

COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28



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This Council Plan is the means by which Wrexham County Borough Council has published its Well-being Statement and has defined its Well-being Objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

FOREWORD

A letter from the Leader and the Chief Executive of Wrexham County Borough Council

Welcome to Wrexham County Borough Council's new Council Plan 2023-28. This document is where we set out our vision and ambitions for the next five years, moulded by your views and aspirations for Wrexham and your communities. The plan is a high level strategic document that drives the activities of the council, supported by the council's [Medium-Term Financial Strategy](#) and underpinned by our service level strategies and projects. The plan details our well-being objectives, which we call our council priorities, and the outcomes we want to achieve within these council priorities to improve the social, cultural, economic and environmental well-being of Wrexham.

Developing the new plan provided an opportunity for the council to reflect on what has been achieved over the last three years, under the unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery. Wrexham is now at an exciting point in the improvement journey and we want to continue to build on the progress made, which has been the result of our councillors, workforce, partners and communities working together. During the last year, there is no doubt that Wrexham was firmly placed on the map with the achievement of being awarded city status and being a runner up for City of Culture. Not forgetting achievements in the sporting world which has seen global promotion for Wrexham and the people who live here. The Wrexham Gateway project and the football museum for Wales are fantastic examples of projects giving us a national profile.

We want to build on the excitement and ambitions of the County Borough over the next five years to make a difference for the people of Wrexham, where they can fulfil their dreams and aspirations. We want to work towards a place that is sustainable, greener, protects our most vulnerable, is ambitious, and a place where people have good well-being.

However, alongside this we recognise the ongoing challenges our communities face including the cost of living crisis, inequalities within our County Borough and climate change. This is in addition to the lasting effect of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on communities, especially on the most vulnerable and children impacted at key stages of their development. These concerns have shaped our council priorities and will continue to drive our improvement journey. We have woven our [equality outcomes](#) into this plan, to deliver on our commitment to achieving better and fairer outcomes for all, promoting equality and diversity and reducing the impact of socio-economic disadvantage. We want to listen more to our communities and build stronger relationships, where the people of Wrexham are part of the journey. We have a strong community spirit in Wrexham that we want to harness to empower our communities. We want Wrexham County Borough to be a place where our residents thrive.

To achieve this we must be an effective council and in 2022 we delivered our first published [self-assessment](#) under the new Local Government and Election (Wales) Act, which requires the council to review how we work and how efficiently we use our resources. We will continue to review and publish our self-assessment on an annual basis and responding to the findings will support the delivery of our vision.

A skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce must be in place to deliver the services that our communities need and want. We will strive to ensure that Wrexham County Borough Council is an 'employer of choice'

to attract, recruit and retain individuals with the skills and experience that will benefit our communities. We understand that this is a challenging task in the national context of a highly competitive recruitment market and aim to continue to respond with new initiatives to support recruitment and retention for example the continued roll out of our 'Grow your Own' approach, to address recruitment difficulties in certain areas, such as social care.

In developing this plan, we have recognised that we cannot achieve this alone and it is the collaboration with our partners, businesses and communities which will allow us to achieve our vision for the people of Wrexham. We have ensured in developing the activities and strategies that underpin the work of the plan that we commit to our sustainable ways of working including integration and collaboration. We hope you enjoy reading about our vision for Wrexham County Borough and we want to continue to work together with you, the people and communities of Wrexham to deliver on this plan.

Cllr Mark Pritchard
Leader of the Council

Ian Bancroft
Chief Executive

OUR VISION

Wrexham County Borough Council Vision: 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, with a focus on strong values and behaviours.

Our values are:

- Empowerment
- Trust and Honesty
- Aspiration
- Collaboration
- Making a difference
- Fairness

[The Seven Principles of Public Life](#) (the 'The Nolan Principles') apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder, including those who are elected or appointed to public office. These underpin our approach to our Values.

IN 10-15 YEARS, THE COUNTY BOROUGH'S ECONOMY WILL...

- Be thriving and resilient and provide developers, businesses and organisations with the confidence and encouragement to invest;
- Be a more multi-purpose, higher quality and enjoyable daytime and night-time economy that appeals to the people that live, learn and work in Wrexham;
- Be a good mix of traditional industry with the skills and knowledge economy;
- Be well-connected regionally, nationally and internationally – both in terms of travel and communications;
- Offer a range of employment opportunities, with higher salaries and better job satisfaction; and
- Value older people through continuing to use their skills and expertise in work places or through volunteering opportunities.

IN 10-15 YEARS, THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH WILL...

- Live here because they choose to – and are proud of their culture and identity;
- Have high aspirations for education and for life, with the skills, opportunities and tools to achieve them;
- Support children and young people to have the space and opportunity to play;

- Have equality of opportunity regardless of their personal circumstances;
- Have the tools to make good life choices that keep them healthy and happy and less reliant on public services;
- Be made up of resilient individuals living in strong and resilient communities where no one feels, or is, isolated or lonely and where people take responsibility for themselves and their areas; and
- Have opportunities to engage in cultural and leisure activities for all ages.

IN 10-15 YEARS, THE COUNTY BOROUGH WILL BE A PLACE WITH...

- Unique and beautiful countryside and heritage that is seen as the gateway to North Wales where people want to be and are proud to say they come from;
- Regional and national significance with a city centre that is playful, sociable, entertaining, and inclusive to all who live, work, visit, and invest in it;
- A city centre that is well-managed and clean, and regularly hosts exciting events and activities to establish Wrexham as a top destination in the region;
- Good public transport links and infrastructure so that people can easily access the services and facilities they want and need, as well as being able to travel to other major cities;
- Good quality housing for all, irrespective of whether it is social housing or privately rented/ owned; and
- Low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, where people feel safe regardless of their background or life choices.

THIS IS WREXHAM

GEOGRAPHY

The County Borough of Wrexham has a geographical area of 193 square miles (499 square km). This area includes a range of cultural assets.

- The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding National Beauty fall within parts of the County Borough.
- Wrexham is the home of Wales' oldest football club and the oldest international football stadium still in use.
- The international music festival 'FOCUS Wales' takes place annually in Wrexham.
- Two National Trust properties (Erddig and Chirk Castle) are situated within the County Borough.

POPULATION

- The 2021 Census estimates the population of Wrexham County Borough to be around 135,100 people.
- There are around 57,900 households in total in Wrexham County Borough.
- The median age of someone living here is 42 years and over a quarter of us are in the 45 to 64 years age group.
- Wrexham has the highest percentage of 0-19 year olds in North Wales.
- 20% of the population of Wrexham County Borough is aged 65 or over, slightly lower than the Wales overall (21.4%).
- The percentage of the population overall identifying themselves as able to speak Welsh is 12.2%.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- There are 67 schools in Wrexham County Borough – 58 primary schools and 9 secondary schools.
- 29% of the population of Wrexham County Borough aged 16 years and over are qualified to NVQ Level 4 or above.
- Around 60,000 (54.5% of the population aged 16 years and over) are in employment. Of these, 72% are employed full time and 28% employed part time.
- Manufacturing, retail trade (including vehicle repairs), and human health and social work, are the sectors which employ the most people in Wrexham County Borough.
- Nearly 70% of us travel to work as a driver or a passenger by car or van, whilst 18% of us work at or mainly from home.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

- 79% of the population of Wrexham County Borough report their health as being very good or good, whilst just over 20% of us consider our day to day activities to be limited to some extent by a long term health problem or disability.
- 10% of residents of our County Borough aged 5 or over currently provide some unpaid care to others.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION

- Some of our urban areas are amongst the most deprived in Wales. There are 6 Lower Layer Super Output Areas in Wrexham County Borough that are in the 10% most deprived in Wales.

FUTURE TRENDS

Current research, which is based on estimates of the population in 2018, tells us that in the next five years::

- The population of Wrexham County Borough is expected to decrease by around 1%.
- Wrexham County Borough expects to experience the biggest percentage decrease across Wales in the number of children and young people aged 15 years and under – down 6.5%.
- An increase in the percentage of our population who are aged 65 years or older of around 6.7% is anticipated.
- The number of people aged 65 and over who struggle with the activities of daily life is expected to continue to increase over the next 20 years.

OUR PLAN

We provide many services to you, whether you live here, work here or are just visiting, such as: schools, waste collection, social care, council housing, planning services, roads, museums, country parks and trading standards. However it isn't enough to just keep these going, we want to focus on improvements for the future and be ambitious in our plans. Our plan is where we set out our priorities for the council for the next five years; it provides a vision and direction for what we will be working towards in the medium term by focusing on the long term future of Wrexham County Borough.

The Council Plan ensures that we are maximising our contribution to the seven [national well-being goals for Wales](#) set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Our Council Plan presents our well-being objectives which we call our council priorities. You can find details of how our council priorities link to the Wales well-being goals on the individual [council priority pages](#).

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 also introduced the '[sustainable development principle](#)' – which requires us to act in a way which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The act makes sure that in developing our council priorities we embed the 'five ways of working' to shape our decision making and ensure we are working in a more sustainable way, including:

- Looking to the long term.
- Taking an integrated approach.
- Involving people in decision making.
- Working in a collaborative way.
- Understanding root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring or getting worse.

OUR COUNCIL PRIORITIES

To achieve our vision we agreed to focus on six priority areas that will provide the direction for all our services over the next five years. Within each priority, we have identified outcomes that we want to work towards. The outcomes set the direction for our improvement journey for Wrexham County Borough, the people of Wrexham and our communities.

OUR SIX COUNCIL PRIORITIES ARE:

DELIVERING EFFICIENT STREETSCENE SERVICES AND DECARBONISING OUR ENVIRONMENT

We recognise the importance of a clean, attractive and sustainable environment on the well-being of our communities, and for all those who live, work and visit Wrexham County Borough. Effective and resilient environmental services are vital in ensuring our city centre, communities and highways are well cared and in a good condition. We will focus on delivering efficient Streetscene services, in line with our service commitments. In improving our environment we will ensure that the Climate Emergency, one of the most important topics of our time is at the forefront of the decisions we make. We will look to the long term and create sustainable and resilient communities that are able to adapt to future environmental challenges.

What the Wrexham Public Service Board Assessment of Well-being told us: Living near and using green spaces can improve health, regardless of social class.

DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY

The economy is a major driver for improving Wrexham County Borough. We want to create a strong, thriving and fair economy that supports our communities and provides developers, businesses and organisations with the confidence and encouragement to invest. We want Wrexham to be seen as the gateway to North Wales with a unique heritage, and beautiful countryside. Our economy will support people in our communities to access a range of employment opportunities, with higher salaries and better job satisfaction.

What our residents told us: “We need to regenerate the city centre and surrounding areas, with more tourism, leisure and entertainment facilities and encourage inward investment”

ENSURING WREXHAM IS A FAIR AND SAFE PLACE

In Wrexham County Borough Council we recognise that being and feeling safe is important to both residents and visitors to our County Borough and the city centre and can have a profound influence on people's quality of life. We will work towards creating a County Borough that is a fair, equitable and inclusive community, where people can access safe and secure homes and quality accommodation appropriate to their needs. With the ongoing cost of living crisis, we will work towards ensuring that everyone, especially anyone who is vulnerable, experiencing poverty, or dealing with cost of living challenges, can access support and services to enable an improved quality of life.

What our residents told us: “It is important that there is fair and equal access to services for all”

IMPROVING EDUCATION AND LEARNING

In Wrexham County Borough Council we recognise the impact that education and learning has on all age groups. We will work across council services and with our partners to support the people in our communities to access the right learning opportunities to realise their potential, whatever their background or circumstance. We will aim to tackle inequalities in educational outcomes by supporting learners to overcome barriers to learning and by improving lifelong learning opportunities. We want to provide education and learning services and support that benefit the people in our communities to develop their skills and achieve their aspirations.

What our residents told us: “Improving educational standards & opportunities is always going to be something to aspire towards, it is important to focus on life skills and employability for learners of all ages”

PROMOTING GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (WITH A FOCUS ON SOCIAL SERVICES AND GOOD MENTAL HEALTH)

Good health and well-being is central to ensuring people in our communities have the best life opportunities available to them. We will support the people in our communities to benefit from good health and well-being by enabling individuals, families and communities to be resilient and by reducing the impact of health inequalities. Alongside our partners we want to provide early prevention and help services that reduce the need for more acute interventions later on. We want the people who use our social care services to feel listened to and to have the tools to live as independently as possible.

What our residents told us: “The well-being of children is paramount. Adverse experiences in early years can be very difficult to overcome later in life”

SUPPORTING A HIGHLY SKILLED AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE, FOCUSSED ON DELIVERING SERVICES

A skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce must be in place to deliver the services that our communities need and want. The health and well-being of our employees is vital to maintain a resilient and adaptable workforce to deliver services. We will support our workforce by ensuring that we maintain our active approach to employee well-being and ensure that robust people management practices are in place to support and manage employees experiencing periods of sickness and to maintain high levels of attendance and continue to reduce absence levels.

What our residents told us: “It is important to ensure that the council provides good employment opportunities with career progression, to attract a skilled and diverse workforce”

STRATEGIC EQUALITY OUTCOMES

Being equal means making sure that life is fair for everyone. [The Equality Act](#) is a law to make sure everyone has the same access to opportunities. All public bodies must think about the impact their decisions have on people from different groups, and ensure that they are treated fairly and equally. These groups are people with 'protected characteristics' as set out in the Equality Duty.

To ensure we are working towards a fairer County Borough, and considering our duties to make sure everyone is treated equally we have identified 12 equality outcomes that we want to work towards over the next five years. These are embedded within our Council Plan outcomes.

You can find out more about how we decided on our equality outcomes on the ['How we developed our plan'](#) page.

There is more information available on our duty, the Strategic Equality Plan element of our Council Plan, our Equality Impact Assessments and how we developed our equality outcomes on our [Equality, Human Rights and Community Cohesion](#) page.

The equality outcomes that we have identified are:

- The council is an 'employer of choice' able to recruit and retain a diverse and sustainable workforce, with a modern approach to work and a framework of employee rewards and benefits.
- Any gender based pay gap identified will be reviewed and better understood. Appropriate work will commence to address this gap and other pay gaps where relevant.
- Our customers are able to contact us easily, through digital systems which are built around their needs. Our services are inclusive and we ensure that we support those customers who would like to use our digital services, as well as continuing to offer more traditional ways of contacting us, for those who need it.
- Welsh language and culture is thriving within our workforce and our communities and is actively promoted and supported.
- Wrexham is a place where everyone knows they can get involved to influence the planning and delivery of services. People are engaged, and consulted with on decisions which affect them, and where we can, we work to design and deliver services, and make things happen together.
- People are safeguarded from exploitation, violence and all forms of abuse, through working in partnership to increase awareness of the victims of exploitation and the available reporting pathways.
- Our communities are welcoming, and we promote and celebrate our communities' diversity and cultures and ensure appropriate access to all services for everyone.
- People seeking sanctuary from war or humanitarian crisis are supported to build a sustainable future in the County Borough.

- All learners are supported to improve their education outcomes, and inequalities in outcomes between different groups of learners will be reduced.
- Our learners have a positive learning experience through access to an environment that is accessible and fit for purpose and allows a choice of Welsh and English medium education.
- Children and adults are supported to have good mental health and well-being, by public services partnerships and communities working together. There is a focus on mental health support provided through prevention and early help mental health services to reduce demand for services later on.
- We make certain our social care services meet the needs of those who use them by making sure the voice of children, adults, families and carers is heard and listened to.

To ensure that these continue to be the right areas of focus we will use relevant equality information to review our outcomes and also inform decision making across the council. You can find more information on the equality data we collect on our [Equality, Human Rights and Community Cohesion page](#) which includes workforce equality monitoring information along with information on any potential identified pay differences. Alongside this, the '[This is Wrexham](#)' page, provides some of the key data that we use to inform our decision making in terms of Wrexham County Borough population and protected characteristics.

HOW WE DEVELOPED OUR PLAN

This plan was developed during 2022/23 through an integrated and collaborative approach including discussion with the people who deliver our services, workshops with our Council Members to consider the proposed outcomes from their knowledge of the people living within their wards, and a public consultation with people across Wrexham including those with protected characteristics. We also looked at a range of evidence including:

- Published data and statistics, for example, Census 2021 data.
- What we know about our communities from local evidence and research about people's health and well-being.
- Messages and feedback from involvement activities we have undertaken with service users and communities over the past year.
- Progress against our existing council priorities and other work areas.

Alongside the evidence mentioned above, our council priorities have been informed by the Wrexham Public Services Board Well-being Assessment. The Public Services Board (PSB) Well-being Assessment for Wrexham was produced following extensive research and engagement with people across Wrexham. The work carried out by the PSB was extremely useful and raised some key areas of focus for consideration for our council priorities, which were developed alongside the PSB Well-Being Plan and objectives. The PSB Well-being Plan seeks to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being across Flintshire and Wrexham.

DEVELOPING OUR EQUALITY OUTCOMES

To ensure we are working towards a fairer County Borough, we carried out research including a review of our previous equality outcomes and considered data and evidence from national reports, North Wales' information and localised information. The analysis undertaken has suggested a number of areas that our work could focus on. More information is available on our [Equality, Human Rights and Community Cohesion](#) page under the Equality Outcomes section.

CONSULTATION

In order to obtain feedback on our proposed council priorities and outcomes, we carried out a public consultation during February and March 2023. This included engagement with representative groups with protected characteristics (as defined under the Equality Act). We asked if the priorities and outcomes we had identified in our draft Council Plan were the right areas to focus on and if there were any other things we should include.

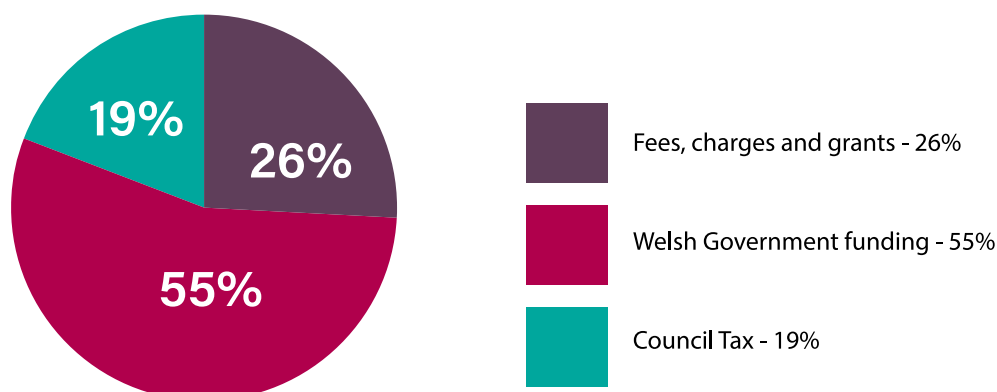
Consultation methods included:

- Online survey on 'Your Voice' platform.
- A printed survey available for those unable to engage digitally.
- Engagement with community groups as part of their own regular meetings (e.g. Warm Spaces and other groups supporting people with differing needs).
- A focus group held with Senedd Yr Ifanc Wrecsam/Wrexham Youth Parliament.
- Engagement at community events, with community councils, with Wrexham County Borough Council staff and with trade union representatives.

Further detail is available in our full [consultation report](#) available on our website under the Equality Outcomes section.

OUR FINANCES

2023/24 Revenue Funding - £406,843,149



The council priorities we have agreed on are ambitious and therefore the financial resource required will be reflected in the budgets set for the next five years. Our council priorities will help us to make decisions about allocating future resources. The council's Medium Term Financial Plan sets out our approach to how we manage our finances as well as the broad issues that will impact on our financial position over the medium term; this provides detail on the revenue and resources that will be available for our priority areas and the services that support these. The management of our resources and assets is informed by our Council Plan and delivery of our vision.

It is important to note that some of the activities we have identified that underpin our outcomes are grant funded or already have resources allocated in their early planning process.

The council's Medium Term Financial Plan approved by Council on 15 February 2023 highlighted a potential revenue shortfall of approximately £9.5m for the period 2024/25 to 2025/26. However, the steep increases in prices, pay, and demand for services creates additional cost pressures that have to be considered and

will be reflected in an updated Medium Term Financial Plan, where the scale of revenue shortfall is likely to be more significant. Indeed, the scale of cost pressures is likely to be much greater than in any period over the last decade. Even in very difficult times, it is vital that we continue to prioritise investment where it is needed. The 2023/24 budget recognises demand pressures in Social Care and inflationary cost increases including pay and energy for all council services including schools and budgets going forward will continue to support the council's priorities, even in challenging financial times.

In 2023/24, specific extra funding has also been provided for investment in Council Plan priorities, highways maintenance and resurfacing, plus public transport (bus services).

Please visit our [financial documents](#) page to view our Medium Term Financial Plan and other financial documents.

MANAGING OUR PERFORMANCE

We use a performance management framework to manage our performance within the council. This involves measuring how well we are achieving against the promises set out in our Council Plan.

Our Council Plan is a high level strategic document that drives the activities of the council. All other plans are built from this one, including specific strategies such as our Decarbonisation Plan, Anti-Poverty Strategy and service plans, which provide the details of the actions, activities and programmes that each service area will undertake to contribute towards achieving the outcomes included within each of our council priorities.

Underpinning all of this is a suite of measures that enable us to track how we are doing and understand the impact of our work on the place and people of Wrexham County Borough. These are our outcome measures.

We will report annually using outcome measures, on the progress towards our outcome statements in an Annual Council Plan Performance Report. These outcome measures will be developed in 2023.

More detail on how we manage performance can be found on our performance management framework page on our website.

MONITORING PERFORMANCE TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUR EQUALITY OUTCOMES

To help monitor the progress we are making towards our equality outcomes, we will extract the related outcome measures into an equality outcomes highlight report within our Annual Council Plan Performance report.

OUR SIX COUNCIL PRIORITIES

DELIVERING EFFICIENT STREETSCENE SERVICES AND DECARBONISING OUR ENVIRONMENT

We recognise the importance of a clean, attractive and sustainable environment on the well-being of our communities, and for all those who live, work and visit Wrexham County Borough. Effective and resilient environmental services are vital in ensuring our city centre and communities are well cared for with highways that are in a good condition and well maintained.

To deliver this our open spaces and areas which are visible and accessible to communities will be managed appropriately for their intended use, and kept safe and clean. We will respond quickly to clean up dog fouling, littering and fly-tipping in our communities, and will work proactively to reduce the volume of these by using evidence to identify 'problem locations', engage with communities to change behaviour, and take enforcement measures where appropriate. We will focus on delivering efficient Streetscene services, in line with our service commitments, improving our use of relevant evidence to ensure that our resources are deployed most effectively.

We know that our highways infrastructure plays a fundamental role in supporting a range of other council services and ambitions; including access to services, flood defence, the hosting of services/utilities, employment and economic connections. We will ensure that highway related assets are safe and fit for purpose, through regular inspections and maintenance in line with our policies.

In improving our environment we will ensure that the Climate Emergency, one of the most important issues of our time is at the forefront of the decisions we make. We declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in September 2019 and in response have developed a robust Decarbonisation Plan to ensure that we collaborate with our partners and our communities to develop and decarbonise our environment, and pursue our net-zero ambitions.

Our approach will be based around changing the way we deliver our services, leading by example, and involving our communities to make real change. We will develop sustainable ways for people to get around, and within the next fifteen years we will create more opportunities for walking and cycling for local journeys to become the norm. We will focus on the energy we use in our council-owned buildings and properties and how we can continue to generate renewable energy.

We remain committed to managing waste and recycling, both in order to meet our statutory recycling targets, but also in support of tackling the climate emergency. We will continue to work with residents and communities to promote and provide opportunities for re-use and recycling, and reducing waste. We will collect all recycling and household waste from residents when it is presented correctly, and aim to respond quickly and efficiently to any missed collections.

Through our Decarbonisation Plan we will also work hard to ensure that the move to tackle climate change is integrated throughout our council services. For example, increasing awareness around reducing emissions and achieving net-zero in new build schools; or within our commitment to reduce our carbon footprint through the delivery of our modern council working environments.

Wrexham County Borough will be a place that our communities are proud of, with a diverse range of open spaces which are accessible, well managed and sustainable whilst offering maximum opportunities for positive environmental impacts. By restoring and protecting our local green spaces, we will improve and enhance people's well-being as well as improving our environment.

Our Priority Outcomes; what we want to work towards:

**indicates a Strategic Equality Objective*

1. All communities and council-owned play areas are kept clean, tidy and safe for our children and young people to play.
2. The council responds to reports of dog fouling and littering by identifying 'problem locations,' and utilising a range of behaviour-change and enforcement measures.
3. Reports of fly-tipping on council land are reduced and responded to by ensuring a timely response to clean-ups, as well as using evidence to identify 'hot-spots' for deployment of CCTV cameras.
4. All recycling and household waste is collected when it is presented correctly, and where we miss any collections, we will aim to respond quickly and efficiently.
5. Our highway related assets are safe and fit for purpose, through regular inspections and maintenance in line with our policies.
6. Wrexham County Borough is a place with a diverse range of open spaces which are accessible and well managed.
7. A County Borough that is becoming more resilient in planning for the effects of climate change through effective flood risk management and maintenance programmes.
8. The council is making progress towards achieving Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030 through the implementation of the Decarbonisation Plan (2021-2030). We consider carbon emissions and opportunities for carbon sequestration (capturing, removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere) in all our decisions.
9. The council is a strong community leader, with developed communication and engagement plans which share best practice, and promote community and individual behaviour change. We work actively in partnership regionally and locally with schools, communities and our own workforce to seek opportunities to work collaboratively, share ideas and raise understanding about our decarbonisation work.
10. Transport & Mobility: The council has a modern and environmentally responsible transport fleet, supported by increased high-quality infrastructure, which allows us to be a leader in low carbon emissions vehicles. We will consider our requirements to travel, and ensure that sustainable travel options are in place to help reduce our overall carbon emissions.

11. Wrexham's transport infrastructure meets the needs of its residents and the economy, with improved public transport services and sustainable options for travel and parking in and around the City Centre, Wrexham Industrial Estate, and across the rural communities, and in support of Wrexham as a significant visitor destination
12. Buildings: The council will be reducing its demand for energy, as we make more of our buildings low and zero carbon, and continue to increase energy efficiency. We will be reducing our emissions year-on-year from our schools, offices, libraries, community centres etc.
13. Procurement: We actively prioritise carbon reduction and zero emissions through more responsible and sustainable procurement, and where possible by supporting local and regional suppliers and businesses.
14. Land Use: The council is committed to ensuring that land within the County Borough is used and maintained in a sustainable manner for the benefit of biodiversity and the decarbonisation agenda, through its own asset management and through its regulatory functions.
15. All households in Wrexham are supported to be actively engaged in working towards zero waste, through a combination of waste minimisation, re-use and recycling.

This Priority contributes directly to all of Wales Well-being Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of more cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY

As the newest city in Wales, shortlisted for UK City of Culture 2025, with Tŷ Pawb nominated for Museum of the Year and significant funding secured from Welsh Government to develop the Wales Football Museum, Wrexham County Borough has never been better placed to build on these successes and develop a strong and prosperous economy: providing wealth, opportunity, safe and healthy neighbourhoods and supporting long term continued inward investment for key infrastructure and services.

With the fourth highest GDP in Wales (£27,595 per capita) the economy is performing well but is not without its challenges. Working collaboratively with partners at Ambition North Wales and Welsh Government to secure investment in Wrexham and the Mersey Dee region, we will develop economic opportunities, create attractive conditions for business growth and promote entrepreneurship to create local employment and wealth. Wrexham is recognised as a hub of industry and commerce in North Wales. We aspire to be a world leader in advanced manufacturing, energy and digital sectors; to attract and retain well paid sustainable jobs to the area, and to develop economic resilience.

Like most high streets across the UK, the city centre has seen a decline in its retail offer. Our Placemaking Plan signals intent for a reimagined, vibrant and attractive city centre with principles that will spread benefits through the wider County Borough. Improvements in the public realm, active travel and empty / problem properties will support creation of venues for culture, sports, community activities and events.

Unemployment stands at 4.9%, which is above the Wales average of 3.6% (2022 ONS figures) with long term sickness representing the largest barrier to work. We aim to reduce and prevent inequalities in employment by targeting those furthest from the workforce and increasing well-paid, secure jobs in order to contribute to a resilient, prosperous, healthy and more equal Wales.

Tourism contributes significantly to the wider Wrexham economy but is still recovering post-Covid with visitor spend of £101.02m in 2021, compared to £135.65m in 2019. Delivery of the Wrexham Destination Management Plan with our partners will provide an integrated route map to recovery; including developments at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site.

Our Priority Outcomes; what we want to work towards:

**indicates a Strategic Equality Objective*

1. Wrexham is effectively engaged locally, regionally and nationally, working in collaboration to build a more vibrant, well-connected, sustainable and resilient economy for North Wales, through the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and developing status within the Northern Powerhouse.
2. Wrexham is promoted and recognised regionally, nationally and internationally as a vibrant hub of industry and commerce, with the capacity to meet the demand for inward investment and create the conditions needed to support commercial development and for existing businesses to grow.

3. Wrexham has a concentrated, diverse and entrepreneurial City Centre with an appropriate mix of retail, residential and entertainment uses, through the implementation of an adopted Placemaking Plan, that will increase confidence for investors and entrepreneurs and support a reduction in empty properties.
4. Wrexham County Borough has a high profile as a significant visitor destination in North Wales and the wider Mersey Dee Region. We are known for our cultural offer that spans both urban and rural communities (including World Heritage Site and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct), our football heritage, our Welsh identity and our ability to host large capacity events at the Racecourse complex, supported by the delivery of the Wrexham Gateway Masterplan.
5. There are high employment rates and a good supply of accessible, well paid jobs. Skills gaps are identified and addressed along with opportunities resulting from new and emerging technologies and markets. People who experience barriers are supported to secure jobs and access employment sites and there are improved pathways to employment for minority groups.

This Priority contributes directly to all of Wales Well-being Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

ENSURING WREXHAM IS A FAIR AND SAFE PLACE

Being and feeling safe is important to both residents and visitors to our County Borough and the city centre, and can have a profound influence on people's quality of life and their ability to engage in a positive and mutually rewarding way with their community. It is important that we create an environment in which all people not only are safe, but feel safe.

Working with our public sector partners, we aim to build a community where fewer people are affected by crime and to safeguard people, especially those who are vulnerable, from exploitation, violence and abuse. We will work to ensure that where crime does occur victims receive the support that they need, and that more people are aware of the signs of exploitation and abuse and know how to report their concerns if they are worried about someone's safety or well-being.

We recognise the importance of a fair, equitable and inclusive community and will strive to build a community in which all people can access the services that they need to thrive and fully realise their potential. We will promote and celebrate the diversity and cultures of our communities to ensure that they are inclusive, involved and welcoming; and we will ensure that people seeking sanctuary in the County Borough from war or humanitarian crisis are supported to build a secure and sustainable future.

A safe and secure home is vital to well-being and we will work to enable people, particularly the most vulnerable, to access good quality accommodation appropriate to their needs, whether in the public or private housing sector. We will help people access support to sustain their tenancies where needed, reducing the risk of people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.

In 2021 there were 57,915 total households in Wrexham County Borough. Of these, 53.1% were deprived in at least one of the four deprivation dimensions as defined by the Census 2021. In the present cost of living crisis we recognise the need to be responsive to challenges that arise from people's changing circumstances. We will work to ensure that everyone, especially anyone who is vulnerable, experiencing poverty, or dealing with cost of living challenges, can access support and services, including digital, to enable greater financial resilience, better health and living conditions, and an improved quality of life.

Our Priority Outcomes; what we want to work towards:

**indicates a Strategic Equality Objective*

1. Effective partnership working supports communities to feel and be safer, with improved support for victims of crime.
2. *People are safeguarded from exploitation, violence and all forms of abuse, through working in partnership to increase awareness of the victims of exploitation and the available reporting pathways.
3. *Our communities are welcoming, and we promote and celebrate our communities' diversity and cultures and ensure appropriate access to all services for everyone.

4. *Our customers are able to contact us easily, through digital systems which are built around their needs. Our services are inclusive and we ensure that we support those customers who would like to use our digital services, as well as continuing to offer more traditional ways of contacting us, for those who need it.
5. *Wrexham is a place where everyone knows they can get involved to influence the planning and delivery of services. People are engaged, and consulted with on decisions which affect them, and where we can, we work to design and deliver services, and make things happen together.
6. *People seeking sanctuary from war or humanitarian crisis are supported to build a sustainable future in the County Borough.
7. Our council housing contract holders can access more high quality housing, and sheltered housing supported by modern, efficient and responsive services.
8. More people are living in better quality private and public sector accommodation, which complies with national housing standards and legislation
9. People will be supported to find suitable accommodation and to sustain their tenancies, so that fewer people experience homelessness and fewer people are rough sleeping.
10. All communities and people, in particular the vulnerable and those experiencing poverty and/or the effects of the cost of living crisis, will have access to advice and support services which support financial wellbeing and good health and living conditions, along with opportunities to participate in leisure, social and employment opportunities, to improve their quality of life.

This Priority contributes directly to the following Wales Well-being Goals:

- A resilient Wales
- A Wales of more cohesive communities
- A more equal Wales
- A prosperous Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

IMPROVING EDUCATION AND LEARNING

In Wrexham County Borough Council we recognise the impact that education and learning has on all age groups and in Wrexham we have many good schools and formal and informal education settings. Over the last few years, Wrexham County Borough Council and its partners, have worked towards ensuring all our learners have equal access to high quality education by improving our Local Authority offer of support, challenge and interventions to create a sustainable and self-improving system. Moving forward it is essential that we raise education outcomes and aspirations across the County Borough providing all our learners with the opportunities to reach their potential, whatever their age, background or circumstance, giving all our learners the best possible chance in life.

In doing this we recognise that there is still a significant gap in educational outcomes within and across groups of learners; including learners with additional learning needs and learners who are impacted by poverty. Working collaboratively with our partners, we will support learners to overcome the barriers to learning. We will deliver an effective additional learning needs offer, provide accessible learning environments, improve transition between stages of learning and focus on early interventions to support learners to overcome challenges and actively contribute to their learning. We will aim to tackle inequalities in educational outcomes, including reducing the impact of poverty on learners' progression and attainment and supporting our learners to have improved emotional health and well-being.

In improving education outcomes we recognise the importance of different stages of education and learning and how each stage impacts on the next. Therefore this priority isn't just about our learners at school age but providing skills for life. We will continue to support schools to develop a broad curriculum in line with the New Curriculum of Wales and support our children and young people in becoming ambitious and capable learners ensuring that our learners are ready and supported to access apprenticeships, training opportunities, higher education and retraining. We want to focus on improving lifelong learning opportunities and will continue to develop and deliver adult learning provisions, by working with our partners and the range of education settings we have within the County Borough. Providing people with the opportunities to develop their skills and to raise and achieve their aspirations.

Our Priority Outcomes; what we want to work towards:

**indicates a Strategic Equality Objective*

1. In order to support our economic and well-being ambitions for Wrexham, learners of all ages have improved outcomes, are able to achieve their potential and become active participants in their community.
2. Our learners are supported to be engaged and aspirational; making the most of new skills, training and learning opportunities for children and young people.
3. Our learners should attend school on a regular basis with more children and families supported at an earlier stage, to increase attendance, improve safeguarding, reduce exclusions and improve behaviour.

4. Our learners actively contribute to their learning, have improved resilience, health and well-being and are supported by effective collaboration with our partners.
5. * All learners are supported to improve their education outcomes, and inequalities in outcomes between different groups of learners will be reduced.
6. * Our learners have a positive learning experience through access to an environment that is accessible and fit for purpose and allows a choice of Welsh and English medium education.

This Priority contributes directly to the following Wales Well-being Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

PROMOTING GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING (WITH A FOCUS ON SOCIAL SERVICES AND GOOD MENTAL HEALTH)

Good health and well-being impact on every aspect of our lives and are central to ensuring people in our communities have the best life opportunities available to them. Supporting and enabling individuals, families and communities to be resilient and have good physical and mental health and well-being is therefore vital so that people are able to benefit from living independently as long as possible and the impacts of health inequalities are reduced.

To continue on our improvement journey to improve health and well-being we will progress our work to integrate and transform our prevention and early help services, working closely with our partners to ensure people get the right support as early as possible, leading to improved outcomes, which in turn lessens the demand on services later on. We will focus on effective front door services and improved information, advice and signposting at first contact. For those that need statutory services we will aim to improve the pathways to the right care.

In delivering good health and well-being we will continue building on the success of our social care services improvement journey to provide the right level of care and support; where all children and vulnerable adults feel, and are, safe, and have the opportunity to reach their potential and lead happy, fulfilled lives and where the voices of individuals are central to practice.

Within this priority we have recognised increasing concerns around mental health support. Good mental health is important at every stage of life and helps determine long term how we make life choices, relate to others and handle stress. We have committed to focusing on improving the support to children and adults to have good mental health. We will do this by working in collaboration with our public service partners, community organisations and other council services, concentrating on early prevention and helping to reduce the incidence of mental health challenges becoming more complex.

Throughout this priority we will work closely with communities, stakeholders and partners to build strong, healthy and resilient communities where people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and supports people to fulfil their potential.

Our Priority Outcomes; what we want to work towards:

**indicates a Strategic Equality Objective*

1. There are fewer children that need to be looked after by the council as a result of effective prevention and early-intervention services reducing the need for further intervention.
2. Looked after children and young people have access to stable, long term foster care and supported lodging placements (with increased in-house provision), and have good experiences within these placements allowing them to thrive and achieve the outcomes they want.

3. People are receiving the right care and support for their needs, in the right place and at the right time, through improved care at home, reablement and occupational therapy capacity (with reduced waiting times for Occupational Therapy assessment), achieved through effective partnership working.
4. *Children and adults are supported to have good mental health and well-being, by public services partnerships and communities working together. There is a focus on mental health support provided through prevention and early help mental health services with the aim of reducing demand for services later on.
5. All people have access to the right level of care and support for their needs, through the provision of consistent and good quality social care services, supported by the Social Care Improvement Board.
6. *We make certain our social care services meet the needs of those who use them by making sure the voice of children, adults, families and carers is heard and listened to.
7. Children, Adults and Families are safeguarded by Social Care and statutory partners.

This Priority contributes directly to the following Wales Well-being Goals:

- A Healthier Wales
- A More Equal Wales
- A Wales of Cohesive Communities

SUPPORTING A HIGHLY SKILLED AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE, FOCUSSED ON DELIVERING SERVICES

A skilled, diverse and sustainable workforce must be in place to deliver the services that our communities need and want. We will strive to ensure that Wrexham County Borough Council is an 'employer of choice' to attract, recruit and retain individuals with the skills and experience that will benefit our communities. We understand that this is a challenging task in the national context of a highly competitive recruitment market and aim to continue to respond with new initiatives to support recruitment and retention for example the continued roll out of our 'Grow your Own' approach, to address recruitment difficulties in certain areas, such as social care.

The health and well-being of our employees is vital to maintain a resilient and adaptable workforce delivering services. We will support our workforce by ensuring that we maintain our active approach to employee well-being and corporate health. We will ensure that robust people management practices are in place to support and manage employees experiencing periods of sickness and to maintain high levels of attendance and continue to reduce absence levels.

We will continue to actively promote and support a thriving Welsh language and Welsh culture in our workforce and our communities to generate a pride in our Welsh-ness. It is vital that the council continues to ensure it is adhering to the Welsh Language Standards.

This objective is cross-cutting and in helping the council deliver improvements across all of its wellbeing objectives and services, will contribute to all seven of Wales' Well-being Goals – but in particular directly supporting a resilient Wales, which is globally responsible and has a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Our Priority Outcomes; what we want to work towards:

**indicates a Strategic Equality Objective*

1. The council has a strong people management culture and arrangements in place to support employee well-being and manage sickness absence effectively, resulting in improved attendance and reduced levels of sickness absence.
2. The well-being of our employees is supported through a range corporate health and wellbeing initiatives.
3. *The council is an 'employer of choice' able to recruit and retain a diverse and sustainable workforce, with a modern approach to work and a framework of employee rewards and benefits.
4. *Any gender based pay gap identified will be reviewed and better understood. Appropriate work will commence to address this gap and other pay gaps where relevant.
5. *Welsh language and culture is thriving within our workforce and our communities and is actively promoted and supported.

6. The council's finances are well managed, and resources are allocated to support the delivery of sustainable and resilient services which directly support the delivery of our council priorities.

This Priority contributes directly to the following Wales Well-being Goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of more cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

We welcome your comments on both the format and the content of our Council Plan. If you have any suggestions or comments to make the plan more readable, or for additional or alternative areas on which the council should focus please contact us at the address below. Any proposals for additional areas of focus will be considered as part of the performance management and updating of this plan. Comments on the presentation of the plan will be considered for its next publication date.

Contact us

telluswhatyouthink@wrexham.gov.uk