



Denbighshire County Council

Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees

2013/14



DRAFT

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Foreword

Denbighshire County Council's Scrutiny Committees examine the work of the Council and other public service providers across a range of topics to help ensure the delivery of quality services for the County's residents. In this Annual Report we give a summary of our Scrutiny Committees' activities during 2013/14.

Whilst councillors, Council officers and external partners contribute regularly to our activities we also welcome public attendance at our meetings. We would like to encourage residents to attend and contribute to our work in securing the best possible public services. The intention is to make sure that we are dealing with the matters that are most important to the community and are delivering quality services to you.

If you feel that there is a topic that we should look at, please let us know by completing the 'Scrutiny Request Form' or by contacting the Scrutiny Co-ordinator on 01824 712554 or email to dcc_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk

We hope that this document gives an interesting insight into our work and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

Introduction

What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's political structure and plays a vital role in improving the services that the people of Denbighshire use. Many of the Council's important decisions are taken by the Cabinet, a group of elected councillors who take decisions about policy and procedures.

Scrutiny Committees give the other councillors an opportunity to review decisions by Cabinet and officers, make recommendations, and examine a range of topics that affect Denbighshire's residents and visitors to help ensure that Denbighshire County Council realises its ambition of being an excellent Council, close to its community.

Scrutiny in Action

In addition to the active role of Scrutiny Committees in developing policies and reviewing performance, they also have the responsibility of holding the Cabinet and other decision makers to account on the decisions they make.

If a Scrutiny Committee believes that an issue should be looked at in more depth before a decision is implemented, it can request a review under the "Call-In" procedure which will allow Scrutiny Committees to formulate alternative proposals.

How does scrutiny work?

Scrutiny acts as a 'critical friend' to the Council's leadership, driving improvement in public services and enabling the concerns of the public to be heard. The Council's scrutiny work is undertaken by three thematic, cross-cutting scrutiny Committees, meeting every 6 weeks and comprising members from all political parties/groups on the Council:

-  Communities Scrutiny Committee
-  Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
-  Performance Scrutiny Committee



The last 12 months of Scrutiny in Denbighshire

During the last 12 months the scrutiny committees have been busy examining various plans and proposals which will hopefully assist the Council to deliver the seven priority areas earmarked for improvement by the time of the next local authority elections in the spring of 2017.

Developing the local economy

All committees have been involved in examining proposals developed to stimulate the local economy, from the Town and Area Plans to larger regeneration programmes such as the work taking place in Rhyl, and the restructure of the Council's Regeneration, Business Support and Tourism Services with a view to invigorating the County's urban and rural economies. It has long been recognised that the availability of convenient car parking facilities is crucial to securing a prosperous future for market towns and tourist areas, therefore scrutiny has been involved with the introduction of a new parking policy for the County and in instigating a review of traffic and parking facilities in ten of the county's towns and villages. Looking ahead to next year scrutiny will be examining a proposed caravan sites strategy for the area.

Improving performance in education and the quality of school buildings

The County's children and young people are its future. The Council is committed to ensuring that they reach their full potential and contribute towards developing the local economy in the years that lie ahead. To enable them to realise their ambitions they need to be provided with the best education available and equipped with the required skills. In a bid to ensure that the Council is on track to deliver its ambition of improving pupil

performance and securing better outcomes for the county's children and young people, the scrutiny committees have been closely monitoring pupils' educational attainment. In addition individual schools' performance in delivering the curriculum has also been monitored. This is done by scrutinising external examination and teacher assessment results and via the School Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG). A number of scrutiny members serve on the School Standards Monitoring Group which interviews headteachers and challenges their school's examination results and educational plans. The Council has a long term goal of improving school facilities under its Modernising Education Programme which aims to provide the right education in the right area. Scrutiny has been regularly monitoring the progress in attracting funding for this Programme and in delivering new state of the art educational facilities. Further educational establishments, such as Coleg Cambria and Glyndŵr University have also attended meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Committees to outline their educational provision and how they are working with the Council to deliver the right type of education which should help to stimulate and sustain the local economy. Looking ahead to next year scrutiny intends to examine whether the investments in new educational facilities is beginning to reap the intended educational outcomes.



Improving roads:

Having a good well-maintained road network is integral to developing the industrial, rural and tourist economies in the County. Good roads also benefit residents' travelling experience whether it be to work, school or for leisure purposes. With that in mind scrutiny has during the year looked at the highways capital investment programme, winter maintenance and verge cutting arrangements. As mentioned earlier it has also supported a proposal to undertake a traffic management and parking review for the purpose of coming up with practical solutions to ease traffic and parking problems in the County. During the forthcoming year scrutiny will be considering the findings of the above review with a view to ensuring the future economic viability of County's towns and tourist attractions.

Ensuring that vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible

Similar to many other counties Denbighshire has an ageing population. To enable the Council to provide quality services to its older residents and help them live independently for longer some established services have had to change and other new services have been developed. During the year scrutiny has examined the proposals for reviewing day care services in the north of the County and the development of a single point of access for health and social care in the County. Scrutiny members have also looked at services which care and support other vulnerable people within the County, such as children, young families, people with learning disabilities as well as those with mental health problems. When scrutiny committees have examined these matters they have often had representatives from the Health Service

attending the meetings to answer any concerns councillors and residents may have about the services, the working relationship between health and social care services and how the transfer from one service to the other can be improved for the citizen's benefit. Scrutiny will continue to monitor the interface between health and social care services during the year that lies ahead.

Having clean and tidy streets

It became apparent during the last County Council election campaign in 2012 that one of the matters of most concern to residents was the untidy state of the county's streets and pathways, dog fouling being a particular concern. In a bid to ensure that the County can in future pride itself on having clean, tidy and safe streets a number of strategies and policies have been introduced. During the last year scrutiny has monitored the effectiveness of the Anti-fouling Strategy, including the number of fixed penalty notices issued for dog fouling and littering, and the resulting environmental improvements in areas which were considered as environmental crime hotspots. Scrutiny has also examined the County's performance in dealing with incidents of fly tipping which blight the landscape and monitored the work of the Community Safety Partnership in dealing with anti-social behaviour in towns and villages. In addition, scrutiny has been consulted on proposals to introduce dog control orders across the County. Performance in delivering these strategies will continue to be monitored through 2014/15.



Ensuring access to good quality housing

The Council has committed itself to ensure that there is an appropriate amount and right mix of good quality and suitable housing in the area to meet residents' needs. With a view to supporting the Council to deliver this priority scrutiny has regularly monitored the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project which forms part of the Rhyl Going Forward Programme. This particular project aims to transform houses of multiple occupation in the west end of Rhyl into a suitable mix of housing, including family housing complemented by a green space recreational area. During the year Scrutiny has contributed towards the development of the county-wide Local Housing Strategy and been consulted on the proposals to establish a common social housing application process and allocations policy, which should make it easier for people to apply for social housing. Scrutiny members have also examined the Council's performance and procedures in dealing with household planning applications in order to ensure that appropriate support is available to applicants and no unnecessary delays are experienced in dealing with planning applications.

During the next few months the quality of the Housing Stock Refurbishment Contracts will be examined as will the Service's Improvement Plan.



Modernising the Council to deliver efficiencies and improve services to customers

In these times of financial constraints improving services while at the same time realising efficiencies is extremely difficult. However, the Council is attempting to do this by modernising its services and, where appropriate, by working in partnership with other councils and organisations. To support the modernisation and efficiencies aim in 2013/14 scrutiny has monitored the effectiveness of the collaborative work taking place to source tailored residential placements for young people and adults with significant and complex needs. The cost of dealing with residual waste (waste that cannot be recycled) is increasing and with this in mind five of the six local authorities in North Wales have joined forces in a bid to deliver economies of scale and drive down costs by having all their residual waste dealt with at one purpose built plant. As this is an expensive and complex project councillors have been monitoring its development over a long period of time and scrutiny members, in early 2014, examined and supported proposals which should bring the project to fruition in the next few years. With so many changes taking place at the same time the quality of services delivered by the Council could easily suffer. In an attempt to make sure that this does not happen and to ensure that the Council can realise its ambition of being close to its community scrutiny regularly examines statistics on the number of complaints received and whether they were responded to on time and satisfactorily resolved within the expected time. By studying this information scrutiny can identify any slippages in services' performance, or increases in certain types of complaints, and recommend appropriate measures to deal

with them. The delivery of the Corporate Plan and its seven priorities is monitored in a similar way, with the objective of realising the Council's ambitions by the next local authority elections in 2017.

During the forthcoming year, with finances becoming increasingly tighter, new ways of working and delivering services will be explored by the Council. Scrutiny will have an important role to play in examining any new proposals which result from this work.

Additional Work

In addition to the work undertaken at formal scrutiny committee meetings, each committee has nominated representatives to serve on a variety of internal 'groups', tasked with working with officers to discharge corporate functions and to try and continually improve services despite central government funding cuts. By participating in groups such

as the Strategic Investment Group, the School Standards Monitoring Group, the Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board and the Corporate Equalities Group, scrutiny members have the opportunity to shape, develop and monitor policy through alternative means, complementing the work undertaken by the committees at their regular meetings.

Each of the scrutiny committees have appointed members to serve on the all of the Council's Service Performance Challenge Groups (where Council departments' performance and priorities are reviewed). In circumstances where there are concerns with a service's performance the Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and the committee's performance lead may meet with the relevant Head of Service and appropriate officers to examine matters in closer detail



All Wales Scrutiny Improvement Study

It was mentioned in last year's Annual Report that Denbighshire had participated in a comparative assessment study facilitated by the Wales Audit Office (WAO). The purpose of the study was to develop the scrutiny function for local councils across Wales. Whilst the national report on the study's findings is yet to be published Denbighshire's scrutiny committees have implemented some of the good practice they observed on visits to Wrexham County Borough Council's scrutiny meetings. As a result of the Study, and following a discussion with Cabinet members, Cabinet Lead Members now present reports at scrutiny committee meetings and are available to answer any policy related questions, with Service officers attending in a supporting role on technical matters.

Once the national report is published the Council will consider its findings and determine whether any further changes are required to scrutiny practices in the authority.

Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

As was reported in last year's Annual Report 'The Local Government (Wales) Measure' has granted local authorities the ability to hold joint scrutiny committees with other councils and to scrutinise organisations delivering public services to residents. However, the final piece of legislation compelling people to attend scrutiny committees when asked to do so is yet to be made by the Welsh Assembly Government. Until this piece of legislation is made scrutiny committees can only invite these organisations to participate. The organisations being proposed as those who can be compelled to come to scrutiny are National Park Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Health Boards and NHS Trusts. Suggestions have been made that Registered

Social Landlords and Town and Community Councils could be included on the list in due course. Time will tell who scrutiny committees will eventually be able to compel to participate in scrutiny enquiries. In the meantime, Denbighshire's scrutiny committees will invite outside organisations to attend as and when appropriate. We feel that the best way to engage and influence these organisations, a number of which we work closely with, is by working with them in a supportive role rather than by engaging with them in a confrontational manner.

Scrutiny committees in Wales now have a duty to consult with residents on major policy issues. To enable this to take place the Forward Work Programmes of the scrutiny committee are accessible to members of the public through the scrutiny page of Denbighshire's website. Leaflets explaining the function of scrutiny and inviting the submission of topics for consideration have also been circulated to schools, libraries, leisure centres, council reception areas, One Stop Shops and to town and community councils. We hope that by improving awareness of the work undertaken by the scrutiny committees, and making it easier for the residents of Denbighshire to propose matters for scrutiny, that scrutiny of the Council will be enhanced through closer relevance to the needs and priorities of local communities



Membership

Communities Scrutiny Committee



The Communities Scrutiny Committee examines issues that directly affect the residents of Denbighshire and the communities that they live in, reviewing services across the Council to make sure that the best possible standards are delivered in areas such as highway maintenance, refuse collection and keeping the County's streets clean and tidy

Huw
Hilditch-Roberts (Chair of the Communities Scrutiny Committee)



James
Davies



Peter
Evans



Carys
Guy (Vice-Chair)



Rhys
Hughes



Win
Mullen-James



Bob
Murray



Joe
Welch



Cefyn
Williams



Cheryl
Williams



Huw
Williams

In the last 12 months the Communities Scrutiny Committee has provided an effective forum for consulting; reviewing and developing policy and strategies across a broad range of Council services. The committee has endorsed the establishment of a working group to develop a Highways Asset Management Strategy and monitored the effectiveness of the Anti-Fouling Strategy, which covers littering and dog fouling. It has continued to regularly monitor the progress made with delivering the Rhyl Going Forward Programme and the Town and Area Plans. Following the call-in of a Cabinet decision relating to Ysgol Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd the Committee had to examine whether proper consultation had taken place prior to the decision being taken and whether the decision had been predetermined. A comprehensive list of the issues considered by the Communities Scrutiny Committee, and recommendations put forward by the committee are listed overleaf.

Summary of Communities Scrutiny Committee resolutions 2013/14

23 rd May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinised the progress with the delivery of the County's Town and Area Plans • Examined how the Restructure of the Regeneration, Business Support and Tourism Services would assist the Council to realise its economic ambition strategy • Considered the progress made in revising the Local Housing Strategy and endorsed the three themed areas for inclusion in the new Strategy • Examined and approved the implementation of a new model for providing Day Care Service in North Denbighshire, but asked that the provision of day care services be undertaken and reported back to the Committee in mid-2014 • In response to the national horsemeat scandal the Council set up a working group to examine the Council's food purchasing procedures. The Working Group's findings and recommendations were considered and supported by the Committee who asked the Working Group to continue with its work and explore the viability of future Council meat purchasing contracts stating that all suppliers must have a recognised accreditation, such as Farm Assured or Red Tractor symbol
4 th July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered the progress to date in regenerating Rhyl through the Rhyl Going Forward programme • The Committee endorsed the development of a Caravan Sites Strategy for Denbighshire and asked for it to be submitted to the Committee for consideration • Considered the reorganisation of the Council's Highways/Public Realm Services and endorsed the general direction of travel with respect to improving service delivery • Following consideration of a report on the Condition of the County's Highways the Committee supported a proposal to establish a working group to develop a Highways Asset Management Strategy • Considered the progress made in Developing the Local Housing Strategy • Having considered a report on the impact to date of cuts to Supporting People Funded Internal Services in Denbighshire the Committee decided that further information should be provided to the Committee once details on further Welsh Government cuts had been announced in the summer of 2014 along with an analysis of their impact on Council services and details of measures which would be taken to mitigate the effects of the cuts and safeguard vulnerable people
12th Sep 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having considered the Draft Public Realm Strategy for the County and recommending a number of amendments and inclusions the Committee endorsed the Strategy and recommended that Cabinet approve and adopt it • The Committee after considering a report on the Council's Preparedness for Winter Maintenance concluded that sufficient arrangements were in place to deal with an average winter on the County's roads and that contingency plans would cover more severe conditions • Following consideration of the New Operating Model for the Destination, Marketing and Communications Team the Committee supported the operating model and its objectives
17th Oct 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Committee considered the progress made with delivering the Rhyl Going Forward Programme • discussed the findings of the North Wales Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment and noted the conclusions, but did not support the make-up or the remit of the proposed Steering Group and requested that further details and costings be provided prior to the report being presented to County Council • Having considered the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan the Committee supported the Plan for 2014/15 and 2015/16 for submission to the regional collaborative committee and the Welsh Government, subject to the inclusion in the Plan of all services available for men
25th Nov 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of considering Parking Enforcement matters the Committee supported a proposal to carry out a scoping exercise to fully evaluate the requirements for parking and traffic reviews in the County's towns with a view to boosting the local economy and ensuring that clear and proper parking signage is in place • Following consideration of the impact and effectiveness of the Anti-Fouling Strategy to date in dealing

	<p>with the dog fouling problem in the County the Committee recommended that every effort should be made to find the money needed to continue the work and to fund the dedicated 0800 number for the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee endorsed the Council's Draft Flood Management Strategy for public consultation, and the actions taken to date to respond to the recommendations of the investigation report into the 2012 floods in the County • Agreed the Highways Maintenance Capital Programme with a view to improving the County's road network and requested that the draft Highways Asset Management Strategy be presented to it in 2014 • The Council's procedure for the Granting of Leases to community groups etc. was considered to ensure that it met the Council and the leaseholder's expectations.
23rd Jan 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee was asked to consider whether the County Council's decision of 14 January to publish a statutory notice of its intention to close Ysgol Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd had been taken without due consultation. In light of the representations made and the information provided the Committee concluded that the decision had been taken following adequate and appropriate consultation. • Progress in delivering the Town and Area Plans and the Rhyl Going Forward programme of work were once again examined • Twelve months after its adoption by the Council the Community's Covenant with the Armed Forces was scrutinised to ensure that the measures introduced under the covenant were being implemented in order to support the local armed services community.
6th Mar 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to concerns raised with respect to the Safer Routes Scheme the Committee considered various aspects of these types of schemes. Whilst the Committee agreed that there had been problems in certain areas it felt that the Council should continue to apply for Safer Routes in Communities funding. It also sent a letter to the Welsh Government's Minister for Economy, Science and Transport urging that the criteria for the scheme be reviewed and that it revert to being a Safer Routes to Schools scheme. • The Committee considered and endorsed proposals to consult on the introduction of additional county-wide Dog Control Orders across the county in a bid to reduce dog fouling. • Kingdom Security Limited's procedures and performance in environmental crime enforcement action, e.g. for littering, dog fouling, graffiti etc. was examined in detail. The Committee supported the approach taken by the Company in dealing with this type of crime, but did seek further clarification on the Council's guidelines to the Company on Enforcement Officers' wearing of uniforms. • The Draft Revised Parking Policy and the results of the scoping exercise to assess options for the Traffic and Parking Review for the County's main towns were examined. The draft Parking Policy was endorsed and the preferred approach for undertaking the traffic and parking review for the towns was supported, with the review's findings being reported back to the Committee in the autumn of 2014
3 rd Apr 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress to date in delivering the Town and Area Plans was discussed • Detailed Design of the West Rhyl Green Space (part of the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project) which forms an integral part of the Rhyl Going Forward Programme was examined • The Council's Highway's Grass Verge Cutting Policy and Programme for 2014/15, including the biodiversity aspects of the programme, were discussed to ensure that local communities' specific needs would be met where possible

In the coming months, the Communities Scrutiny Committee will also be looking at...

15 May 2014	Caravan Sites Strategy for Denbighshire
26 June 2014	Highways Asset Management Strategy



Pont y Ddraig, Rhyl

Membership

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee



The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is responsible for reviewing the provision of council services delivered in conjunction with external partners in the public and private sector, with their work encompassing health, social services, economic development and community safety. The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is also the Council's designated 'Crime and Disorder Committee'.

Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee)



Bill
Cowie



Ann
Davies



Meirick Lloyd
Davies



Alice
Jones



Pat
Jones



Margaret
McCarroll



Dewi
Owens



Merfyn
Parry



Bill
Tasker



Joe
Welch

The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meet to review and scrutinise the effectiveness of arrangements for service delivery in partnership with other public service providers and private sector companies. During the year the Committee has been involved in enhancing joint working arrangements between Social Service and the Health Service to try and improve services for residents when they need them the most. The Committee has also examined further and higher education provision in the area, as well as safeguarding and housing matters. Details of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's activity and the recommendations made in 2013/14 are included overleaf.

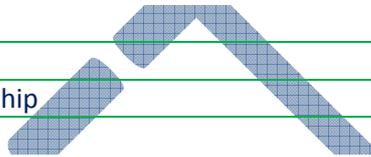
Summary of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee resolutions 2013/14

10 th June 2013	<p>The Committee discussed a number of health and social care matters at this meeting and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supported the development of a Single Point of Access for Health and Social Care in the County supported the development of services in the county in line with the Mental Health Measure Wales and acknowledged the good working relationship between Health and Social Care services to deliver mental health services across all age ranges examined the demand and capacity within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the County received an update on the development of joint Health and Social Care Locality Working in the area received an update on Health Protection Issues in the Health Service locally
18 th July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the New Work Connections Programme procedures and governance arrangements were examined as was the development of its exit strategy for when the European funding ceases in 2014 the progress to date in delivering the Local Service Board's integrated community plan 'The BIG Plan' was scrutinised the Committee considered a number of different aspects of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services recommended to Cabinet to change the arrangements for adult safeguarding in line with other North Wales authorities and establish a two-tiered North Wales Adult Safeguarding Board having considered the conclusion of enquiries made with respect to the Potential for Collaboration in Delivering Domiciliary Care in Rural Areas the Committee supported the on-going work to find alternative ways of meeting the small demand for this type of care in rural areas.
26 th September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Committee discussed the delivery of Further and Higher Education in North East Wales and how further and higher educational establishments planned to support local businesses by providing the right type and range of courses that would help develop and sustain the local economy. In its capacity as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee it provided observations on the Community Safety Partnerships' Action Plan and priority areas for 2013/14 Potential Scrutiny Arrangements for the Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board were agreed.
7 th November 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The delivery of services under the Families First Programme in the County were examined in detail. The Committee considered and provided observations on North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Improvement Objectives for 2014/15 and Beyond as part of the Authority's consultation on the objectives. Consideration was given to the Conwy and Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report for 2013/14 and comments were provided on the Board's proposed priorities for 2014/15 Proposals for transforming transport by the establishment of a Regional Transport Collaboration Project were examined.
19 th December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals to establish a National Adoption Service for Wales were scrutinised and supported. The Committee considered and supported a draft statement of intent between the Council and the Health Board to comply with the Welsh Government's aspiration of Delivering Integrated Health and Social Care Services for Older People with Complex Needs The principles for establishing A Single Route to Housing, which would see a single social housing application process and common waiting list across all housing organisations in the County, was discussed and endorsed for Cabinet's approval and implementation.
6 th February 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The progress made with the establishment of the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) was examined. Concerns were raised following scrutiny of the progress achieved to date in delivering the Local Service Board's BIG Plan on whether the entire Plan would be deliverable given the considerable financial constraints faced by all public service and third sector organisations involved with its delivery Members considered the progress made with the establishment and the running of the North Wales Commissioning Hub. The Hub realises value for money in finding quality care placements for children and adults with complex needs e.g severe learning difficulties or mental health problems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following consideration of the processes undertaken to date with respect of the North Wales Residual Waste Project the Committee supported the principles to proceed with the project.
10 th April 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee members considered the challenges and priorities for all partner organisations involved with delivering the Welsh Government’s strategy Together for Mental Health and raised a number of issues of concern with representatives from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. The governance arrangements for the Proposed Joint Committee for the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) were examined and endorsed.

In the coming months, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee will also be looking at...

5 June 2014	Heritage and Arts Service
10 July	Rural Development Partnership



National Eisteddfod of Wales, Denbigh August 2013

Membership

Performance Scrutiny Committee



The Performance Scrutiny Committee monitors the Council's business planning and operational performance, reviewing corporate and financial strategies to ensure that the Council is governed effectively and delivers quality services for Denbighshire's residents.

David Simmons (Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee)



Bill
Cowie



Meirick Lloyd
Davies



Richard
Davies



Colin
Hughes



Geraint
Lloyd-Williams



Peter
Owen



Dewi
Owens



Arwel
Roberts
(Vice-Chair)



Gareth
Sandilands



Joe
Welch

In 2013/14 the Performance Scrutiny Committee has played an important role in the development of Denbighshire County Council's corporate policies, offering a valuable perspective and helping to ensure that services achieve results for Denbighshire's residents, meet their expectations and deliver the services they want when they want them. . The Committee has reviewed the key plans for discharging the Council's corporate functions, monitored the performance of services in meeting their operational targets, and driven improvements in the delivery of education in Denbighshire

A summary of the Committee's work at each of its meetings over the last year is included overleaf.

Summary of Performance Scrutiny Committee resolutions 2013/14

24 th May 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following consideration of a report on Cefndy Enterprises the Committee recommended to Cabinet that money held in the Corporate Plan capital reserve should be invested in machinery to assist the business to be financially viable in the future. The Committee debated the Wales Audit Office's Annual Improvement Report on the Council. Proposals to develop a new complaints framework were endorsed as part of the scrutiny of the Council's performance in dealing with complaints under the Your Voice Complaints process. The Director of Social Services' Annual Report which included a self-assessment of social care services in the County and outlined the improvement priorities for 2013/14 in the field of social care was debated and endorsed.
20 th June 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee scrutinised the progress made to date in delivering the Estyn Action Plan Performance to date in delivering the Corporate Plan was examined. Consideration was given to the Council's Corporate Risk Register and the actions taken to reduce the risks contained in it.
19 th September 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Provisional External Examination and Teacher Assessment Results were discussed First Quarter 2013/14 performance in responding to residents' complaints under the Your Voice complaints policy were studied. Committee members scrutinised and provided observation on the Council's Annual Performance Review Report 2012/13 before it was presented to County Council. The frequency of Future Performance Reporting was discussed in order to reduce the number of in-year performance reports and to align the performance and risk register reports
24 th October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following consideration of a report on CCTV in Denbighshire the Committee requested officers to undertake a detailed business case analysis on a number of possible options for future CCTV provision in the County and present their findings to the Committee at a future meeting. Members examined the effectiveness of new Taxi Licensing procedures which had been introduced as a result of an Internal Audit review. As a consequence of considering a report on the development of a Dropped Kerb Strategy for the County the Committee asked that an audit be undertaken of dropped kerb requirements across the County. The Committee examined the Council's performance in dealing with Planning Applications
12 th December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee considered a report on Listed Buildings at Risk in the County and the potential financial risk this could pose to the Council. Having studied the information it was decided to write to the Welsh Government outlining their concerns to proposed changes in legislation relating to listed buildings. Second Quarterly report on the Council's performance in dealing with complaints under the Your Voice' complaints procedure was scrutinised. The Council's Corporate Risk Register was examined. As a result of the scrutiny of the Council's performance in delivering its Corporate Plan concerns were raised in relation to aspects of five of the corporate priorities.
16 th January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in delivering the Estyn Action Plan was scrutinised and additional information relating to specific matters were requested to be included in the next monitoring report The verified KS4 Examination Results were examined in detail Information relating to School Places throughout the County were scrutinised to examine the future sustainability of schools. As a consequence of examining Denbighshire's Performance on Fly Tipping Issues it was decided to support the County's rigorous enforcement procedures in dealing with fly-tipping incidents and to write to Natural Resources Wales to highlight the Committee's concerns on the quality and reliability of its 'Flycapture' data.

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20 th February 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee considered the findings of a review into the progress achieved to date in delivering the Modernising Education Programme, which is the work underway to refurbish and build new school buildings across the County. Members considered the Council's performance in dealing with complaints under the Your Voice complaints process and asked that work be undertaken to examine the nature of complaints and Council services' performance in responding to complaints received.
20 th March 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed consideration was given to the alternative services that would be available to residents following the closure of the Community Development Agency. As a result of considering a report on the outcomes of councillor visits to the Council's In-house social care establishments the Committee decided to establish a Task and Finish Group to examine value for money options for delivering high quality care in the County. Progress made with rationalising the County's Agricultural Estate was examined and consequently the Committee decided that a clear long-term vision and strategy needed to be developed for the Estate.
1 st May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a consequence of scrutinising the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Annual Report concerns on the capacity of computer software to correctly categorise accidents were raised and escalated for urgent resolution. Members examined the Council's Corporate Risk Register and decided to look closer at the measures in place to mitigate the risk relating to Human Resources at a later meeting. With a view to ensuring continued improvements in the service provided the Housing Service's Improvement Plan was examined and commended.

In the coming months, the Performance Scrutiny Committee will also be looking at...

12 th June 2014	Agricultural Estate Strategy
17 th July 2014	Provision of CCTV and Out of Hours Service



Denbighshire has the cleanest streets in Wales, according to information issued by Keep Wales Tidy (March 2014)

Further information on the topics discussed by all three committees, including the agendas, reports and minutes for each committee meeting, can be found on the Council's website, under 'Your Council'/Meetings, minutes & agendas/Committees or by following the link below >>>

<https://moderngov.denbighshire.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

DRAFT

The Year Ahead

The Scrutiny Committees are looking forward to another busy 12 months, reviewing the Council's policies and performance and supporting improvements to service provision at a time when Council services face ever increasing financial pressures.

Some of the most prominent issues that scrutiny will be reviewing over the next year include a draft Caravan Sites Strategy for Denbighshire, the Findings of the Traffic and Parking Review in the County's Towns, and the Review of Local Authority Provided Adult Social Care Services. This will be in addition to the Committees' role in scrutinising, developing and monitoring service performance across the Council.

As mentioned earlier the Scrutiny Committees are also awaiting the findings of the Wales Audit Office's Scrutiny Improvement Study, which is expected to establish 'best practice' procedures and techniques for local government scrutiny across Wales.

The Council's Scrutiny Committees hope that developing public awareness and participation over the next 12 months will increase the effectiveness of Scrutiny in assisting with Denbighshire County Council's goal of being *an excellent council, close to the community*.



How can residents participate in Scrutiny?

Would you like scrutiny to look at a particular matter?

You can raise a matter for consideration by one of Denbighshire County Council's scrutiny committees by filling out the Scrutiny Request Form (overleaf). The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the three scrutiny committees meet every 6 weeks to decide how to allocate the work of the scrutiny committees and will consider if any matter raised should be examined in detail by one of the committees, or if another course of action should be pursued. This can range from a referral to the service responsible, to full scrutiny of the matter by one of the scrutiny committees, or even the establishment of a specialist 'task and finish group' to investigate and report on a particular matter.

Would you like to attend a meeting of a scrutiny committee?

Denbighshire County Council's scrutiny committee meetings are generally open to the public, and residents of Denbighshire and the general public are encouraged to attend. A list of upcoming scrutiny committee meetings and the matters to be discussed are available on the 'Scrutiny' page of the Council's website.

If you wish to take part in the discussion on a particular matter you will require the permission of the Chair of the committee (further details below).

Occasionally some items being discussed by a committee will contain confidential information and cannot be discussed in the usual public forum. Any such items (referred to as 'Part Two (II)') will be clearly identified when the meeting papers are published, and the Chair of the committee meeting discussing a 'Part II' item will make it clear that the meeting should continue without the press and public in attendance in order to avoid divulging confidential information.

Would you like to speak to a committee on an item being discussed?

Members of the public are very welcome to attend scrutiny committee meetings but will require the permission of the Chair of the committee if they wish to speak or make representations at a committee meeting. If you wish to submit evidence to a committee, or address members on your experience in relation to a subject under discussion, please contact the Scrutiny Co-ordinator in advance of the meeting so that this can be arranged and any paperwork can be circulated to members of the committee.

Occasionally scrutiny committees may wish to 'co-opt' an individual with particular experience or expertise to become a temporary member of the committee or ask them to contribute to an inquiry as an expert witness.

Keeping up to speed with decisions made by Denbighshire's scrutiny committees

You can keep track of what is being discussed at each scrutiny committee meeting, as well as any other public Council meeting, by visiting the 'meetings' page of the Council's website. The latest 'work programme' for each of the scrutiny committees is available with the meeting papers for each meeting and the confirmed agenda for each meeting will usually be available 5 - 7 days before the meeting is due to take place.

The minutes of previous scrutiny meetings and a record of the decisions made are also available on the Council's website.

Further advice or information is available by contacting the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Rhian Evans on rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk (01824 712554) or the Democratic Services Officer, Karen Evans, on karen.a.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk (01824 712575) or e-mailing: dcc_admin@denbighshire.gov.uk.

SCRUTINY REQUEST FORM

Is there something you would like scrutiny to have a look at?

Please give a brief description of the topic you would like to be considered by one of the Scrutiny Committees and why you think it should be considered

Would you like to attend a meeting of a Scrutiny Committee?

YES/NO

It would be useful if you could give us the following details so that we may respond to your request

Your name:
Address:

Postcode:
Email:
Telephone number:

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, COUNTY HALL, WYNNSTAY ROAD, RUTHIN LL15 1YN or e-mail it to dcc_admin@denbighsire.gov.uk

Scrutiny Referral and Interface Chart

