Denbighshire County Council

Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees 2011/12

Contents	Page Number
Introduction	14 – 19
Summary of scrutiny related matters	20 – 29
Evaluation of scrutiny in Denbighshire	30 – 40
Annex 1: Scrutiny Committee Membership and Issues Considered by Scrutiny	41 – 48
Annex 2: Self-evaluation questionnaire results	49 – 56
Annex 3: Summary of the Conclusions of 2010/11 Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Exercise	57 – 58
Annex 4: Schedule of Scrutiny Committee Meetings 2011/12	59
Annex 5: Citizens' Scrutiny Request/Referral Form	61
Annex 6: Scrutiny Representatives on Council Boards, Groups and Service Challenge Groups	63 – 66
Annex 7: Scrutiny Referral and Interface Chart	67

Introduction

Scrutiny forms an integral part of both local and national government. In the context of local government its duty is to facilitate effective and accountable decision-making which delivers high quality public services to the residents within the area it serves.

As in previous years, through the course of 2011/12, the Council's scrutiny committees examined a wide and diverse range of topics. However, whereas in previous years scrutiny in Denbighshire was aligned to an operational directorate based structure, the 2011/12 year saw the introduction of a new cross-cutting thematic based scrutiny structure. Following a review of the Council's scrutiny structure in 2010/11, information on which was reported in last year's Annual report, the four directorate based scrutiny committees of Environment and Regeneration, Lifelong Learning, Resources, and Social Services and Housing were this year replaced with three thematic scrutiny committees, namely Communities, Partnerships and Performance Scrutiny Committees. Each Committee's sphere of responsibility is outlined later in this report, whilst a list of the membership of each Committee and the topics examined by them during the year can be seen at Annex 1 to this report.

As in previous years, and as is common practice, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the scrutiny function over the year we have used the four key roles for effective scrutiny[1]; namely that it:

- provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- enables the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
- is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny process;
- drives improvement in public services.

To compile an evaluation of the scrutiny function's effectiveness since the last local authority elections in 2008 scrutiny members undertook a self-evaluation exercise in which they reviewed scrutiny's performance in undertaking the above four key roles. The outcomes of similar exercises in past years were reported to Council as part of the Scrutiny Committees' Annual Reports. As Scrutiny, like other Council functions, is on a continual journey of improvement, members of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group felt it would be particularly useful for a self-evaluation exercise to be undertaken this year as this would assist the Group to measure the improvement (or deterioration) in the function during the 2011/12 municipal year and since the introduction of the new scrutiny structure. The results of the self-evaluation exercise would also provide some useful background information and act as a conduit to introduce scrutiny to newly elected councillors following May 2012's

[1] Centre for Public Scrutiny. www.cfps.org.uk

local authority elections. The results and feedback from the 2011/12 self-evaluation exercise can be seen at Annex 2 to this report. For comparison purposes a summary of the conclusions drawn from the 2010/11 exercise are attached at Annex 3 to the report.

As previously mentioned, the 2011/12 municipal year saw the introduction of a new thematic based scrutiny structure here in Denbighshire. It is widely accepted that any new system, whatever its purpose, encounters teething troubles of one sort or another. With the majority of the provisions of the new Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 being commenced in either May or the autumn of 2012, it was agreed that it would be beneficial to introduce the system in the year preceding the local authority elections in order that any anomalies or irregularities could be resolved in time for the new Council, and in readiness for the additional duties placed upon scrutiny under the Measure. It was felt that this was a fairer approach than introducing a new system at the same time as the formation of a new Council and expecting inexperienced councillors to grapple with their new roles and additional responsibilities and sort out any teething troubles with the new system.

Whilst the effectiveness of the new scrutiny structure has been the subject of a separate review, which led to Council confirming the new thematic structure with some minor changes to the membership of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, the present Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group felt that it would still be worthwhile to undertake the annual self-evaluation exercise as part of the production of this report. The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group was of the view that this would assist with the handover to the new Council and further improve scrutiny's effectiveness as it prepares to assume the additional duties and expectations placed upon it by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

The three thematic scrutiny committees are made up of 11 councillors (the 4 former scrutiny committees comprised of 9 members). Under the thematic system the Council's five statutory education co-opted members serve on any of the three committees as and when they deal with education related business, which all three committees have done at some point during the year. Of the 33 elected members' positions on scrutiny committees, 2 councillors served on more than one committee during 2011/12. Questionnaires were issued to all scrutiny members, including the statutory education co-opted members, as part of the self-evaluation exercise. Generally the conclusions drawn from the exercise, to which further reference is included in various sections of the Annual Report, were that:

- generally, the number of meetings held and the number of issues considered at each meeting (usually 4 items and the committee's work programme report) were appropriate. The room layout for meetings was also appropriate, although a comment was made that more needs to be done to ensure that members can see and hear officers presenting reports, and that officers/members of the public know which members are actually committee members and which members are attending as observers. It was also suggested that input by non-

committee members who attend as observers should be strictly managed;

- the current practice of holding the majority of meetings in County Hall, Ruthin, should continue as this constituted better use of resources and officers' time. However, it was also suggested that if meetings were held at other locations around the County it may generate more public interest in scrutiny;
- scrutiny had performed its role effectively or very effectively since the last local authority elections in 2008;
- scrutiny had generally provided an effective and constructive 'critical friend' challenge to officers and Cabinet;
- scrutiny effectively challenged major plans and strategies within their respective remits and followed their impact;
- there was a good, strong working relationship between scrutiny members and the majority of officers;
- scrutiny operated with political impartiality, had strong ownership of its work programme and generally led the scrutiny process;
- scrutiny was a worthwhile and fulfilling role and that scrutiny had contributed towards improving outcomes with examples being cited to substantiate this statement;
- information requested by Scrutiny was managed in a timely and appropriate manner.
- in the main, scrutiny's meetings, processes and work programmes are accessible to the general public, and residents and communities' concerns are adequately represented in the work of the committees. The information booklet that was produced for the first time in 2011/12, which includes a scrutiny referral form for the general public to complete, was cited as a useful tool for this purpose; and
- overall, the process adopted for developing and scrutinising the 2012/13 budget was felt to be effective and appropriate, with the links between service business planning processes, performance monitoring and the service challenge process being regarded as contributing and complementing the budget process.

But……..

- whilst some doubts had been raised last year on whether reducing the number of scrutiny committees (from 4 to 3) twelve months after reducing the frequency of meetings (from monthly to six weekly) would impact on the scrutiny function's effectiveness and cause unnecessary delays between items being scrutinised and desired outcomes being achieved, members were generally in agreement that the six weekly meeting cycle was appropriate. Nevertheless, all three committees had at some point during the year either extended their meetings to all day meetings, held longer sessions or held special/additional meetings in order to accommodate the workload;
- whilst generally respondents felt that scrutiny provided an effective and constructive 'critical friend' challenge to officers and Cabinet, a significant proportion of those who responded were unsure on whether

scrutiny did have a beneficial impact on the work of Cabinet and officers, or whether scrutiny worked effectively with Cabinet and senior officers. However, they did feel that a number of items which they had drawn to Cabinet's attention had been acted upon;

- whilst there was broad satisfaction that scrutiny effectively challenged major plans and strategies within their remits and followed their impact, particularly with respect to education, there was also an element of uncertainty as to whether this was always the case;
- whilst the Council does now have a committee dedicated to the scrutiny of partnerships there is still a level of uncertainty on whether external partners are sufficiently challenged and supported by scrutiny. However, it was felt that the waste partnerships seemed to be working well and that the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) was now much better at discussing and sharing information with the Council;
- whilst, generally members were of the view that residents and communities' concerns were adequately represented in the work of the committees, there is still some concern regarding the number of residents who attend meetings as well as a high level of uncertainty on whether scrutiny effectively communicates with the public. The provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 will in future require scrutiny to consult with residents on certain matters;
- whilst overall, members felt that there were adequate support and resources available to enable the scrutiny committees to achieve their aims, some concern was expressed on whether there was adequate administrative support and resources available to assist scrutiny committees to ensure that they achieved their objectives;
- whilst members were of the view that generally a good, constructive working relationship existed between members and officers, some members did have reservations on whether the same was true about the working relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny;
- a high level of uncertainty existed with respect to whether scrutiny had sufficient regard to the Council, Services and partner organisations' work plans when deciding on their own programme of work; and
- whilst the majority of members felt that there were no major barriers which impacted on scrutiny committees' effectiveness, there were also a significant number of members who were unsure about this, with the problem of committee meetings not being quorate cited as a particular obstacle.

A copy of the comments received on each question asked in the questionnaire can be seen at Annex 2 to this report. These include the comments of elected and co-opted scrutiny members.

Did we improve on last year's weaknesses and how will we improve on them in future

This was the third year that a full self-evaluation exercise has been undertaken, and the first year under the new thematic scrutiny structure. Therefore the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group was keen to see whether members had identified the same weaknesses as last and previous years, whether previous weaknesses had been addressed or at least partly addressed under the new system, and whether in fact the new system had thrown up some new concerns or weaknesses.

It is apparent from comparing the conclusions of this year's self-evaluation exercise with last year's (Annex 3) that some of the same, or similar, limitations exist:

- the conclusions of this year's exercise confirm some of the doubts raised last year with regards to whether the reduction in the number of committees from 4 to 3, coupled with the previous year's reduction in the frequency of meetings, would have an impact on scrutiny. Whereas there is no evidence that it has impacted on the scrutiny function's effectiveness, a number of respondents have stated that additional or extended meetings have had to be held in order to accommodate the workload. To a degree the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, in its coordinating role, has helped to ease these pressures;
- whilst in previous years it was suggested that it would be prudent on the Council's behalf if scrutiny meetings were held across the County, so that it could be seen as attempting to realise its ambition of getting closer to the community, members who responded to this year's questionnaire were generally in favour of the majority of meetings being held in County Hall, Ruthin in order to make the most effective use of officers' time and valuable resources;
- similar to last year, and despite a number of examples being cited where scrutiny was perceived to have made an impact on Cabinet, some considerable doubts still exist amongst members on how beneficial an impact scrutiny has on the work of Cabinet in general;
- again, similar to last year members felt that a strong and constructive working relationship exists between scrutiny and Council officers, but yet again this year there were some reservations on whether the same could be said about scrutiny's relationship with Cabinet;
- despite the fact that for the first time this year the Council had a dedicated scrutiny committee dealing with partnerships, members of that committee (including co-opted members) who responded to the questionnaire were not entirely convinced that external partners were sufficiently challenged and supported by scrutiny. There was also uncertainty as to whether sufficient regard was given to partner organisations' priorities and work programmes when determining the scrutiny committees' work programmes. With the onset of the new Council in 2012 new duties will be conferred on local authorities by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, one of the duties under the

Measure will be that local authority scrutiny committees scrutinise outside organisations that deliver services to local residents;

- whilst scrutiny members were again this year confident that residents' concerns were being adequately addressed by scrutiny, there was disappointment and concern at the lack of public interest and attendance at scrutiny meetings. That being the case and although the number of citizens attending scrutiny meetings had not been high, more members of the public had attended scrutiny meetings during the year than in preceding years. This was because items which impacted on their communities, their day to day lives or livelihood were under discussion e.g. review of education provision, proposed fees and charges to be levied etc. In addition, the information leaflet produced by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group which explained the role of scrutiny in layman's terms, how it fitted into the decision making process and how it would welcome more citizen engagement, was circulated to libraries, one stop shops, local schools and town and community councils. Copies were also placed on the intranet and the Council's website. It is pleasing to report that a number of outlets and community councils requested additional copies of these leaflets on more than one occasion. Whilst the number of referrals submitted on the referral form (see Annex 5) from members of the public seeking scrutiny to examine certain topics or subjects has not been high, the handful of requests received to date have been considered by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, which has either requested further detailed information prior to responding to the request, referred it to a scrutiny committee for thorough examination or suggested that the matter be more appropriately dealt with by the local Member Area Group (MAG);
- although members this year were of the view that adequate support and resources were available to assist scrutiny to achieve its aims, there were concerns expressed with respect to the workload of the scrutiny coordinator;
- contrary to last year the majority of members who responded to this year's survey did not think that any major barriers existed which hindered scrutiny committees' effectiveness. However, the issue of committees on more than one occasion being inquorate for part of or for a whole meeting was perceived as a recurring problem, and was seen as a potential barrier to the effectiveness of the scrutiny process. Of the 26 formal scrutiny committee meetings held during 2011/12, 20 of the meetings were quorate for the duration of the meeting whilst the six remaining meetings were inquorate for the entire meeting or became inquorate during the course of the meeting;
- following the introduction of the new scrutiny structure there was some discontentment amongst the statutory education co-opted members with respect to the scheduling of education items. However, following a meeting between the co-opted members and relevant officers, these initial problems were resolved and the feedback received to the self-evaluation exercise substantiates the position.

Summary of Scrutiny Related Matters

The three Scrutiny Committees support the work of the Cabinet and the Council as a whole. They allow the public to have a greater say in Council matters by holding inquiries into matters of local concern. Scrutiny Committees also review and monitor the decisions of the Cabinet. This enables them to consider whether a decision is appropriate and they may recommend that the Cabinet reconsiders certain decisions. Scrutiny Committees may also be consulted by Cabinet or Council on forthcoming decisions, and will be consulted on the development of policy.

Whilst the primary role of Scrutiny Committees is to scrutinise and oversee the work of the Cabinet and Council policies and services as a whole, they may also have a role in scrutinising other public bodies. This latter role is expected to become a statutory duty during 2012/13.

Under the terms of the Council's Constitution there are three scrutiny committees and their areas of responsibilities are outlined below:

Communities: this Committee is charged with scrutinising area focussed service delivery and developments, including:

- Local Development Plan (LDP)
- Roads and Highways
- Town Plans
- Local impact of service delivery
- School Modernisation
- Community development
  Libraries
- Regeneration and sustainable development

Partnerships: the remit of this Committee includes ensuring that the Council's interests, resources and priorities are reflected in the work of partnerships involving the Council, including:

- Local Service Board
- The 'Big Plan'
- Partnership arrangements with other local authorities or public sector organisations such as Health
- Safeguarding Children
- Regional Partnership arrangements
- Emergency Planning
- Community Safety Partnership
- Health and Well-being Partnership
- Collaborations with Conwy
- Regional Waste Management

Performance: scrutinises the performance of the Council and the achievement of its objectives, including:

- Budget and corporate financial matters
- Performance management
- Financial performance of schools
- Corporate plan
- Corporate policies
- Capital programme
- Information and communications technology
- Health and safety
- Equalities, Complaints and Communications Strategy and the Welsh Language Policy

Each Scrutiny Committee is made up of eleven non-Executive councillors appointed to reflect the overall political makeup of the Council. All Scrutiny Committees may co-opt such persons as shall be decided by the Scrutiny Committee in question but, with the exception of the statutory education co-opted members (who have the right to serve on each of the above committees as and when education matters are discussed), co-optees do not have voting rights.

The work of the Council's Scrutiny function is primarily supported by the Council's Scrutiny Coordinator and the Democratic Services Manager, with further administrative support being provided by the Council's committee administrators.

Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder matters: Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 places a duty upon local authorities to scrutinise crime and disorder matters. To comply with this duty local authorities are expected to either establish a dedicated Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee or to designate one of its scrutiny committees to undertake this role. The Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee was the designated crime and disorder scrutiny committee under the former scrutiny committee structure and, with the introduction of the thematic scrutiny structure, Partnerships Scrutiny Committee was assigned as the designated committee to exercise the functions of a crime and disorder scrutiny committee. In fulfilling this role the Committee considered the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) Action Plan for 2011/12 at its meeting on 26 May 2011.

Scrutiny of partner organisations: primarily Partnerships Scrutiny Committee undertakes the role of scrutinising partner organisations. During 2011/12 representatives of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) attended meetings of the Committee on three separate occasions for the purpose of discussing with members the progress and effectiveness of areas of joint working between the Health Board and the Council e.g. Localities and the interface between the Home Enhanced Care Service (HECS) and social care, as well as the proposals being developed for the future provision of NHS services across North Wales and for community health care services in north Denbighshire. During these meetings with BCUHB representatives Committee members also had an opportunity to raise matters of local concern.

In addition to BCUHB and Public Health Wales (PHW) representatives, officials from the North East Wales Food Waste Treatment Project, Conwy and Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Tourism Partnership North Wales (TPNW) attended Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meetings during the year and engaged with the scrutiny process.

As well as scrutinising partner organisations who deliver services in conjunction with the Council, or whose services have a close alignment to or complement Council services, Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has also been involved with the development of future partnership arrangements with respect to establishing a regional commissioning, procurement and monitoring hub for low volume high cost social care and education placements, and for a Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service. In both these cases the Committee considered and commented on the draft proposals and final business cases prior to their submission to Cabinet.

Whilst Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is regarded as the main committee for scrutinising partner organisations, Communities Scrutiny Committee accommodated a request from representatives from the North Wales Police Service and Police Authority to present their draft Estate Strategy to the Council. Communities Scrutiny was regarded as the most appropriate committee to receive and consider the Police's proposals as they dealt with the rationalisation of the Police Authority's Estate and its impact on the delivery of Police services in communities. As the presentation of the draft Estate Strategy to the Committee formed part of the Police Authority's formal consultation on the proposals the Committee duly submitted a written response to the consultation exercise.

As mentioned on numerous occasions in the past, local authority scrutiny committees will in due course be able and expected to scrutinise partner organisations and public sector providers' provision of services to citizens within their areas. These powers will be conferred on councils during 2012/13, when regulations defining which organisations councils will be permitted to call to account, will come into force. Albeit that, until these powers are available, scrutiny can presently only invite and not compel partners and outside organisations to attend, it is pleasing that these external organisations are already willing to engage with scrutiny on a voluntary basis, and are now even approaching the Council seeking to attend scrutiny to present their proposals. This attitude aids to build a level of mutual trust between the Council and partner organisations and can assist to develop a better working relationship, which can only be of benefit to local residents in the long run.

Council Programme Boards and Groups: the Council operates a number of strategic programme boards, which were established with the aim of effectively transforming service delivery in the difficult financial climate within which public services presently operate. Representatives from the Council's Scrutiny Committees serve on these Boards and on other strategic groups such as the Strategic Investment Group, the Corporate Equalities Group and

the Service Performance Challenge Groups. A full list of scrutiny representatives on these boards and groups can be seen at Annex 6.

Due to the level of scrutiny involvement with these various boards and groups, and with a view to ensuring transparency and to facilitate communication on issues discussed at board/group meetings with scrutiny members who were not board/group members, an additional standing item now appears on the agendas of all scrutiny committees. This item is titled 'Feedback from Committee Representatives' and provides representatives on the boards and groups with an opportunity to share information with the Committee on the discussions which have taken place at recent meetings and on any proposals being developed. A standard report template has also been devised by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group to enable representatives to provide written reports on meetings attended by them if they so wish.

Scrutiny Champions: the Council has appointed a number of 'champions' for specific Council functions or service areas. The individuals appointed to these roles act as advocates for their specific areas both inside and outside the Council. By virtue of their roles as 'champions' they attend national, regional and sub-regional meetings and events, as well as serve on bodies or organisations relating to their specialist areas. The 'champions' aligned to the scrutiny function are the Carers' Champion, Homelessness Champion, Learning Disabilities Champion, Older People's Champion and the Scrutiny Champion. During the Council's 2008 / 2012 term of office the 'champions were:

Carers' Champion:	Councillor J Ann Davies
Homelessness Champion:	Councillor Christine Evans
Learning Disabilities Champion:	Councillor Raymond Bartley
Older People's Champion:	Councillor Bobby Feeley
Scrutiny Champion:	Councillor David Smith

Joint scrutiny meeting with Conwy County Borough Council: the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 will confer on local authorities the power to establish joint scrutiny committees between two or more councils. The draft statutory guidance on the implementation of this provision is yet to be consulted on by the Welsh Government (WG). However, in the absence of statutory guidance, and by mutual agreement, as a precursor for possible formal arrangements in future, Conwy and Denbighshire Councils' Partnerships Scrutiny Committees held an informal joint meeting in December 2011. At this meeting members from both councils had an opportunity to jointly discuss the following subjects:

- Progress in Rationalising Strategic Partnerships
- Plan and Partnership Rationalisation Update
- Developing Joint Local Service Board Scrutiny Arrangements
- The preferred option in relation to collaboration within Highways and Infrastructure.

Whilst the attendance from Denbighshire's scrutiny representatives was lower than expected, those members present from both authorities felt it had been a worthwhile exercise. The intention is for this informal arrangement to continue following May 2012's local authority elections until such time as statutory guidance is published when consideration can be given to establishing a formally constituted joint committee.

Scrutiny of the Joint Local Service Board: although a Denbighshire Local Service Board (LSB) had been in existence for some length of time, there were no formal scrutiny arrangements in place to monitor and oversee its work. In 2011 Conwy and Denbighshire decided to replace their individual LSBs with a joint LSB to cover both counties. In view of this, and with regard to the powers that will be available to local authorities under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 with respect to joint scrutiny and the scrutiny of partner and public organisations, Welsh Government (WG) officials in consultation with officers from both counties developed a proposed set of arrangements for the future scrutiny of the Joint LSB. As mentioned in the previous section the draft proposals were discussed at the Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Partnerships Scrutiny Committees' meeting in December. Members from both authorities present at that meeting were keen to adopt the approach of appointing a new Joint LSB Scrutiny Panel to undertake the scrutiny of the LSB - the arrangements for which could be formalised when secondary legislation comes into force in the autumn of 2012. Members were also in favour of appointing co-opted members from partner organisations represented on the LSB onto the Joint LSB Scrutiny Panel, and for those co-opted members to have voting rights. However, when the same report was presented to the Joint LSB the following day - and the views of the Joint Partnerships Scrutiny Committees' meeting were conveyed to the LSB - while welcoming the fact that legislation will require LSB member organisations to be scrutinised in future, the LSB deferred a decision about the preferred model for scrutinising its work until after the local authority elections and the publication of the final guidance on how the legislation will operate, by which time the new joint LSB arrangements will have had time to become established.

Review of the new scrutiny system's effectiveness: when County Council approved the new scrutiny committees' structure in February 2011 it also resolved that a review into the new structure's effectiveness should be commenced within six months of its inception so that any problems or shortcomings which came to light could be rectified in time for the new Council in May 2012. The review commenced in October 2011 and included the distribution of a questionnaire to <u>all</u> councillors seeking their views on the new system's effectiveness, what had worked well, and what had not worked as well. Views on the scrutiny system's effectiveness were also sought from officers who interacted with scrutiny committees on a regular basis, the statutory education co-opted members, as well as from external partners who had attended scrutiny meetings under the new structure. Staff who supported the scrutiny function in various roles were also asked to comment on its impact on their workloads and, if they felt it appropriate, on its effectiveness.

The main problem that came to light was the scheduling of education related items onto committees' forward work programmes as the discussion on these items required the attendance of the Council's statutory education co-opted members at those meetings. A problem had arisen with respect to the scheduling of education items, which had resulted in the co-opted members being expected to attend scrutiny committees on consecutive weeks for perhaps a discussion on a single business item. In order to resolve this problem a combined forward work programme for education items on the three committees' future business agendas was developed, and this document is now made available for each Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group meeting to enable that Group to effectively coordinate education items and ensure that co-opted members are not expected to attend meetings on consecutive weeks. Also, whenever possible education items are scheduled as the first items on a meeting's business agenda.

The Review of the new scrutiny structure's effectiveness culminated in a report being presented to County Council in February 2012 which recommended that:

- the new structure should continue in its current configuration;
- the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group be modified to include the chair of each Scrutiny Committee plus the chair of the Corporate Governance Committee, with vice-chairs substituting where necessary; and
- training for Members on the scrutiny system should be included in the induction programme for the new Council.

Whilst Council approved the continuation of the new thematic scrutiny structure it also resolved that the membership of the new look Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Group should include the vice-chairs of all scrutiny committees and the Corporate Governance Committee as full, and not substitute members of the Group and that the Group's main focus should be on the coordination of the scrutiny committees' work programmes. Council also decided that a further review of the structure's effectiveness should be undertaken in 12 months time and that the membership of any future Scrutiny Review Group should be different from the Group that had undertaken the original review and the subsequent evaluation of its effectiveness.

Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

The membership of the current Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group currently consists of the chairs and vice-chairs of the Council's scrutiny committees along with the chair and vice-chair of the Corporate Governance Committee. In addition to these eight individuals the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council also serve on the Group. The Group is chaired by one of the scrutiny committee chairs. Its chair for the 2011/12 municipal year was Councillor Bobby Feeley, Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee. As mentioned above, from the beginning of the new Council's term of office year in May 2012 the Chair and Vice-Chair of Council will no longer be members of this Group.

Under the thematic scrutiny structure the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group has assumed more of a coordinating role with a view to ensuring that the forward work programmes of the committees complement each other, avoid unnecessary duplication, and that the committees' work assists the Council to achieve its aspiration of being a high performing authority closer to the community. In performing this role the Group has on a number of occasions recommended to individual committees that they take responsibility for scrutinising certain items instead of another committee, and on each occasion the committees have agreed to the Group's recommendations. Several requests from officers, and all requests received to date from members of the public, for items to be considered by scrutiny have been channelled through the Group for determination as to whether the subjects are suitable for scrutiny or whether they could be dealt with more effectively via other channels, such as the Member Area Groups (MAGs).

In response to concerns raised by the statutory education coopted members with respect to the scheduling of education items under the new scrutiny structure, the Group now also ensures that every effort is made to streamline the presentation of education items to make the most effective use of the coopted members' time and specialist skills.

Similar to the scrutiny committees themselves, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group meets regularly on a six weekly basis.

Whilst the Group's primary role is that of a coordinating committee it can also oversee more general scrutiny related work, for example it kept a close eye on the preparations for the recent Estyn Inspection and was briefed on the development of the Self-Evaluation Report, the arrangements for the inspectors' visit and also considered the inspectors' final report and the steps being taken to address the report's recommendations. In addition the Group considered and commented on the review of the new scrutiny structure's effectiveness, and contributed to the Council's response to the WG's consultation on the draft Guidance on the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Annex 7 to this report contains a chart which illustrates the Group's links with the three scrutiny committees, as well as the Group and the scrutiny committees' interface and connections with other Council committees and boards, the Member Area Groups, town and community councils, residents, and partner organisations.

The Leader of the Council attended one of the Group's earliest meetings to discuss scrutiny's role in holding Cabinet members to account, particularly the practicalities of undertaking that role within a thematic structure. Scrutiny already has the power to require any county councillor or Council officer to appear before it, but at present it cannot compel members or officers from outside organisations, even other public organisations, to attend or engage with the scrutiny function. It is anticipated that once the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 are fully enacted, and the

associated guidance has been published, scrutiny will then have the necessary powers to require representatives from other designated organisations to engage with it.

WLGA North Wales Scrutiny Champions Network and the Wales Scrutiny Champions Network:

During the term of the current Council the WG was keen for local authorities in North Wales to follow other Welsh local authorities and establish a forum for elected members who serve on scrutiny to share best practice and network with a view to enhancing scrutiny skills and their own knowledge of scrutiny. Consequently, the North Wales Scrutiny Champions Network was established and initially met two to three times a year for the above purposes. All secretariat arrangements were undertaken by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) with the host authority, one of the six councils in the area on a rotational basis, only having to secure a venue for the event. However, due to the need to realise efficiencies and cutback on unnecessary costs, the WLGA had to withdraw its secretariat services for this Network and because local councils were also expected to realise efficiencies there was no capacity within any of the local authorities to assume responsibility for the Network in its original guise. Therefore it was agreed that rather than see the Network fold completely it would continue in the form of best practice sharing visits to each of the local authorities in turn to observe scrutiny committee meetings. During 2011/12 visits of this type have taken place with scrutiny members travelling to both Gwynedd and Flintshire to observe scrutiny committee meetings and discuss their approach to scrutiny with members of their committees. At the conclusion of the visits those who attend complete a standard observations questionnaire which is then shared with the host authority. Scrutiny members are encouraged to utilise any best practice they observe during their visits in their own scrutiny committee meetings if they think they would enhance the scrutiny process.

To complement the regional Scrutiny Champions Networks the WLGA established a national Scrutiny Champions Network for Wales. In contrast to the situation with respect to the regional networks the WLGA continues to arrange and service this forum, which meets twice a year. This forum, at which the Council's Scrutiny Champion usually represents Denbighshire's scrutiny committees, showcases best practice with respect to scrutiny from across Wales and acts as a conduit for sharing information and developments in the field of scrutiny. Representatives from the WG's Scrutiny, Democracy and Participation Team usually attend meetings of this Network to discuss developments that will affect scrutiny with elected members and to gather their views. The most recent meeting of this Network was set-aside solely for the purpose of discussing and commenting on the first draft Guidance on the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Scrutiny Timebank: the Scrutiny Timebank is a repository of scrutiny related information and a best practice sharing facility which has been developed for use by all local authorities and public sector organisations in Wales which

undertake scrutiny. Authorities can post and deposit information relating to their scrutiny work, including details of investigations conducted by them, reports etc. on this restricted website which scrutiny members in other authorities can access and use to assist them in their work. Authorities can 'bank' scrutiny time and resources on the website which other authorities can then use and pay for by banking or trading some of their specialist skills and expertise with the Timebank. This scrutiny tool has been widely promoted across Wales via the national and regional Scrutiny Champions' Networks.

Looking ahead

2012/13 year will be an important year for local government in Wales. In May 2012 local authority elections will be held in all but one of Wales' county and county borough councils. The elections will see a number of experienced councillors retiring and others may not be returned, which will lead to a loss of experience and expertise. Consequently scrutiny, like other council committees, will be welcoming new members to its ranks and, with a view to equipping new and returning members with the necessary skills to carry out their roles a comprehensive rolling programme of training and development events has been arranged. The Council's training programme will include events on the Council's scrutiny system and on scrutiny related skills. Some of these events will be supported by experts from the WLGA.

The 2012/13 municipal year also heralds a new era in the field of scrutiny as during the year the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 are expected to be enacted which will confer new powers and duties on local authority scrutiny committees. Amongst the new powers and duties conferred on local authorities will be:

- a **duty** to scrutinise 'designated persons' – consultation on a definitive list of 'designated persons' is still awaited from the WG, but the Measure itself states that they are bodies who deliver services of a public nature;
- a **duty** to consult with citizens and to take into account their views on major issues of policy;
- a **duty** to publish scrutiny committees' forward work programmes to ensure that they are accessible to the general public;
- a **duty** on executives to respond to scrutiny committees with respect to reports or recommendations made by them;
- the **power** to establish joint scrutiny committees between two or more local authorities; and
- the **power** to co-opt non council members as members of scrutiny committees if authorities so wish

The draft guidance on how the above provisions within the Measure can be applied has not yet been published for consultation for all of the above areas. Once the guidance is agreed and subsequently published, and regulations made to commence the provisions, further training and/or awareness raising events will need to be arranged for elected and co-opted members.

As the incumbent chairs of the Council's scrutiny committees in the 2011/12 municipal year we would like to thank those elected and co-opted members who have served on the Authority's scrutiny committees during this Council's term of office for their hard work and effort. In doing so we also extend our best wishes to those individuals who will be serving on the Council's scrutiny committees from May 2012 onwards and on any future joint scrutiny arrangements that may be established. We can assure you that being a member of scrutiny is a satisfying, worthwhile and fulfilling role.

Councillor Bobby Feeley,
Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Dewi Owens,
Chair of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Councillor David Smith,
Chair of Communities Scrutiny Committee

Evaluation of the effectiveness of scrutiny in Denbighshire

The Centre for Public Scrutiny advocates the use of a self-evaluation framework for overview and scrutiny in local government based on four principal roles (see the introduction for details).

Denbighshire's performance during 2011/12 has been appraised against a number of key questions.

1. Provide 'critical friend' challenge

1.1 Does scrutiny provide an effective challenge to the executive?

Pre-decision consultation with scrutiny and an apolitical approach to member-level governance in Denbighshire has resulted in infrequent formal challenges to Cabinet decisions. This approach to governance has continued during 2011-12 and consequently no Executive decisions have been made the subject of the Council's call-in procedure during the Council year. Nevertheless, that does not mean that scrutiny has not challenged the Executive during the year. Performance Scrutiny Committee in particular has utilised the standing item on Cabinet meeting agendas, where scrutiny can formally present recommendations to the Executive, on a number of occasions i.e. in January 2012 when it had serious concerns regarding the Authority's performance in achieving its target with respect to reducing carbon emissions and the financial penalties that it could incur as a consequence.

Where pre-decision scrutiny has taken place scrutiny's comments and recommendations have been reported to the Executive under the 'consultation' section in Cabinet reports or communicated directly to the relevant Lead Member for conveying to Cabinet.

There is, and has been, a consensus amongst members that the call-in procedure should be invoked as a last resort, when all other methods of influencing the final decision have been unsuccessful. Consequently, to date the formal call-in procedure has only been used once, in December 2009 when decisions relating to the Council's Agricultural Estate were made the subject of the procedure.

Some questions have been raised during the course of the year, and during the self-evaluation exercise, on whether scrutiny's involvement in the service challenge process, the Council's various programme boards and working groups can be construed as compromising the function's independence and consequently the integrity of its challenge to decision makers. It is fair to say that, to date, there is no evidence to suggest that scrutiny's independence has in any way been compromised.

1.2 How does scrutiny have an impact on the work of the executive?

As mentioned above, and as in previous years, during 2011/12 the Council continued with the practice of pre-decision consultation on a range of policies and issues. This has often resulted in recommendations and amendments put forward by scrutiny being approved by the Executive. Scrutiny and Executive members' ability to work without political bias and to co-operate in developing policies and on other matters, which included controversial topics such as primary school reviews and reorganisation, continued during 2011/12. Following pre-decision consultation, scrutiny's views are reported to Cabinet either under the consultation section of the report to Cabinet, or if the scrutiny meeting is held within close proximity to the Cabinet meeting, by the Lead Member who will have either been advised of scrutiny's viewpoint, or have been present at the scrutiny meeting to hear the Committee's viewpoint.

Another avenue available to scrutiny to draw Cabinet's attention to areas of concern is the 'Recommendations to Cabinet from Scrutiny Committees' standing item which regularly appears on Cabinet agendas. This route has proved extremely useful to bring urgent items to Cabinet's attention, such as issues relating to the Council's performance in becoming more energy efficient and reducing its carbon footprint. During the year this standing item was used to draw to Cabinet's attention Performance Scrutiny Committee's decision to establish a working group to support and challenge officers developing the self-evaluation report on the Council's Education Services for Children and Young People prior to the Estyn inspection in early 2012.

1.3 How does scrutiny routinely challenge the Council's corporate strategy and budget?

While the Council has always had a robust budget setting process which has resulted in a deliverable budget, the austere financial climate within which local authorities and other public bodies are currently operating has necessitated some tough decisions in order to deliver the amount of savings required over the medium to long-term.

With respect to the budget setting process the majority of the questionnaire's respondents were of the view that scrutiny's role in this area was effective and appropriate, although a number of respondents were also unsure on this point. The Service Challenge process, with which a number of scrutiny members had been involved, was cited as a useful, robust and effective practice.

1.4 Are external partners scrutinised?

The question regarding the sufficiency of the challenge and support provided by scrutiny to external partners was confined to members of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee and the statutory education co-opted members.

At present scrutinising external partners is still undertaken subject to mutual agreement by all parties, as scrutiny committees do not yet have powers to compel external partners to engage with scrutiny or attend meetings of the committees. This will change during 2012 when the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 come into force and the statutory guidance to accompany the Measure is published. This Measure will give local authority scrutiny committees powers to require certain other organisations to engage with scrutiny inquiries and attend meetings. The Welsh Government is expected to consult later in the year on which external organisations (known as 'designated persons') can be compelled to engage with local authority scrutiny committees.

Whilst partner organisations are not obliged to attend scrutiny at present it is pleasing to report that a number of them have attended and contributed to scrutiny discussions over the past year. Representatives from North Wales Police and the Police Authority brought their draft Estate Strategy to scrutiny in January 2012, as part of their public consultation exercise on the proposals. Following the meeting the Committee submitted a written response to the consultation.

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has continued with the former Social Services and Housing Scrutiny Committee's practice of periodically meeting with representatives from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) for the purpose of discussing areas of joint working and common interest, as well as the Health Board's developing proposals for delivering acute and community services in future and their consequential impact on Council services. Other partners who have been subject to scrutiny during the course of the year include the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Tourism Partnership North Wales (TPNW).

It is fair to say that collaborative and partnership working is still very much in its infancy and consequently so are the scrutiny arrangements for these areas. However, scrutiny members have considered and commented on the proposals and final business cases for both the regional commissioning and procurement hub for low volume, high cost social care placements, and for the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (RSEIS). With the establishment of a Joint Local Service Board (LSB) for Conwy and Denbighshire during the 2011/12 year proposals were developed for the scrutiny of the Board. The proposals were developed by officials from the Welsh Government (WG) in consultation with officers from both Conwy and Denbighshire and were considered and approved by members of both counties' Partnerships Scrutiny Committees at the inaugural meeting of the joint Conwy and Denbighshire Partnerships Scrutiny Committees in December 2011, prior to being considered by the Joint LSB the following day. The Joint Scrutiny Committee recommended that representatives from LSB partner organisations should be co-opted onto the Joint Scrutiny Panel that was being proposed to be established, and that the co-opted members should have voting rights. However, the Joint LSB deferred a decision on the proposals put forward until after the local authority elections in 2012.

Whilst the joint scrutiny meeting of Conwy and Denbighshire's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee could only be held on an informal basis in December 2011 due to the absence of statutory guidance on how such committees should be constituted and function, the intention is to carry on with the arrangements informally at present and, when statutory guidance is eventually published, to establish the committee on a formal basis and to meet regularly, probably on a quarterly basis. The joint committee will have its own work programme and will focus on areas of joint, partnership and collaborative working between both councils and between both authorities and other partner organisations.

1.5 Does scrutiny work effectively with the executive and senior management?

On the whole respondents felt that scrutiny worked effectively with senior management and Cabinet, although a number of members felt that scrutiny worked more effectively with the former rather than the latter. That being said, individual Cabinet members have been praised for attending scrutiny meetings on a regular basis and, whilst doing so, for not undermining the scrutiny process but contributing when it was appropriate to do so.

2. Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities

2.1 How is the work of scrutiny informed by the public?

Elected members are the primary method of bringing the public's concerns into the work of the scrutiny committees, as they are able to draw issues of concern to their residents to the committees' attention. Councillors are community advocates and best placed to fulfil this role as they are aware of the importance their communities attach to specific issues. During this current Council's term of office councillors have been keen for residents to engage more with scrutiny, as has been mentioned in previous reports,. Therefore, during 2011/12, a brief easy-read information leaflet was published which gave the general public an overview of scrutiny's work and invited them to engage with the function by suggesting topics for scrutiny to examine. The leaflet was distributed to all Council offices, libraries, town and community councils, One Stop Shops and school councils, and is also available on the Council website. It includes a short request form which citizens complete if they feel they would like scrutiny to consider a certain subject or service. A copy of the form can be seen at Annex 5 and a copy of the information document can be found on the Council's website by following the link below:

http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en-gb/DNAP-74KJ2E

Since the publication of this leaflet a number of residents have suggested topics for scrutiny's consideration. All these requests were initially considered by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, who decided which scrutiny committee should deal with scrutinising the matter or requested more

information from officers with respect to the subject in question before determining how to proceed with the request. The topics proposed by residents for scrutiny since the publication of the leaflet are detailed below:

- The procedures used by the Council for appointing contractors

  This included the flexibility and discretion afforded to managers to engage local trades people for urgent or small maintenance work on council property. The issue was resolved via a comprehensive explanation of the Council's procedure on the appointment of approved contractors and the flexibility that existed within the current system to employ local trades people as long as health and safety requirements were met.

- The possible re-location of staff to the Dee Valley

  At the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group's request this matter was dealt with by the local Member Area Group who raised the possibility of staff, where appropriate, 'hot-desking' from facilities in the Dee Valley with the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and requested that a full audit of services available in the Dee Valley area be undertaken.

- The disposal of Council buildings and land

  This item has been scheduled into the work programme for Communities Scrutiny Committee once the new Council is in place.

- The noise nuisance caused by a sewage pumping station in Rhyl

  This is currently with the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group who are awaiting further information from officers on the monitoring work currently taking place in a bid to locate the actual source of the noise problem experienced by residents living near the sewage pumping station, before a decision can be taken on whether further scrutiny work is appropriate.

Amongst other issues considered by Scrutiny this year are the type and frequency of the Council's grass verge cutting programme along the County's roads and the arrangements for the Etape Cymru road cycling event. Whilst these topics were examined following requests from officers or committee members, the requests were initiated by residents' concerns on the adequacy of the grass cutting programme and the management of the road cycling event last year including the associated road closures. Scrutiny made a number of recommendations with respect to both these subjects and consequently changes will be made to the grass cutting regime for the 2012 season and to the management and communication arrangements for the Etape Cymru 2012 event.

Another topic considered by Scrutiny which saw interested parties attending scrutiny meetings and presenting their case were the proposed scale of

mooring fees and charges for using Rhyl's Foryd Harbour. Having received representations from the local Yacht Club and the Harbour Forum, Communities Scrutiny Committee deferred discussion on the item at its January meeting and requested that further consultation took place with the stakeholders prior to the proposed fees and charges being considered by the Committee at its meeting in March. When considering the proposed fees and charges at its March meeting, the Committee invited representatives from both the Yacht Club and Forum who were present at the meeting to make representations before the Committee. Having heard the stakeholders' views the Committee approved the scale of charges in principle, but recommended that they should not be levied for 12 months due to the redevelopment work taking place in the harbour and the inconvenience that caused.

2.2 How does scrutiny make itself accessible to the public?

Similar to the majority of Council meetings scrutiny committee meetings are open to the public and therefore formal notices of meetings are circulated to the press, libraries and town and community councils. Committee papers, including meeting agendas, reports and minutes are available on the Council's website. The public are entitled to attend meetings unless they have been specifically excluded because of the nature of the business under consideration. Despite this the public infrequently attend scrutiny or the majority of Council meetings unless a contentious issue is being discussed that directly impacts on them. That being said more residents have attended or engaged with scrutiny during this year. In September 2011 Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the process followed for undertaking and consulting on the review of primary school provision in the Edeyrnion area, part of the modernising education priority. Due to the contentious nature of the proposals being put forward interested parties attended this meeting. As mentioned in paragraph 2.1 above, the proposals for a scheme of charges for the Foryd Harbour saw stakeholders attending meetings where the proposals were discussed.

Scrutiny meetings are open to the press and media in the same way that they are open to the public, but it is extremely rare for a media correspondent to attend and report on the discussions. Press and media coverage tends to be limited to newspapers summarising the contents of reports and minutes circulated to them by the Council.

The new Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 will confer certain new duties and powers on local authority scrutiny committees. One such duty will be to consult with citizens and to take into account their views on major issues of policy. This provision extends to making arrangements to enable people who live or work in Denbighshire to bring issues to the relevant committee's attention and to provide observations on matters which committees are considering. The Scrutiny request form (Annex 5), to which reference has already been made, was devised with this new provision in mind. The new Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 will also introduce a 'Councillor Call for Action' mechanism which will enable local councillors to refer a matter of

concern within their ward to a scrutiny committee as long as the matter relates to the discharge of any of the Council's functions.

During the year a new decision management system, Modern.gov, was introduced and towards the end of the municipal year this system went 'live' on both the Council's intranet and internet. Consequently, this has meant that as soon as committee agendas, reports etc. are published internally they are also available on the Council's website and immediately accessible to the world.

2.3 How does scrutiny communicate?

Whilst members who responded to the questionnaire in the main felt that meetings, processes and work programmes were accessible to the public, there was a general consensus that scrutiny does not effectively communicate with residents and that more needs to be done to improve this aspect of scrutiny's work. Nevertheless, no firm ideas or proposals were put forward on how this could be achieved

Internally, issues arising from meetings are reported promptly to officers and lead members. As mentioned earlier in this report the standard agenda item to relay recommendations or issues from Scrutiny to Cabinet, where they are not already the subject of a report on Cabinet's agenda, seems to have worked well to date and has generally improved communication between Scrutiny and Cabinet. A similar item also now appears on the agenda of every Corporate Governance Committee, although this has rarely been used to date. Nevertheless, a number of respondents to the questionnaire feel that there is some considerable room for further improvement in communication between Cabinet and Scrutiny.

3. Take the lead and own the scrutiny process

3.1 Does scrutiny operate with political impartiality?

Responses given to question 4.1 of the scrutiny self-evaluation questionnaire confirm that scrutiny members in Denbighshire are of the view that the scrutiny function operates with political impartiality. It has been a long-held belief amongst the current Council's scrutiny members that it is far more important to reach a consensus in order to formulate robust recommendations. It is only on a rare occasion that recommendations formulated by scrutiny are actually made the subject of a formal vote at Committee. Whilst detailed discussion and debate is had on a subject, a consensus of opinion will usually have been reached well before a vote is required.

3.2 Does scrutiny have ownership of its own work programme?

Answers received to question 4.2 of the self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex 2) endorse the view that the ownership of the scrutiny committees' work programmes lie solely with each committee. At every meeting each committee review and agree their forward work programme for the forthcoming meetings. In doing this each committee has regard to the Cabinet's forward work programme and the Council and committee's priorities. To ensure that agendas are manageable, realistic and focused, Scrutiny Committees do not normally discuss more than four agenda items (plus their work programme) at any one meeting. Whilst this practice has continued under the new scrutiny structure, due to the workload every committee has at some point either held an additional meeting or extended its meeting to include an afternoon session in order to deal with the increased demand on their time. As part of the restructure of the Council's scrutiny committees the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group assumed a coordinating role in relation to committees' forward work programmes. It has recommended that items are transferred from one committee to another in order to balance work loads or to assist education co-opted members to attend by ensuring that education related matters are discussed at one meeting instead of necessitating their attendance for a single item at consecutive meetings. As mentioned earlier, the Group also considers requests from the public and from officers for matters to be considered and allocates them to the appropriate committee for scrutiny.

Under the provisions of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 every Council will be required to publish the forward work programmes of their scrutiny committees. This has been a long established practice in Denbighshire.

3.3 Do scrutiny members feel that they have a worthwhile and fulfilling role?

Question 4.3 of the self-evaluation questionnaire asked members for their views on the above. Whilst the majority of respondents answered 'yes' to this question which leads to an overall conclusion being drawn that Scrutiny is a worthwhile and fulfilling role, 50% of the observations submitted indicated that the role is not as worthwhile and fulfilling under the new structure as it was under the old. One of the reasons cited for this is the breadth of each committee's remit, which some members feel impedes in-depth scrutiny.

3.4 Is there a constructive working partnership with officers, including support arrangements for scrutiny?

The majority of respondents were of the view that a constructive working relationship exists between officers and scrutiny members, although one comment was received that this was not the case with all officers. Whilst the majority again felt that there was adequate support and resources at their disposal to assist the scrutiny committees to achieve their aims, a substantial number of respondents stated that the support and resources available to them were not sufficient or that they were unsure on whether they were adequate (Question 4.5 in Annex 2). The comments received complemented

the work of the scrutiny support function, but raised questions as to whether the workload of the individuals supporting the function was too high.

Prior to the recent Estyn Inspection on the quality of local authority education services for children and young people in Denbighshire, having considered the initial Self Evaluation Report being compiled for the regulators, Performance Scrutiny Committee decided to establish a working group of five members (which included a statutory education co-opted member) for the purpose of working with officers to challenge and scrutinise the self-evaluation assessment ahead of its submission to Estyn. The Committee's decision with respect of this matter was reported directly to Cabinet. Officers and members alike felt that this approach had been worthwhile and had added value to the final submitted document.

4. Make an impact on service delivery

4.1 How is the scrutiny work programme coordinated and integrated into corporate processes?

As in previous years Scrutiny has considered areas of high risk as identified through the corporate risk register. Under the new scrutiny structure responsibility for scrutinising the Corporate Risk Register falls within the remit of the Performance Scrutiny Committee. That Committee also considers the Council's performance in delivering its Corporate Plan and the Corporate Project Register on a quarterly basis. Consideration of these registers ensures that escalating risks or slippages in risk mitigation measures or project delivery targets can be identified as early as possible and scheduled into the committee's work programme for closer scrutiny and regular monitoring.

Scrutiny processes in relation to monitoring the implementation and compliance with action plans drawn up in response to regulatory activity[2] have continued.

Since the establishment of the new thematic scrutiny structure a number of scrutiny members, from all three committees, now have links with the Council's various Programme Boards and Working Groups. As has been mentioned before a number of members are also involved with the service challenge process. While the intention of having scrutiny involved with these Boards and Groups is to ensure that all elected members have early knowledge and insight into proposals being developed for delivering services to residents in the future, and to ensure all viewpoints and aspects are taken into account at the developmental stage, there is still some concern amongst scrutiny members on whether having such close working relationships between Cabinet, officers and scrutiny could actually compromise scrutiny's independence and objectivity when the proposals, policies etc. finally come before scrutiny committees.

[2] Inspections and audits conducted by regulatory bodies including the Wales Audit Office, Estyn and the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

In considering service position statements, performance monitoring information and draft service business plans as part of the service performance challenge process, scrutiny members have been able to monitor services' performance in delivering against set targets. This has enabled the identification of areas of under-performance and weaknesses which has led to Performance Scrutiny Committee undertaking closer monitoring and scrutiny with a view to improving both performance and outcomes for service users.

4.2 What evidence is there to show that scrutiny has contributed to improvement and made a real difference to service quality?

Part of the scrutiny function's remit is to challenge performance with a view to improving services, references have already been made to scrutiny's involvement with the service challenge process, developing the budget proposals, performance monitoring and identification and close monitoring of areas of risk and concern.

Performance Scrutiny Committee has appointed 'Performance Leads'- from amongst its membership – aligned to each of the Council's 14 service areas. These 'Leads' can meet at any time with the relevant Head of Service to discuss performance related issues or particular pressure areas within their respective service. The aim of this approach is to try and address pressure areas or slippages in performance from escalating to far bigger problems and becoming major causes of concern. Looking towards the future, Performance Scrutiny Committee has recommended that a training workshop is arranged for all newly elected councillors to assist them to understand the purpose of the Council's Corporate Risk Register, the information contained within it and how they can use that information to inform their future work. In addition the Committee has recommended that its successor committee in May 2012 establishes a working group of four committee members that will meet on a regular basis with the Head of Internal Audit and Corporate Improvement Team personnel for the purposes of monitoring performance and identifying issues to bring to the Committee's attention during the quarterly discussion on performance monitoring reports.

Whilst members and officers acknowledge that scrutiny has contributed to improvements across the Authority, probably the most notable and best documented evidence of scrutiny's contribution in improving services and outcomes and making a real difference to the quality of the service provided are the findings of the recent Estyn inspection into the quality of education services for children and young people in Denbighshire. The inspection report was published in early 2012 and concluded that *"scrutiny arrangements are highly effective in challenging underperformance and holding officers and schools to account".* The report went on to say that *"the council has reorganised its scrutiny arrangements into three committees for partnerships, communities and performance and all services report different aspects of their work to the relevant committee. As a result, scrutiny members have a better overview across the whole council and a wider range of members understand education issues. Members are now able to compare and challenge services*

more effectively and make better informed decisions. In addition, cross-party involvement in scrutiny means that all members can work towards a common goal in improving services for children and young people. Partners within the local service board also bring their contributions to delivering outcomes within partnership plans to scrutiny."[3]

Scrutiny also performs a valuable role in the development of policy in Denbighshire. This is aided by appropriate support from officers and lead members with the majority of amendments and recommendations arising from scrutiny debates being accepted in the final approved policies.

The majority of respondents to the self-evaluation exercise felt that they had contributed to improving policies and the quality of services in the County over the last 4 years (see comments received in response to question 5.2 – Annex 2).

4.3 How well is information required by scrutiny managed?

The responses received to question 5.3 in the self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex 2) indicate that information required by Scrutiny is generally made available and managed in a timely and appropriate manner, although the observations submitted indicate that this does not happen at all times. As previously mentioned, scrutiny committees manage their work programmes and focus on a small number of important issues at each meeting, with any additional information requested being provided through information reports and regular updates to Committee members.

Committees have the option of establishing Task and Finish or Working Groups to work closely with officers for the purpose of looking at specific time-limited subjects or areas of work, such as the Estyn Self-Evaluation Report (SER) Working Group to which reference has already been made.

[3] Estyn/Wales Audit Office: 'A report on the quality of local authority education services for children and young people in Denbighshire County Council' *January/February 2012*

Annex 1

Communities Scrutiny Committee

Membership for 2011/12

Chair: Councillor David I Smith

Vice-Chair: Councillor Diana Hannam

Councillors:
Ian Armstrong
Brian Blakeley
June Cahill
James M Davies
T Rhys Hughes
E Richard Jones
Peter Owen
Selwyn Thomas
Cefyn H Williams

Topics considered throughout the year

9/6/2011	• Allocation of additional resources for pupils with special educational needs • Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Report – Flood Risk Regulations 2009 • Leisure Strategy
14/07/2011	• Implications of the outcome of V2 Appeal • Control of caravan sites • Management of allocation of Section 106 Commuted sums for open space provision and maintenance. • Closer to the Community – Developing a Community Engagement Strategy for the Council
15/09/2011	• 21st Century Schools Area Reviews • Modernising Education : Review of primary school provision in the Edeyrnion area • Provision of Music within schools • Development of a Community Engagement Strategy
27/10/2011	• Review of Day Care Provision for Older People in North Denbighshire • Review of roadside grass cutting • Getting Closer to the Community • Denbigh Town Plan
08/12/2011	• Impact of the Community Youth Worker Structure • Denbighshire Adult Community Education Estyn Inspection

	• 21st Century Schools
19/01/2012	• North Wales Police Draft Estate Strategy • Foryd Harbour Mooring Fees and Charges • Highway verge grass cutting • Local Housing Strategy
01/03/2012	• Etape Cymru Cycling Event • Foryd Harbour Mooring Fees and Charges • Changes to the Supporting People Strategy for 2012 to 2014 and the Operational Plan for 2012/13 • Residents Survey • Community Funding
12/04/2012	• Etape Cymru Cycling Event • Community Engagement Update • Getting Closer to the Community

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Membership for 2011/12

Chair: Councillor Dewi Owens

Vice-Chair: Councillor Christine M Evans

Councillors:
Raymond Bartley
Joan Butterfield
J Ann Davies
Carl Davies
Gwilym C Evans
Neville Hughes
Gwyneth M Kensler
Glyn Williams
Jane Yorke

Topics considered throughout the year

26/05/2011	• Crime & Disorder : Community Safety Partnership • Policing in 21st Century • Partnerships Review and the Safer Communities Board
07/06/2011	• Guidance for engagement and consultation on changes to Health Services • The Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Boards 5 year plan • Dignified Care • Home Enhanced Care Services (HECS) • North Denbighshire Locality Project • Ablett Unit • Communication between the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the Council
22/09/2011	• Home Enhanced Care Services (HECS) • North Denbighshire Coastal Locality – Community Healthcare Services Project • Denbighshire 14-19 Learning Pathways and Network • Issues arising from the Welsh Government's (WG) Policy Statement – Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action
03/11/2011	• Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service Project • Progress in rationalising strategic partnerships • Annual Report on adult protection in Denbighshire 2010/2011

	• Conwy & Denbighshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Annual Report and six month update (April – September 2011)
15/12/2011	• Waste Strategy update and regional procurement of waste treatment • Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring Hub
26/01/2012	• Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring Hub • Families First update • The Big Plan
09/02/2012 – Special Meeting	• Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service • Implementation of the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010
08/03/2012	• Tourism • Regional and National Supporting People Programme Changes • Presentation by Public Health Wales on tobacco and alcohol issues • The development of locality working in Denbighshire • NHS Strategic Service Reviews
19/04/2012	• Annual Audit of Safeguarding Children in Education – quality assurance framework • Provision of Music within Schools • Partnership Governance Toolkit

Performance Scrutiny Committee

Membership for 2011/12

Chair: Councillor Bobby Feeley

Vice-Chair: Councillor Huw Ll Jones

Councillors:
Peter Duffy
Michael Eckersley
Gwilym C Evans
George A Green
Ian A Gunning
Colin Hughes
T Rhys Hughes
David W Lee
Lucy Morris

Topics considered throughout the year

19/05/2011	• Business Planning/Performance Management arrangements • Ruthin Craft Centre
30/06/2011 (informal meeting)	• Committee Priority Areas
21/07/2011	• Finance and Assets / Property / Asset Review • Performance Standards revealed through the complaints process
08/09/2011	• Arrangements for the Estyn Inspection of Spring 2012 • Evaluation of the impact of the use of the additional resources given to schools in 2010/2011
20/10/2011	• Evaluation of the impact of additional resources to schools 2010/2011 • "Your Voice" – Performance Standards revealed through the complaints process • Annual Performance Review : 2010-11 and quarterly performance report : Quarter 1, 2011-12
17/11/2011 – Special Meeting	• The Council's IT Strategy • Children's Services • Financial Report • Budget Development Process
01/12/2011	• Self Evaluation Report for Estyn • Adult Services • Monitoring Performance against the Corporate Plan (QPR 2)

	• Corporate Project Register
12/01/2012	• Schools in Financial Difficulties • Examination Results at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 • Care Home Fees • Highways and Infrastructure Capital Works 2011/12 • Energy Efficiency • Finance Report
23/02/2012	• Energy Efficiency update • Planning, Regeneration and Regulatory Services • Monitoring Performance against the Corporate Plan (QPR 3) and the Project Register • Corporate Risk Register • Housing Services • Library Service Standards : Annual Report 2010/2011
05/04/2012	• Planning Appeals • Financial Report 2011/2012 • Monitoring of the Capital Programme

***In addition to the items listed above all Committees have received a number of information and consultation reports which have been considered by Members outside of formal meetings**

Statutory Education Co-opted Members:
(all of whom have served on all three scrutiny committees at some point during the year when education related matters were discussed)

Mrs Carole Burgess (Church in Wales)
Mrs Gill Greenland (Catholic Church)
Mrs Debra Houghton (Parent Governors – Primary)
Dr Dawn Marjoram (Parent Governors – Special)
Mr John Saxon (Parent Governors – Secondary)

Annex 2

SELF EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

1. Effectiveness of Scrutiny Meetings

1.1 The Scrutiny Committees meets once every month at present (except during August) with occasional additional 'special' meetings convened for specific issues. Do you consider the number of meetings to be:

- May need to have additional meetings if required depending on the workload
- Should be monthly
- There was a small window of too many meetings under the new scrutiny arrangements. However, the new process has now bedded in and the balance is appropriate.

1.2 The Scrutiny Committees generally hold their meetings in County Hall, Ruthin. Are you in favour of this practice continuing for the new Council?

- depends where the members of the committee are located
- around the county would be good, promoted to public
- This venue is only 20 minutes away from where I live so in terms of easy access I find it ideal. I would prefer to continue the meetings in County Hall, Ruthin
- If this is more convenient for officers

1.3 The Scrutiny Committees limit the number of issues/reports they will consider during a meeting to four plus the monthly work programme report. Is this:

- dependent upon the depth of the scrutiny
- currently we are having longer meetings and covering more topics. This question is not valid
- although some issues take longer to debate than others… This is appropriate as an average number.

1.4 Overall, how effective do you think the Scrutiny Committees have been since the 2008 elections?

- call-in Agricultural Estate
- good examples of how scrutiny improved council services since 2008 – Youth Provision; Lifelong Learning/school improvement
- this scrutiny had only been going 10 months, but is effective
- I found it easier to concentrate on social services and housing. Partnerships is confusing, too much education
- I have not been in place long enough to compare 2008 through to 2012. I understand the County Council had an excellent inspection and would assume that the scrutiny process would have been taken into consideration. I recall from previous meetings that Youth & Leisure has moved forward in a very positive way. I feel that there is a lot of time and effort provided by the County Council e.g. extra presentations and explanations of reports we are asked to scrutinise i.e. Collaboration, RSEIS
- Changes in scrutiny arrangements have been a little disruptive but overall I feel that members have been able to challenge and question issues effectively
- one respondent who rated the scrutiny committees as 'very effective' stated that this had been the case until the change in the scrutiny committee structure in 2011

1.5 Do you think that Scrutiny meeting procedures, room layout and the participation of officers, observers and witnesses is appropriate? Please comment on how meeting arrangements could be improved.

- the format could have a little more thought in future
- I do not feel that the meeting arrangements need to be improved. The room layout is comfortable and has an informal relaxed feel. Participation of officers, observers and witnesses is a smooth process. Everyone is made to feel welcome
- there is a need to make sure that members can see and hear those officers who present reports to the committee – and that the speakers know which members are members of the committee and therefore take decisions. Observers need to be strictly controlled

2. Providing "Critical Friend" challenge

2.1 Do the Scrutiny Committees provide an effective challenge to the Cabinet and officers?

- Performance Scrutiny has brought several matters before Cabinet i.e. carbon reduction programme not on target; proposals to establish an Estyn Self-Evaluation Working Group
- could do better!
- Some specific issues have been raised with Cabinet
- There is always lots of discussion and questioning surrounding reports/issues
- as scrutiny members now serve on working groups established by, or which include Cabinet members they cannot properly challenge Cabinet

2.2 Do Scrutiny Committees have a beneficial impact on the work of the Cabinet and officers? Please give examples of what has been done well and what could be improved?

- too soon to say as yet
- to have an impact on the Agricultural Estate Review
- I feel that the scrutiny committees provide challenge and input and I do feel that our comments and suggestions are listened to and implemented. There were lots of suggestions and comments regarding the SER report for Estyn.
- scrutiny meetings enable officers and members to discuss issues face to face and develop relationships in which frank and honest discussions can happen
- It now reaches a wider audience of councillors

2.3 Do the Scrutiny Committees effectively challenge the major strategies and plans within their remit, and follow their impact?

- that will happen under the new system in time
- regularly briefed on service plans etc.
- I don't know enough about plans
- Yes the scrutiny committees do effectively challenge education matters. Eg Evaluation of the Impact of The use of the additional Resources given to schools in 2010/2011.
- It is quite early to comment on some of these but I feel that scrutiny is showing that it is effective in these areas.
- It was much easier when there was a scrutiny devoted to education matters

2.4 Is Scrutiny's role in the annual budget setting process effective and appropriate? Please comment on measures that would improve how Scrutiny scrutinises the budget.

- yes, I think the service challenge meetings have helped in this regard
- new system of improvement on the service challenge group has been very effective
- just seems like an extra meeting with no measurable outcome
- this has been much better
- The budget is thoroughly discussed and managed appropriately
- Feel we as co-opted members are playing 'catch-up'

2.5 Does scrutiny work effectively with the Cabinet and senior management?

- not always, but I think things are improving
- don't see all the Cabinet members
- to an extent
- yes, with senior management not sure re Cabinet
- There is open and honest communication and healthy debate between scrutiny and cabinet/senior management. I think it is effective as scrutiny recommendations are implemented. Eg further reports if required, further in depth explanations ie RSEIS.
- Senior officers and cabinet members attend scrutiny as appropriate to respond to questions and discuss strategies with members

[The following question was restricted to Partnerships Scrutiny Committee members and the Council's Statutory Education Coopted Members]

2.6 Are external partners sufficiently challenged and supported by the Scrutiny Committee? Please give your views on how the new Partnerships Committee should develop its links with external partners.

- doing well waste, highways, lighting. We have less control over BCUHB
- The BCUHB is now much better at discussing and sharing information with DCC through scrutiny. Other partnerships are also developing these links within the new scrutiny arrangements

3. Reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities

3.1 Are the views and concerns of the public adequately represented in the work of the Scrutiny Committees? Please give your opinions on how Committees should seek to do this.

- booklet produced last year and left at local libraries are helping to restore this
- better communication with public is a result of better scrutiny
- scrutiny expects officers and performance from all services. The public expect this too
- Members are able to represent the views of the communities through scrutiny
- by calling in Cabinet decisions on a more frequent basis
- cannot comment

3.2 Are Scrutiny Committee meetings, processes and work programmes accessible to the public? Please comment on how access could be improved.

- not attended by public – more publicity would help possibly
- never seen any general public
- Interested parties do read the scrutiny minutes via the website. I think if people genuinely have an interest, the information is accessible enough.

3.3 Do the Scrutiny Committees communicate effectively with the public?

- there are plans to improve communication with the public i.e. lay people attending/taking part in scrutiny
- maybe more use of the Internet/Intranet
- most people don't know what we do. Maybe press office should take part
- is there any except through the press?
- I am not sure that the committee itself needs to do this as DCC communicates corporately with the public as can individual members. Do the public really want further information overload?

4. Take the lead and own the scrutiny process

4.1 Do the Scrutiny Committees operate with political impartiality?

- [a particular political group is] too powerful and [results in] bias
- I feel confident that decisions and discussions of agenda items are non-political.

4.2 Do the Scrutiny Committees have ownership of their work programmes, i.e. do members decide (after considering any appropriate advice) which topics are considered, when and how they are considered and the outcomes/recommendations?

- members decide work programme content
- Scrutiny Work Programme. Committee considers their forward work programme and agree on relevant items.
- The forward work programme is decided by the members with advice and support from the excellent scrutiny support officers
- We seem to 'slot-in' when necessary

4.3 Is membership of a Scrutiny Committee a worthwhile and fulfilling role?

- I feel it has become more difficult to do the work because the Committee is expected to undertake a wider remit. It was easier to scrutinise under the previous structure
- Allows members to have good knowledge of Council's workings
- I feel very strongly about education matters as every child should have the opportunity to access quality learning. I am still learning myself and the education scrutiny committee has given me a whole new perspective particularly in my role as a governor. I have a clearer understanding of educational matters and the work that goes into reports and the focus on improving and providing high quality education. I find this is a very worthwhile and fulfilling role
- not since the new scrutiny structure was introduced
- our views are welcomed and valued and we do feel part of the team, but on an 'ad hoc' basis [co-opted member]
-

4.4 Is there a constructive working partnership with officers?

- not with all officers
- answer all questions and concerns

4.5 Is there adequate support and resources to achieve Scrutiny Committees' aims?

- I think the Scrutiny Support Officer goes out of her way to assist us and could do with more support
- need more support for the officers (workload too much!)
- support is good and has the respect of senior officers
- scrutiny support officers brilliant!
- Scrutiny support is excellent!
- too much work for one officer to support three committees
- very good scrutiny officer

5. Make an impact on service delivery

5.1 Do the Scrutiny Committees have sufficient regard to the Council/Services/partner organisations' work plans and significant issues when deciding on their own programme of work?

- I'm sure this could be improved
- We as co-opted members should be part of any training

5.2 Can you give examples that demonstrate that the Scrutiny Committees have contributed to improvements (e.g. work that resulted in improved services or more appropriate provision, improved policy and strategic planning, appropriate challenges to decision-makers leading to improved accountability, actions to mitigate risks, etc)?

- scrutiny contributed to massively improved audit and Estyn reports
- with getting Heads of Service to fill in staff appraisal forms!
- Grass cutting. By scrutinising we should hopefully have found a cutting regime that will suit everyone
- 1st March morning session! Good session
- KPIs show DCC is performing very well. It's not just down to good scrutiny, but it has played an important part in driving improvement
- BCUHB operates far more openly now since challenged by scrutiny
- Special needs concerns; higher standards of attainment and achievement; safeguarding children

5.3 Is the information required by the Scrutiny Committees and their members made available and managed in a timely and appropriate manner?

- usually
- sometimes?
- received in good time for members to fully brief themselves
- too many delays on reports
- Agenda, Minutes and Reports are received in plenty of time.
- Scrutiny officer is very good at keeping us informed and most helpful

5.4 Are there any major barriers to the Scrutiny Committees' effectiveness? Please outline what these are and suggestions on how they could be removed.

- I think it is a pity more councillors don't take the responsibility seriously – quoracy has been a problem
- Not at the moment but with a lot of change at the election it will take some time for new members to come up to speed
- Political correctness a barrier to free speaking
- I do not feel there are any major barriers. There was an initial concern as to how effective the new scrutiny arrangement would be as it was

felt that it had become diluted and disjointed. However, after a few teething problems I feel those concerns have dissolved. I feel that the system of putting educational items on the agenda first works very well.

- Meetings are sometimes inquorate which is a problem – members must be aware of the importance of tendering apologies well in advance to allow the committee to prepare appropriately
- members not attending committee meetings
- concerns that education is sometimes not given the priority it needs or deserves

Annex 3

Summary of the Conclusions of 2010/11 Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Exercise

- the number of meetings held (this being one every six weeks during 2010/11 compared to one every month during 2009/10) and the number of issues considered at each meeting were appropriate. The room layout for meetings was also appropriate;
- members favoured continuing the current practice on the locations for committee meetings, with some being held in County Hall and others in various parts of the County. Generally, members were of the view that more effective use was made of time and resources if meetings were held where the majority of officers required to attend were based;
- scrutiny had performed its role effectively or very effectively since the 2008 local authority elections and had, on the whole, provided an effective and constructive 'critical friend' challenge to officers and Cabinet;
- the majority felt that scrutiny effectively challenged major plans and strategies within their current remits and followed their impact;
- Scrutiny operated with political impartiality;
- there was a good, strong working relationship between scrutiny members and officers;
- Scrutiny had strong ownership of its work programme and generally led the scrutiny process;
- there was an unanimous feeling that Scrutiny was a worthwhile and fulfilling role;
- Members were confident that Scrutiny had contributed towards improving outcomes and could identify examples of where Scrutiny had contributed towards such improvements;
- information requested by Scrutiny was managed in a timely and appropriate manner. The majority of members were of the view that their committees gave sufficient regard to the Council, Service and partner organisations' work plans and issues when determining their own work plans;
- generally, members were of the view that residents and communities' concerns were adequately represented in the work of the committees; and
- the majority were of the view that the process adopted for developing and scrutinising the 2011/12 budget was superior and more robust than those used in previous years

But……..

- some doubts were raised as to whether reducing the frequency of meetings this year from monthly to six weekly, followed by the reduction in the number of scrutiny committees next year from four to three, would eventually impact on the function's effectiveness and cause unnecessary delay between items being scrutinised and desired outcomes being achieved;

- some members were of the view that scrutiny committee meetings should be held in various locations and in communities throughout the county if the Council is serious about getting closer to the community;
- some doubts were raised as to whether Scrutiny had a beneficial impact on the work of Cabinet and officers, and on whether it worked effectively with Cabinet. Some members felt that Cabinet and some senior officers should communicate better with scrutiny and give timely feedback to scrutiny committees when acting upon recommendations or queries raised;
- whilst there was general satisfaction that scrutiny effectively challenged major plans and strategies within their current remits and followed their impact, there was also an element of uncertainty as to whether this was the case and how the impact could actually be measured;
- there was a high level of uncertainty on whether external partners were sufficiently challenged and supported by scrutiny, with fears that this evolving area of work could potentially grow to become a logistical nightmare;
- whilst, generally members were of the view that residents and communities' concerns were adequately represented in the work of the committees, there was concern regarding the number of residents who attend meetings. The new Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group will be looking at how to improve scrutiny's engagement with the public and ways of effectively communicating with residents as part of its future work programme;
- overall, members felt that there were adequate support and resources available to enable the scrutiny committees to achieve their aims. However, there were concerns regarding this area in future due to the reduction in dedicated scrutiny officers supporting the new system
- whilst members were of the view that a good, constructive working relationship existed between members and officers some members had reservations on whether the same could be said about the working relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny; and
- mixed views existed on whether there were any major barriers to scrutiny committees' effectiveness

Annex 4

Schedule of Scrutiny Committee Meetings 2012/13

Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date	Venue	Time
14th June 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
16th July 2012	Conference Room 1B	9.30am
13th September 2012	Conference Room 1B	9.30am
25th October 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
6th December 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
17th January 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
28th February 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
18th April 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date	Venue	Time
31st May 2012	*Conference Room 1A*	*9.30am*
12th July 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
27th September 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
8th November 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
20th December 2012	Conference Room 1B	9.30am
31st January 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
14th March 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
25th April 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am

Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date	Venue	Time
28th June 2012	Council Chamber	9.30am
26th July 2012	Conference Room 1B	9.30am
6th September 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
18th October 2012	Conference Room 1B	9.30am
29th November 2012	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
10th January 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
21st February 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
11th April 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am
23rd May 2013	Conference Room 1A	9.30am

Annex 5

We would very much like to hear from you if you live or work in Denbighshire

Is there something you'd 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 Tel. number

For enquiries/requests, please contact:
Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Democratic Services, County Hall, Wynnstay Road, RUTHIN LL15 1YN

Tel: (01824) 712554
Email: rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk
http://www.denbighshire.gov.uk

Annex 6

Scrutiny Representatives on Council Programme Boards and Groups 2011/12

Board/Group	Communities Scrutiny	Partnerships Scrutiny	Performance Scrutiny
Business Transformation Programme Board	Cllr. Brian Blakeley	Cllr. Gwyneth Kensler	Cllr. Huw Ll Jones (sub: Cllr Bobby Feeley)
Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board	Cllr. June Cahill	Cllr. Dewi Owens (with Cllr. Gwilym Evans as the reserve/substitute member)	Cllr. Ian Gunning
People and Places Programme Board	Chair of Communities Scrutiny by virtue of office held (Cllr. David Smith)	N/A	N/A
			overleaf/…

Service:	Cabinet Lead Member(s):	Performance Scrutiny Service Lead(s)	Partnerships Scrutiny Service Lead(s)	Communities Scrutiny Service Lead(s)

Board/Group	Communities Scrutiny	Partnerships Scrutiny	Performance Scrutiny
Capital Strategy/Strategic Funding Group	Cllr. David Smith (sub: Cllr. Rhys Hughes)	Cllr. Dewi Owens	Cllr. Huw Ll Jones
Corporate Equalities Group	Cllr. Cefyn H Williams (named sub: Cllr. Rhys Hughes)	Cllr. Christine Evans (named sub: Cllr. Jane Yorke)	Cllr. Colin Hughes (named sub: Cllr Gwilym C Evans)

1. Adult & Business Services - Phil Gilroy	Cllr Pauline Dobb	Cllr Bobby Feeley	Vacancy	Vacancy
2. Business Planning & Performance - Alan Smith	Cllr Hugh Evans, Cllr Paul Marfleet, Cllr Morfudd Jones	Cllr David Lee, Cllr Gwilym C Evans	Cllr Gwilym C Evans	Vacancy
3. Customer Services - Cara Williams	Cllr Hugh Evans, Cllr Paul Marfleet			Cllr. Rhys Hughes (sub Cllr. Brian Blakeley)
4. Legal and Democratic Services -Gary Williams	Cllr Hugh Evans			Vacancy
5. Strategic HR - Linda Atkin	Cllr Paul Marfleet			Vacancy
6. Children & Family Services - Leighton Rees	Cllr Morfudd Jones	Cllr. George Green Cllr Ian Gunning*	Cllr. Dewi Owens	Vacancy
7. Environment Services - Steve Parker	Cllr Sharon Frobisher	Cllr Lucy Morris, Cllr Michael Eckersley	Cllr. Christine Evans	Cllr. Brian Blakeley (sub Cllr. Richard Jones)
8. Planning, Regeneration & Regulatory Services - Graham Boase	Cllr Sharon Frobisher, Cllr David Thomas, Cllr Pauline Dobb			Cllr. Selwyn Thomas

Service Challenge Groups

Service:	Cabinet Lead Member(s):	Performance Scrutiny Service Lead(s)	Partnerships Scrutiny Service Lead(s)	Communities Scrutiny Service Lead(s)
9. Finance & Assets - Paul McGrady	Cllr Paul Marfleet, Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill	Cllr Huw Jones	Cllr. Dewi Owens	Vacancy
10. Highways & Infrastructure - Stuart Davies	Cllr Sharon Frobisher	Cllr Rhys Hughes	Cllr. Dewi Owens	Cllr. Rhys Hughes (sub Cllr. Richard Jones)
11. Housing Services - Peter McHugh	Cllr David Thomas	Cllr Peter Duffy	Cllr. Christine Evans	Cllr. Brian Blakeley
12. Leisure, Libraries & Community Development - Jamie Groves	Cllr Morfudd Jones, Cllr Pauline Dobb	Cllr George Green Cllr Ian Gunning*	Cllr. Gwyneth Kensler	Cllr. David Smith
13. Modernising Education - Jackie Walley	Cllr Eryl Williams	Cllr Colin Hughes	Cllr. Dewi Owens	Cllr. David Smith
14. School Improvement & Inclusion - Karen Evans	Cllr Eryl Williams	Cllr Colin Hughes	Cllr. Gwyneth Kensler	Cllr. David Smith

* Councillor Gunning was also the Committee's lead contact for the Ffynnon performance management system and the Council's Arms Length Companies (including Clwyd Leisure Limited and the Scala)