

# *Denbighshire County Council*

*Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees*

*2012 / 2013*



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## ***Foreword***

Denbighshire County Council's Scrutiny Committees examine the work of the Council across a range of topics to help ensure the delivery of quality services for the County's residents. In this Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees we give a summary of our activities during 2012/13.

We welcome public attendance at our meetings and we'd like to encourage residents to attend and contribute to our work in reviewing Council services so that we can make sure that we are dealing with the issues that are most important to the community. If you have an issue relating to a particular service that the Council delivers, which concerns you personally or the community in which you live or work, Scrutiny can assist in driving improvement in that service.

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

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

## **The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group**

## **Introduction**

### **What is scrutiny?**

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

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



### **Scrutiny in Action**

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

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

### **How does scrutiny work?**

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

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



## *The last 12 months of Scrutiny in Denbighshire*

Since the election of the new Council in May 2012, the three scrutiny committees have been active in reviewing Council policy and performance and have played an important role in improving Council services in the challenging economic circumstances that face the Council.

In addition to the work undertaken at formal scrutiny committee meetings, each committee has nominated representatives to take part in a variety of internal 'groups', tasked with working with officers to discharge corporate functions and improve services more directly. In participating in groups such as the Strategic Investment Group, the School Standards Monitoring Group, the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board

and the Corporate Equalities Group, scrutiny members have had the opportunity to shape, develop and monitor policy through alternative means, complementing the work undertaken by the committees at their regular meetings.

Each of the scrutiny committees have appointed members to serve on the different Service Performance Challenge Groups. In circumstances where there have been concerns with a service's performance or where a change in funding policy has been recommended, the Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and the committee's performance lead have met with the relevant Head of Service and appropriate officers to examine matters in closer detail.

### **Training**

Following the election of the new Council scrutiny training was offered to new and previously elected members, informing members of the role of scrutiny in the Council's governance and giving guidance on techniques for effective scrutiny.



### **All Wales Scrutiny Improvement Study**

Denbighshire has been participating in a comparative assessment study facilitated by the Wales Audit Office to develop the scrutiny function for local councils across Wales. The exercise has encompassed an initial self-assessment of scrutiny in Denbighshire, a regional workshop to compare assessments, and a sequence of observational 'learning exchange' visits between councils – with Denbighshire visiting Wrexham, and Flintshire visiting Denbighshire as part of an exchange programme.

The results of the study are expected to be made available for Summer/Autumn 2013 and any recommendations for improving scrutiny in Denbighshire can be taken forward.

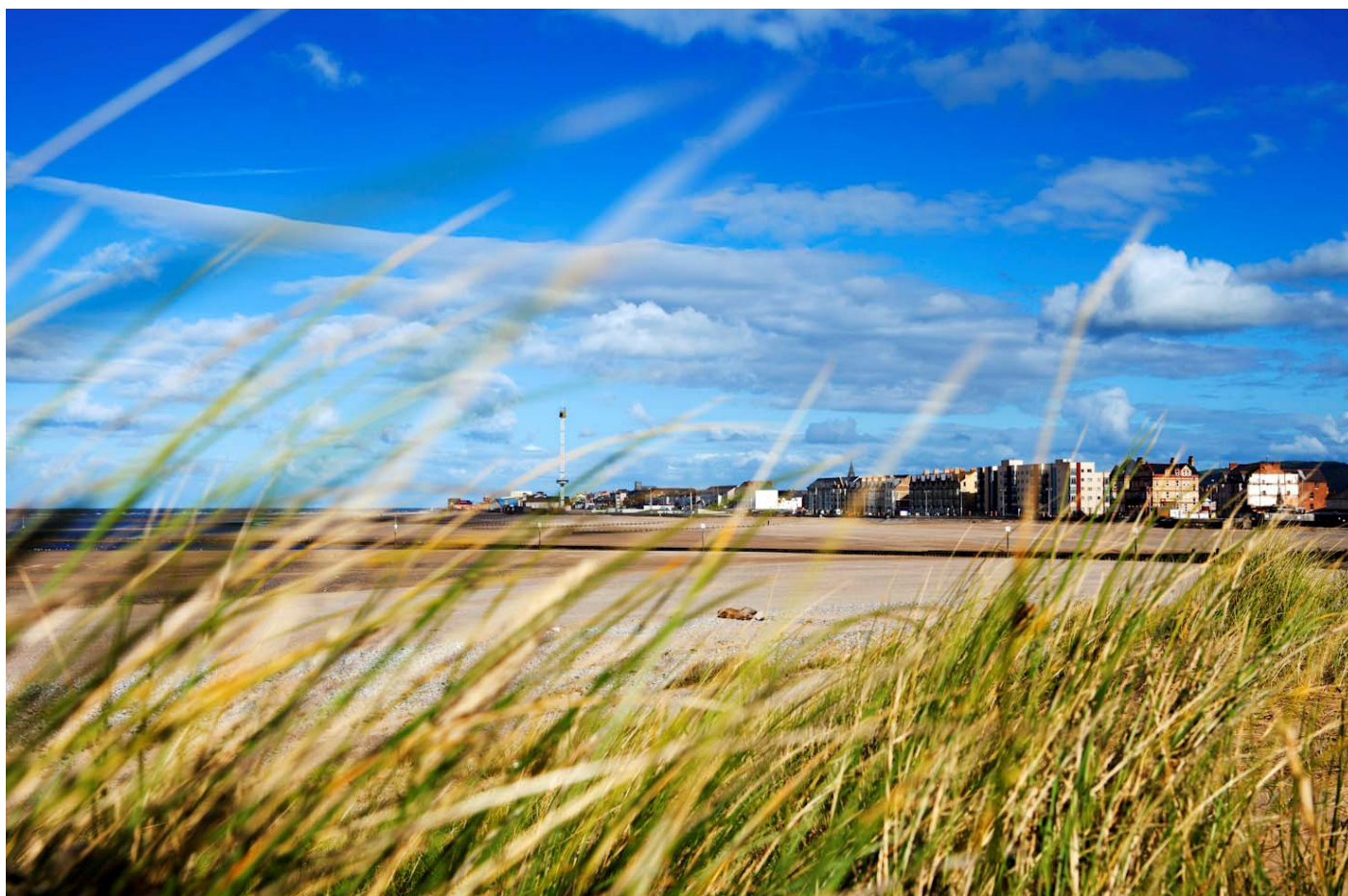


### Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011

The Local Government (Wales) Measure has granted local authorities the ability to hold joint scrutiny committees with other councils. The joint scrutiny committees will have the capacity to scrutinise organisations delivering public services, although the list of 'designated persons' (organisations) that this specifically incorporates is yet to be finalised.

Scrutiny committees in Wales now have a duty to consult with residents on major policy issues and measures to engage local communities with the scrutiny of the Council have progressed. The Forward Work Programme of each scrutiny committee is

now accessible to members of the public through the scrutiny page of Denbighshire's website. Leaflets explaining the function of scrutiny and inviting the submission of topics for consideration have also been circulated to schools, libraries, leisure centres, council reception areas, One Stop Shops and to town and community councils. It is hoped that by improving awareness of the work undertaken by the scrutiny committees, and making it easier for residents of Denbighshire to propose issues for scrutiny, that scrutiny of the Council will be enhanced through closer relevance to the needs and priorities of local communities.



## *Membership*

### **Communities Scrutiny Committee**



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

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



James  
Davies



Peter  
Evans



Carys  
Guy-Davies



Rhys  
Hughes



Win  
Mullen-James



Bob  
Murray



Joe  
Welch



Cefyn  
Williams



Cheryl  
Williams



Huw  
Williams  
(Vice-Chair)

In the last 12 months the Communities Scrutiny Committee has provided an effective forum for consultation; reviewing and developing policy and strategies across a broad range of Council services. The committee has also participated in exercises which have taken the committee's work beyond its regular formal meetings, directing a number of initiatives to improve Council services which fall within the Communities Scrutiny Committee's remit. This has included: setting up a working group to review provision of bus services in the wake of central government funding cuts, helping develop the anti-dog fouling strategy, monitoring the development and implementation of the Rhyl Going Forward programme, and reviewing the terms of the grass cutting arrangements with private contractors to ensure that local community interests were respected. A comprehensive list of the issues considered by the Communities Scrutiny Committee, and the recommended outcomes put forward by the committee are included overleaf.



## Summary of Communities Scrutiny Committee resolutions 2012/13

14th Jun 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutinised a report on the <b>Estyn Adult Community Education Inspection</b></li> <li>• Commissioned a working group to review the <b>provision of bus services</b> following a reduction in central funding</li> <li>• Acted as a key consultee in the development of the <b>Anti-Dog Fouling Strategy</b></li> <li>• Endorsed the progress made in implementing the <b>Single Access Route To Housing (SARTH)</b> collaborative project</li> </ul>
16th Jul 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed the progress in <b>allocating additional funds to Special Educational Needs in Primary Schools</b></li> <li>• Supported a proposal for formal consultation on <b>the review of day care services in north Denbighshire</b>, specifying local member involvement</li> <li>• Supported the <b>allocation of resources for major infrastructure projects</b> but recommended the amendment of the consultation process to include a more pro-active approach to engaging third parties in understanding major infrastructure projects</li> <li>• Recommended that any future <b>member area funding</b> should be administered by local 'Member Area Groups' and aligned to support the delivery of town plans and rural projects</li> </ul>
13th Sep 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offered a perspective on the <b>Rhyl Going Forward Strategy</b>, emphasising the importance of co-ordinating the strategy with the wider economic regeneration agenda, with a recommendation to Cabinet that the Rhyl Going Forward Programme Board's mandate be widened to enable the strategy to target the development of sustainable employment opportunities in the area</li> </ul>
25th Oct 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported the <b>programme for grass cutting</b> followed in 2012 to be used again in 2013, and commissioned a working group to review the terms of the grass cutting contracts offered to external contractors</li> <li>• Examined the Council's <b>plans for winter maintenance</b> and agreed that the contingency preparations were adequate</li> <li>• Reviewed the progress of <b>highway capital maintenance works</b> and their impact on local communities</li> <li>• Discussed and supported the Council's plans for <b>bringing planning closer to the community</b> through close communication and consultation with town/community councils</li> </ul>
6th Dec 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorsed the operational changes made under the <b>review of heritage and arts assets</b></li> <li>• Scrutinised the changes to the <b>Supporting People Strategy and Spend Plan</b></li> <li>• Assisted in developing the measures included in the <b>Community Covenant with the Armed Forces</b></li> </ul>
17th Jan 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitored the development of <b>Town Plans</b> and supported the introduction of Area Plans to identify priorities in Denbighshire's rural communities</li> <li>• Requested that the 'Safety Advisory Group' provide clarification of a number of issues in relation to the Council's plans for managing the impact of the <b>Etape Cymru</b> cycling race prior to the submission of a report to Cabinet</li> <li>• Considered an update on the <b>Rhyl Going Forward</b> project, requesting more specific details of the income generation forecast, and agreed to invite representatives from Alliance Leisure to a Council Briefing session in order to look at the Council's strategic leisure partnership</li> <li>• Withheld support for the recommendation stemming from the <b>review of day care services</b> in the north of the county, pending further information relating to the full business case for the review, a financial and service impact assessment, estimated transport costs, and third sector involvement</li> <li>• Scrutinised the Council's <b>Asset Management Strategy</b></li> </ul>
28th Feb 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluated the problems encountered during the <b>implementation of the X2 recycling scheme</b> in the South of the County, recommending improvements in communication and organisation for similar Council projects in the future</li> <li>• Recommended the development of special issue-led Member Area Group meetings for residents to attend as part of a review of the mechanisms for <b>engaging the community</b> in the Council's work</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered the potential benefits and implications of the proposed <b>Community Infrastructure Levy</b></li> </ul>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported the process outlined for expanding Town Plans to the broader <b>Area Plans</b></li> </ul>
18th Apr 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received the latest update of the progress made in achieving the work stream objectives of the <b>Rhyl Going Forward</b> project</li> <li>Reviewed the draft <b>Play Sufficiency Assessment</b> and Action Plan and supported the commitment to play development in Denbighshire</li> <li>Received a report which gave an update following the implementation of the <b>Anti - Dog Fouling Campaign</b> in February</li> </ul>





**Case Study: Etape Cymru 2013**

The Etape Cymru is a closed-road cycle race that partially takes place in the south of Denbighshire, with the 100 mile route passing through Llangollen, Llandegla and the Horseshoe Pass. Following the considerable difficulties experienced by both local residents and participants when the Etape Cymru race was first run in September 2011, the Council officers tasked with facilitating the race were keen to ensure member participation in preparations for future events. Prior to submitting a report to Denbighshire’s Cabinet seeking approval to temporarily close a number of roads being used in the race, the officers requested that the Communities Scrutiny Committee consider, comment and advise on how existing arrangements could be improved in order to minimise inconvenience for local residents and businesses, and to ensure that the benefits of hosting such a high profile event in Denbighshire could be realised.

The Communities Scrutiny Committee had provided their conditional support for the closure of roads in south Denbighshire to allow the event to take place in 2012 based on the satisfaction of a number of stipulations, which included; a guarantee that the Horseshoe Pass would be re-opened to traffic by 11:00am, consultation with local communities businesses affected by the road closure, and close monitoring of the race’s impact both before and after the event taking place. The Committee received an update of the preparations made for the race in respect of these conditions at their meeting in April 2012.

The race took place on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and the race organisers ‘Human Race’, as well as the ‘Safety Advisory Group’ of Police, Ambulance, Emergency Services and highways officers from both Denbighshire and Wrexham Councils, had reported on the event’s success, citing high levels of participant satisfaction and an estimated boost of £129k to the local economy. The Safety Advisory Group met for a debrief meeting in November and recommended that further improvements in communication in 2013 would augment the successes of the previous year’s event.

In January 2013 the Communities Scrutiny Committee received an update report from Denbighshire officers in order to identify areas for improvement in organising the race in 2013. A number of issues were raised in respect of event planning and monitoring, relating to communication, promotion, marshalling provision, risk assessment, liability in case of accident and the validity of income generation figures. The issues were referred to the Safety Advisory Group, with their response informing a report submitted to Cabinet in February 2013, which requested Cabinet approval for the temporary closure of roads to allow the race to take place in September 2013.

The participation of the Communities Scrutiny Committee as a key consultee in developing plans for the Etape Cymru, and in monitoring the race’s impact on local communities, have helped ensure that local interests are respected when organising events on this scale. This has enabled organisers to turn an event that was heavily criticised at its inception, into a successful annual race that brings visitors and investment in to the county.

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

23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2013	Local Housing Strategy, Town Plans, Control of Caravan Sites, Food Safety Review
4 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	Rhyl Going Forward Programme, Supporting People Strategy, Condition of Highways, Local Housing Strategy,

## Membership

### Partnerships Scrutiny Committee



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

Brian  
Blakeley (Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee)



Joan  
Butterfield



Ann  
Davies



Meirick  
Lloyd-Davies



Alice  
Jones  
(Vice-Chair)



Pat  
Jones



Margaret  
McCarroll



Dewi  
Owens



Merfyn  
Parry



Bill  
Tasker



Huw  
Williams

The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meet to review and scrutinise the effectiveness of arrangements for service delivery in partnership with private sector contractors and other public bodies. Over the last year the Committee has been involved in the development of social care policy, monitored the proposed integration of highways services, and conducted an in-depth examination of the proposals to reorganise healthcare in North Wales. Details of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's activity and the decisions made in 2012-13 are included overleaf.

Summary of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee resolutions 2012/13

31 <sup>st</sup> May 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitted observations as part of the Council's formal response to the <b>Sustainable Social Services: A Framework for Action and Social Services (Wales) Bill</b> and endorsed the formation of a Denbighshire Modernising Social Services Board</li> <li>Reviewed the <b>Social Services Annual Report 2011/12</b> prior to the submission of the report to County Council</li> <li>Considered the <b>regional and national Supporting People Programme changes</b> and provided comments for inclusion in the Council's consultation response</li> <li>Acknowledged the amendments made to the Partnership Agreement for the <b>Safer Communities Regional Board for North Wales</b> and supported the scheduling of a workshop for developing guidance for the scrutiny of regional partnerships</li> </ul>
12 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed to support a <b>joint scheme for the provision of local primary mental health support services</b> which would be monitored through regular reports</li> <li>Looked at the <b>tendering and award process for the Families First Programme funding</b> from April 2012</li> <li>Monitored the <b>New Work Connections</b> project's success in supporting disadvantaged people to gain access to education, training and employment</li> <li>Examined the Council's Economic Ambition Strategy and supported the creation of an Economic Ambition Board for North Wales as part of the Council's commitment to <b>regional collaboration on economic development</b></li> </ul>
27 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received a presentation from Professor Michael Scott, the Vice-Chancellor of Wrexham's Glyndwr University, regarding the provision of <b>higher education in North-East Wales</b>. The Committee acknowledged the important role the University played in developing skills to drive the local economy, and recommended that the Council support the research and teaching undertaken at the University</li> <li>Looked at the work of the <b>Community Safety Partnership</b> in the Committee's role as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee, identifying issues such as anti-social behaviour, CCTV and a number of policing matters for further attention</li> <li>Reviewed the arrangements for the development of the <b>North East Wales Hub food waste project</b> following a change to the preferred bidder</li> <li>Examined and commented on the <b>Local Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report</b> for 2011-12, and supported the Board's identified 'key priorities' for 2012-13</li> </ul>
11 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At this specially arranged meeting the Committee supported the Conwy and Denbighshire Highways and Infrastructure Collaboration Programme Board's recommendation not to continue with the planned <b>integration of Conwy and Denbighshire's Highways Services</b>, recommending to Cabinet that other opportunities for reducing costs and rationalising management through collaboration should be explored, short of full integration.</li> </ul>
8 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received the <b>Annual Report on Adult Protection in Denbighshire</b>, acknowledging the importance of protecting vulnerable adults, and recommending that organised visits to community living schemes are arranged for members of the Committee</li> <li>Reviewed the arrangements for the <b>joint out of hours emergency duty service</b> providing emergency social services across North-East Wales</li> <li>Analysed the <b>Post-Pembrokeshire Safeguarding Action Plan</b>, based on the recommendations stemming from the review of allegations of professional abuse of children in Pembrokeshire, and recognised the role that the Local Safeguarding Children Board plays in monitoring child protection across Denbighshire and Conwy.</li> <li>Provided observations on the <b>Strategic Youth Justice plan</b> prior to its submission to the Youth Justice Board</li> </ul>
29 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed <b>the impact of NHS services on local residents</b> with representatives from Betsi Cadwaladr</li> </ul>



2012		University Health Board, with the discussion covering the BCUHB Service Review, locality working, public health and children, children's services and child and adolescent mental health services.
5 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2012		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Committee met again for a special meeting in order to explore the options available for closer internal and external <b>collaboration for Highways Services</b>, following the decision of Cabinet for the Council not to proceed with the original plan to fully integrate these services with Conwy. The Committee supported the recommendation to Cabinet for the integration of Highways and Infrastructure with Environmental Services, with further internal and external collaboration to take place at sub-service level.</li> </ul>
20 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2012		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed the performance of the Local Service Board in delivering <b>The BIG Plan</b></li> <li>Monitored the development and operation of the <b>North Wales Commissioning Hub</b> for high-cost, low-volume social care placements</li> </ul>
31 <sup>st</sup> Jan 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looked at a report detailing the progress made in establishing the <b>Regional School Effectiveness and Inclusion Service</b> for North Wales</li> <li>Supported the adoption of the <b>North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012-15</b></li> <li>Examined the provision for commissioning and monitoring <b>independent care services</b></li> <li>Received an update on the delivery of the <b>Families First Programme</b></li> </ul>
14 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed the <b>capacity of the Adult Safeguarding Service</b> to deal with an increase in referrals</li> <li>Agreed to support the regional approach to setting <b>residential care fees</b> for 2013/14</li> <li>Recommended that Cabinet adopt the final business plan to establish a <b>regional emergency planning service</b></li> <li>Recommended that Cabinet accept the outline business case for the development of a passenger transport service for North Wales, in order for the full business case for the collaborative project to be progressed</li> </ul>
25 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At this meeting dedicated to the <b>November 2012 Floods</b> the Committee received an update on the progress of on-going investigations in to the causes of the flooding, endorsed the recommendations stemming from the examination of the recovery procedures implemented to deal with the consequences of the flooding, and recommended the development of a local flood risk management strategy as well as a multi-agency group to manage waterways to mitigate flood risk</li> </ul>

### Case Study: 'Healthcare in North Wales is Changing' - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Service Review

The Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) published proposals for restructuring the delivery of health services in North Wales in July 2012, and as part of the consultation process Denbighshire County Council was asked to provide a formal response. The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee regularly receive update reports from representatives of BCUHB, so the Committee decided to establish a working group of members and officers to examine the proposals in detail and identify the practical implications that the proposed changes would have on the residents of Denbighshire. The working group was supported by Sally Ellis, the Corporate Director: Demographics, Wellbeing and Planning, and consulted with the Lead Member for Social Care and Children's Services, Councillor Bobby Feeley, the Chair of the North Wales Community Health Council, former county councillor Christine Evans, and a number of other councillors able to offer a valuable perspective on the delivery of healthcare services.

The working group first met on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the day after the proposals had been published, and agreed to allocate aspects of the proposals to members of the working group to enable closer and more specific scrutiny. Having been able to examine the proposals in detail the working group identified over 50 separate points that merited challenge, encompassing the capacity of reorganised services to maintain standards, the adequacy of consultation, financial viability, transitional arrangements, transportation, the impact on areas losing services, and planned timescales for implementation. The group was able to condense these points in to 12 key questions that were addressed to representatives of BCUHB when they attended County Council on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

The debate at County Council informed Denbighshire’s final consultation response which specified the need for a Strategic Group to be developed to monitor the implementation in Denbighshire, the importance of alternative services being in place prior to the cessation of existing services, a proposal for a joint hub across the Denbigh Infirmary and Ruthin Hospital sites, and specific support for the Minor Injuries Service in Llangollen.

Following the consultation the BCUHB published their final report ‘Healthcare in North Wales is Changing’ on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013, which included provision for the transition between the closure of Prestatyn Community Hospital and the opening of the new facility at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in Rhyl. However, the BCUHB were not able to adopt Council’s other main proposals. The working group met again to review the final report and raised a number of further issues in respect of the implementation that were submitted to BCUHB and incorporated in to a report for County Council. The group also resolved to ensure that an article was included in ‘County Voice’ in order to explain to residents how health services could be accessed following the review.

The creation of the working group to focus on a specific issue enabled members and officers to thoroughly examine the impact of significant changes to the provision of healthcare in North Wales, and helped to ensure that the effect of these changes on the residents of Denbighshire were properly considered prior to the implementation of the review’s recommendations.

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

10 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	Regular meeting with BCUHB representatives
18 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	New Work Connections, BIG Plan, Collaborative Domiciliary Care
26 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	Higher Education in North-East Wales, Hub Food Waste Project, Community Safety Partnership, Regional Collaboration on Economic Development, Coleg Cambria

## *Membership*

### Performance Scrutiny Committee



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

Colin  
Hughes (Chair of the Performance Scrutiny Committee)



Ian  
Armstrong



Bill  
Cowie



Richard  
Davies



Meirick  
Lloyd-Davies



Huw  
Hilditch-Roberts



Geraint  
Lloyd-Williams



Peter  
Owen



Dewi  
Owens



Arwel  
Roberts  
(Vice-Chair)



Gareth  
Sandilands

In 2012-13 the Performance Scrutiny Committee has played an important role in the development of Denbighshire County Council's corporate policies, offering a valuable perspective and helping to ensure that services achieve results for Denbighshire's residents. The Committee has reviewed the key plans for discharging the Council's corporate functions, monitored the performance of services in meeting their operational targets, and driven improvements in the delivery of education in Denbighshire

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

Summary of Performance Scrutiny Committee resolutions 2012/13

28 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in the development of the <b>Estyn Action Plan</b> which followed the recent inspection of the Council's education services</li> <li>Considered a report on the outcomes of the <b>Building Capacity in Schools</b> project</li> <li>Looked at the <b>Corporate Performance Report for Quarter 4</b> and decided to establish a working group of members to meet regularly with the Head of Internal Audit and Corporate Improvement officers to monitor performance against the agreed indicators</li> <li>Received an update on recent <b>performance standards revealed through the complaints process</b></li> </ul>
26 <sup>th</sup> Jul 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitored the Council's performance against its budget strategy as detailed in the <b>Finance Report 2012/13</b>, and identified areas of budgetary pressure for further consideration</li> <li>Examined a report which detailed recent developments under the <b>Capital Plan</b> and recommended that immediate action be taken to ensure that the safety issues relating to the demolition of the Honey Club in Rhyl were resolved as soon as possible</li> </ul>
6 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed the delivery of <b>Post-16 Education</b> in Denbighshire, seeking further clarification of issues relating to charges for transportation and provision for students with disabilities</li> <li>Received a report on <b>Schools' Financial Positions</b> and accepted assurances from the Head of Internal Audit that robust procedures were in place to assist schools in financial difficulty</li> <li>Approved the framework for the <b>School Funding Formula</b>, subject to the final consultation document being presented to the Committee later in the year prior to its submission to Cabinet</li> </ul>
20 <sup>th</sup> Sep 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutinised the Council's draft <b>Corporate Plan</b> at a specially arranged meeting prior to its submission to Cabinet, emphasising the importance of community consultation on the Corporate Plan's impact, the need for further development of the town plans and recommending a number of amendments.</li> </ul>
18 <sup>th</sup> Oct 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewed the findings of the <b>Foundation Phase and provisional exam and teacher assessment results</b></li> <li>Looked at the consultation proposal document for the new <b>School Funding Formula</b> prior to its issue to schools, and requested an update when the consultation closed</li> <li>Considered a report outlining the resources available to ensure <b>compliance with planning resolutions</b></li> <li>Received a report which provided an update on recent <b>performance standards revealed through the complaints process</b> and gave an overview of the measures being implemented to improve customer service across the Council</li> <li>Discussed the <b>Annual Performance Review Report 2011/12</b>, assessing how well the Council had performed in the previous year against the targets set</li> </ul>
29 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysed the <b>Corporate Risk Register</b> and acknowledged the recent amendments</li> <li>Noted the suggestions made in the Wales Audit Office's <b>Improvement Assessment Letter</b>, one of the key external regulatory reports</li> <li>Received an update report on <b>performance standards revealed through the complaints process</b></li> <li>Considered the <b>Libraries Service's Annual Report</b>, which detailed performance against CyMAL's assessment framework, endorsing the work being undertaken to improve aspects of service that fell below national standards</li> <li>Supported the approach undertaken in the <b>review of licensing policies</b> for taxis and private hire vehicles</li> </ul>
10 <sup>th</sup> Jan 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observed a presentation from the Principal and Director of <b>Coleg Llandrillo</b> which gave an overview of the performance of the college's students from Denbighshire aged between 16 and 19</li> <li>Studied the <b>Key Stage 4 and Post-16 examination results</b> for Denbighshire schools, commending improvements in Denbigh High School in particular</li> <li>Reviewed the progress in implementing the <b>Estyn Action Plan</b></li> </ul>

21 <sup>st</sup> Feb 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Considered the latest update of <b>performance standards revealed through the complaints process</b></li> <li>Noted the recent amendments to the <b>Corporate Risk Register</b>, emphasising the importance of effective governance monitoring of collaborative projects</li> <li>Received the draft baseline report for the <b>Corporate Plan 2012-17</b> and agreed to establish a sub-group of the committee to review quarterly performance reports in detail in advance of their presentation at formal scrutiny committee meetings</li> <li>Supported the introduction of a pilot project to look at the feasibility of fitting <b>speed limiting devices</b> to Council vehicles</li> </ul>
11 <sup>th</sup> Apr 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looked at the latest quarterly progress update under the <b>Corporate Plan 2012/13</b> and recommended that the process for measuring progress be reviewed by the Cabinet and Corporate Improvement Officers</li> <li>Supported the proposals put forward following the <b>review of the Service Challenge process</b></li> <li>Agreed to support the arrangements for providing <b>CCTV in Denbighshire</b> and requested information to illustrate the nature and location of incidents recorded on CCTV</li> </ul>

### Case Study: Service Performance Leads

Following a review of the role of Scrutiny in driving the continued improvement of the Council's services, it was recommended that the Performance Scrutiny Committee assign each of the Committee's members to one of the Council's services to act as the Scrutiny Performance lead for that service. Each member has been responsible for the working with the Head of Service to monitor the performance of their designated service, ensuring a specific and consistent scrutiny perspective in supervising service operational performance.

The Scrutiny Performance Leads are crucial to the Service Performance Challenge meetings, which give an opportunity for members, lead members and senior officers to look in detail at the performance of each service. Each Scrutiny Performance Lead also has the authority to call a meeting with the Head of their allocated Service if they have concerns with any aspect of service delivery.

The introduction of designated Service Performance Leads has given an extra dimension to the Performance Scrutiny Committee's work, and both the Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have also decided to nominate members to participate in the Service Performance Challenge process.

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

16 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	Cefndy Enterprises, Annual Council Reporting Framework, WAO Improvement Report, 'Your Voice' Complaints Performance
20 <sup>th</sup> June 2013	Corporate Plan Q4, Corporate Risk Register, Estyn Action Plan, Review of Council Publications
19 <sup>th</sup> September 2013	Annual Performance Review Report, Licensing Matters, Exam Results and Teacher Assessments, Corporate Plan Q1, 'Your Voice' Complaints Performance



## ***The Year Ahead***

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

Some of the most prominent issues that scrutiny will be reviewing over the next year include the Rhyl Going Forward Programme, the BIG Plan, Town and Area Plans and regional collaboration – in addition to the Committees' role in scrutinising, developing and monitoring service performance across the Council.

The push for closer collaboration between public sector organisations in recent years has seen the introduction of provision for joint scrutiny committees under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, which is expected to be enhanced when the Welsh Government publishes its formal guidance in the coming months as to which 'designated persons' (organisations) can be formally summoned to attend local government scrutiny committee meetings.

The Scrutiny Committees are also awaiting the findings of the Wales Audit Office's Scrutiny Improvement Study, which promises to establish 'best practice' procedures and techniques for local government scrutiny across Wales, and will also provide a critical assessment of how effective Denbighshire's scrutiny arrangements are.

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



## ***How can residents participate in Scrutiny?***

### **Would you like scrutiny to look at a particular issue?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Members of the public are very welcome to attend scrutiny committee meetings but will require the permission of the Chair of the committee if they wish to speak or make representations at a committee meeting. If you wish to submit evidence to a committee or offer a perspective as a 'witness' in the discussion of an item, please contact the Scrutiny Co-ordinator in advance of the meeting so that this can be facilitated and any paperwork can be circulated to members of the committee.

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

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

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

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

Further advice or information is available by contacting the Scrutiny Co-ordinator, Rhian Evans on [rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk) (01824 712554) or the Democratic Services Officer, Rhys Hughes, on [rhys.a.hughes@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:rhys.a.hughes@denbighshire.gov.uk) (01824 712575).

*SCRUTINY REQUEST FORM*

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

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

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

**YES/NO**

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

Your name:  
Address:  
  
Postcode:  
Email:  
Telephone number:

*PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, COUNTY HALL, WYNNSTAY ROAD, RUTHIN LL15 1YN*



**Scrutiny Referral and Interface Chart**

