a full commissioning cycle, in accordance with the current Commissioning & Procurement Strategy and the draft Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy which is due to be agreed in July 2022. Good practice standards and advice is available for services and we work closely with Chief Officers and managers to support successful procurement.
- Procurement Reforms (April 2023) will require increased transparency on procurement over £25k – our procurement team already work in to many of these requirements as part of good practice. Planning is underway for autumn 2022 workshops with officers and elected members to introduce the changes and new requirements are being built into our processes.

We have a centralised, experienced team, but are facing capacity issues.

- The procurement team is a centralised unit which means we are able to work collaboratively within departments while maintaining an overview of commissioning and procurement across the authority and identify opportunities for maximising budgets and expertise.
- We work with departments to plan their procurement requirements to help ensure we have capacity to support them as required.
- We have recognised the opportunity to work more closely with finance colleagues to ensure procurement developments are reflected in financial planning.
- At the end of 2021-22, employee turnover due to competitive market conditions, means we have vacancies which are hard to fill. This issue of capacity is a risk to our capacity to support procurement processes and projects across the council.

We work in collaboration and in partnership with colleagues and stakeholders.

- Our team has effective regional and national networking relationships which support a good understanding of markets.
- We work in partnership across North Wales and are experienced in taking the lead procurement role on partnership projects as required.

- We recognise the benefits of working in partnership to increase capacity and achieve shared objectives – however, we recognised that the complexities of national commissioning processes (as highlighted by Audit Wales in relation to the commissioning of care home placements) have the potential to impact adversely on service users.
- We involve the public and our stakeholders in decision-making and feedback, and this will be reinforced as part of the Procurement Reforms.
- Our current Commissioning & Procurement Strategy and the draft Commissioning, Procurement & Contract Management Strategy which is due to be agreed in July 2022 include a commitment to considering equality in our commissioning and procurement decisions and this is included in our tender documents and contracts.

We have taken steps to maximise the 'social value' of our procurement.

- Our draft Commissioning & Procurement Strategy (due to be agreed in July 2022) identifies social value as a key priority, and clearly defines that in Wrexham this means contributing to decarbonisation and providing defined community benefit. (Community benefit being the provision of something in kind for the community, a cash payment towards a community need, or products and services to help a given community within the County Borough.)

Our assessment 2021-22 - Yellow

We have reached this conclusion because we can demonstrate good performance and our strengths outweigh our areas for development.

Strengths

- Procurement processes are good.
- We have strengthened approval processes around procurement decision making within last 12 months.
- Workforce changes have been well managed.
- 'Purchase to Pay' processes work well – we ensure that potential off-contract spend is monitored and subject to procurement review where appropriate.
- Continuing to develop approach to delivery of social value with partners including Manchester University.

Areas for development

- Ensure compliance with and delivery of Procurement Reform and Common Framework for Public Procurement.
- Improve recruitment and retention of procurement team against backdrop of a competitive employment market.
- Prioritise carbon reduction and zero emissions through responsible and sustainable procurement to deliver our ambition for a net zero public sector in Wales by 2030.
- Contribute to improved financial management and budget planning with better integration between finance and procurement services.
- Embed the effective management of contracts across the organisation.

Appendix 1: Key sources of evidence

The review to inform the report considered a broad evidence base, guided by Welsh Government's 'Performance and Governance of Local Authorities: Statutory Guidance'. This included, but was not limited to:

- Reports produced by the council in response to statutory requirements;
- Evidence, reports and advice from a range of inspection and regulatory bodies;
- Review of various council strategies, policies and procedures;
- Reports to the council's various committees, including Council, Executive Board, scrutiny committees and Governance & Audit Committee;
- Internal audit reports and self-evaluations undertaken by the council and individual services;
- Compliments, complaints and other feedback from engagement processes with local people and stakeholders; and
- Workforce surveys and outputs from other engagement processes with the workforce and the recognised Trade Unions.

Some of the key published documents we reviewed, with hyperlinks, are set out below:

[Wrexham Council Constitution](#)

[Council Plan \(2022-23\) and Council Plan Annual Performance Report \(2021-22\)](#)

[Annual Governance Statement \(2021-22\)](#)

[Budget Monitoring – December 2021](#)

[Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2021](#)

[Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021](#)

[Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Procuring Well-being in Wales 2021](#)

[Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2021](#)

[Audit Wales Driving Sustained Improvement Review 2021](#)

[Audit Wales Wrexham Council Financial Sustainability Assessment 2021](#)

[Audit Wales Audit of 2020-21 Accounts](#)

[Audit Wales Springing Forward Review 2022](#)

Audit Wales Public Engagement Review 2022

Estyn Monitoring Visit (November 2021)

Care Inspectorate Wales April 2021 and November 2021

Welsh Language Commissioner Report 2021 and 2022

Appendix 2: Glossary of Terms

Annual Governance Statement

The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) is to describe the extent to which the council has complied with its Code of Governance. It describes how the effectiveness of the governance arrangements has been monitored and evaluated during the year and sets out areas for improvement in the coming year.

The AGS is required to be published as part of our Annual Statement of Accounts.

Assets Valuation – additional detail

Council Fund Assets - Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years.

Assets are carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- infrastructure assets – depreciated historical cost.
- assets under construction – historical cost.
- council offices – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV), except for a few offices that are situated close to the council's housing properties, where there is no market for office accommodation, and that are measured at depreciated replacement cost (instant build) as an estimate of current value.
- school buildings – current value, due to their specialist nature, are measured at depreciated replacement cost which is used as an estimate of current value.
- surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.
- all other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

The Value of the Council Dwellings as at 31 March 2021 is £457 million as per 2020/21 Audited Statement of Accounts (Notes 20 & 24).

- Council Dwellings are carried in the Balance Sheet based on current value, determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH).

Audit Wales

Audit Wales is the trademark of two legal entities: the Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office.

Each has its own particular powers and duties:

- The Auditor General audits and reports on Welsh public bodies.
- The Wales Audit Office provides staff and other resources for the Auditor General's work, and monitors and advises the Auditor General.

CIPFA/SOLACE

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy: is a UK-based international accountancy membership and standard setting body.

Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers: is the leading members' network for local government and public sector professionals in the UK.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

Care Inspectorate Wales is the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales.

Commissioning & Procurement Strategy

The council's arrangements for how it undertakes commissioning, procurement and contract management activities.

Constitution

The Constitution sets out how the council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures it follows to make sure it is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. It contains 22 sections, which contains sections about the rules, protocols and codes of practice that councillors and employees work under.

Corporate Land & Buildings Strategy

The council's strategy sets out the importance and significance of the council's property portfolio in the activities it undertakes, and seeks to challenge and justify why assets are being retained, while looking at alternative options for asset use and service delivery within our stringent budgetary framework.

Council

All 56 Elected Members.

Approves the Council Plan and agrees the Constitution, policy and financial frameworks.

Council Plan

The Council Plan is a key document, agreed by Council, which publishes the well-being and equality objectives.

Council's Standards Committee

A council committee which promotes high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members and monitors the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.

Elected Member Protocol

The Protocol promotes high standards of conduct and behaviour as a means of strengthening respect and trust among members. It is contained within the Constitution.

Estyn

Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales.

Executive Board

The Executive Board is appointed to carry out all of the Council's functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council, whether by Law or under the Constitution. The Executive Board consists of the Leader of the Council and nine other Councillors appointed to the Executive Board by the Council.

Governance/ Governance Framework

Governance refers to the processes by which organisations such as the council are directed, controlled, led and held to account. Our governance framework is set out in our Code of Governance which sets out our commitment to good governance and the framework of controls and arrangements we have in place to ensure good governance.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The HRA records expenditure and income in relation to the council's housing stock.

Internal Audit

Internal audit is an independent assurance function that undertakes work that will inform the Head of Internal Audit's (HoIA) annual opinion on the overall adequacy of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control, including all its operations, resources and services and responsibilities in relation to other bodies.

Involvement Strategy

The council's Involvement Strategy sets out the council's commitment to involving everyone in our communities in discussions about the services we design and deliver and the principles we will work to in ensuring this.

Local Government and Election (Wales) Act 2021

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 established a new legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance, and performance.

Medium Term Financial Plan

The MTFP is a strategic guide to the council's spending plans over the coming 3 years to support the council's priorities within the context of a balanced annual budget. It forecasts the future financial outlook for the council based on a number of assumptions, setting out indicative revenue and capital budgets, including projections of the likely level of council tax and council balances.

Member Development Strategy

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out a number of requirements in relation to Member training and development. The Member Development strategy sets out the development and training activities specifically designed to improve knowledge, skills and abilities of elected members in their varied roles.

Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA)

The MDA is a partnership supporting strategic economic growth across North East Wales, West Cheshire and Wirral, which is recognised as a single economic sub-region having a population close to 1 million.

Modern Ways of Working Programme

A programme to transform our working practices by providing improved working environments, adopting new technology and digital solutions, making our work more sustainable in the long term and challenging the culture around the way the council works.

North Wales Economic Ambition Board

The NWEAB is a partnership between the six local authorities in North Wales and other local partners in the region. It is the sponsoring group and decision-making body for the North Wales Growth Deal, funded by UK and Welsh Governments as well as other private and public partners aims to build a more vibrant, sustainable and resilient economy for North Wales.

Office Accommodation Review

A programme of work to review our office accommodation requirements, ensuring our assets are fit for purpose and provide modern and flexible office accommodation which meets the requirements of a modern organisation.

Performance Management Framework

A performance management framework ensures that individuals, teams and the overall organisation know what they should be doing, when they should be doing it, and how they should be doing it. It is part of an ongoing cycle of 'Plan, Do, Review,' involving robust self-assessment, service planning and performance management. It is focussed on ensuring that we deliver our objectives and achieve our corporate and partnership priorities as set out in the Council Plan.

Personal Review and Development (PRD)

The council's arrangements for performance review of the workforce, to appraise the employees' performance over the previous year, to set objectives, to identify training and development needs and to provide constructive feedback to enable good performance.

Priority Boards

Each council priority is supported by a Priority Board responsible for delivering the outcomes set out in the plan and reporting on these to elected members and the public.

Public Services Boards

Public Services Boards were established by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, consisting a number of statutory members (including local authorities) to improve joint working across all public services in each local authority area in Wales.

Purchase to Pay

The council's e-Procurement process.

Strategic Equality Objectives

The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relation with and between 8 'protected characteristics'. It requires that local authorities prepare and publish its strategic equality objectives at least every 4 years. Our strategic equality objectives are published as part of our Council Plan.

Sustainable Development Principle

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 introduced the sustainable development principle: the importance of balancing short term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs. It sets out 'five ways of working' to support this approach – long term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention.

Wales' Well-being Goals

Seven interdependent well-being goals for Wales, established by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Well-being Objectives/ Council Priorities

Local Authorities are required to agree and publish their own well-being objectives, which contribute to Wales' well-being goals. In Wrexham Council, these are published in our Council Plan and also serve as our Council Priorities.

Welsh Housing Quality Standards 1 (WHQS1)

The Welsh Housing Quality Standard is the Welsh Government standard of social housing quality, first introduced in 2002.