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**sir ddinbych**  
**denbighshire**  
County Council



**Annual Report of Denbighshire County Council's Scrutiny  
Committees 2016-17**



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## What is scrutiny?

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

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

## Scrutiny in Action

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

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

## How does scrutiny work?

Scrutiny acts as a 'critical friend' to the Council's leadership, driving improvement in public services and enabling the concerns of the public to be heard. The Council's scrutiny work is undertaken by three thematic, cross-cutting scrutiny Committees, meeting approximately every 7 weeks and comprising members from all political parties/groups on the Council:

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



When examining education matters representatives appointed by the Church in Wales and the Catholic Church, along with representatives elected by parent governors, also serve on the committees. Whilst dealing with matters to do with education these representatives have full voting rights.

As reported in recent Annual Reports Scrutiny in Denbighshire decided to focus its efforts for the remainder of the Council term, up to May 2017, on supporting the work to deliver the Council's corporate priorities and ultimately the Corporate Plan.

Nevertheless, this did not mean that it would not examine other matters, which were considered to be important or urgent. To ensure that matters of importance and concern to residents and councillors are brought to scrutiny's attention, a procedure has been introduced to filter requests to enable scrutiny to consider the most important ones whilst referring the non-urgent or more local ones to other groups or individuals to address. How requests are made and dealt with is explained at the end of the report (see pages 35 to 38).

During 2016/17 the Council's three scrutiny committees have dealt with a mixture of pre-decision and post-decision scrutiny as well as a wide range of other business, including performance monitoring, policy development and consultation exercises undertaken by other organisations.

As already explained scrutiny has during the last few years been focussing its efforts on delivering the corporate priorities to support the delivery of the Council's ambitious Corporate Plan 2012-2017. The Corporate Plan consisted of seven corporate priorities:

- developing the local economy;
- improving performance in education and the quality of our school buildings;
- improving our roads;
- vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible;
- clean and tidy streets;
- ensuring access to good quality housing; and
- modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers

As we focus on scrutiny's work during the past year in supporting the delivery of the priorities and the Plan you will notice that a number of the topics examined contribute towards the delivery of more than one of the priorities.

## **1. Developing the local economy**

The Council during its term of office in adopting developing the local economy as one of its corporate priorities acknowledged the importance of a thriving local economy as a means for providing a sustainable future for the area and its inhabitants. However, the Council cannot deliver this ambition alone, it

requires the involvement of other public organisations and private businesses. The local authority's role is to help create and support the conditions that allow businesses to successfully flourish. With a view to ensuring that the Council was fulfilling its responsibilities in this area Scrutiny during the year examined the Council's progress in implementing its Procurement Strategy and revised Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs). One of the objectives of the Strategy and revised CPRs was to support local businesses and the local workforce when the Council advertised for tenders for contracts, both large and small.

Denbighshire has a varied economy, ranging from small and medium size enterprises located on a number of industrial or retail parks, and from town centre shops to food outlets. Being a mainly rural county a large area of the county is dependent upon agriculture, whilst the existence of a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) along its eastern and southern boundaries hosts a number of tourist based businesses, as does its northern coastline. Caravan sites are a necessity in all tourist areas in order to accommodate families who wish to spend some time in the area to explore what it has to offer. Their existence supports local businesses and contributes towards the local economy. For some years there has been concerns that not all caravan site operators are complying with the planning and licensing stipulations granted to them when they originally applied to operate their sites. On this basis, and in response to concerns that some individuals were living as permanent residents on certain sites without contributing towards the costs of local services through the payment of Council Tax, Scrutiny asked that detailed work be undertaken to establish the extent of such practices and to draw up a procedure to tackle incidents of non-compliance. Aware that some caravan park residents may be vulnerable individuals,

Scrutiny members were keen to ensure that they were not being put at risk of being made homeless during the implementation of any new approach. To safeguard against this Scrutiny decided to monitor the enforcement of the procedures. This work will continue under the new Council.

A number of areas within Denbighshire are regarded as areas of deprivation and consequently qualified for Communities First funding to assist people to learn skills to help them gain employment. Other organisations which help people find work and gain the necessary skills are the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and People Plus, their decision to relocate the majority of services from Rhyl to Flint caused some concern locally. All three organisations have attended scrutiny meetings during the year to discuss future service provision with elected members and to explore potential areas for the Council to work with them in a bid to improve the lives of local residents by supporting them into employment.

Scrutiny considered the availability of a suitable mix of car parking facilities in the county's towns, appropriately priced to support the local economy during the year. Recognising the value of such facilities to local businesses, residents and visitors to the area scrutiny has asked that a car park asset management plan is drawn up with a view to developing an investment plan to improve the appearance of the county's car parks, improving signage, exploring the potential of introducing transferable parking tickets e.g. tickets which would be valid within any Denbighshire County Council car parks and the viability having vouchers redeemable at local businesses printed on the reverse side of parking tickets.

## 2. Improving performance in education and the quality of school buildings



A good education is a key foundation stone on which successful futures for individuals and the economy are built. In a bid to ensure that all of the county's pupils realise their full potential Scrutiny regularly monitors the external examination results of the county's pupils. The majority of School Improvement Services are now delivered by a North Wales wide regional organisation called GwE, Scrutiny in Denbighshire has had some reservations on whether this organisation is delivering the level of school improvement services expected by the Council and has therefore been keeping a close eye on GwE's performance. This work will continue under the new Council to ensure that the county's pupils receive the highest level of support in order to realise their ambitions and to give them the best possible career opportunities. During the year Scrutiny has examined school absenteeism rates within primary and secondary schools, both authorised and unauthorised absences. By examining this area councillors were able to understand the reasons for pupil absences, as well as the effectiveness of the practice of issuing fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to parents in reducing unauthorised absences. In addition they were able to ensure that sufficient support was available to pupils and families who required it in order to make sure that they achieved their educational potential. In some cases this may involve pupils switching to more vocational

type courses, nevertheless basic language and numerical skills still needed to be gained.

Continually improving educational attainment and pupils' life prospects will feature in scrutiny's work following the Council elections in May 2017. Scrutiny will carry on monitoring examination results and the effectiveness of school improvement services delivered by GwE. It will also be examining the findings of a study undertaken on Year 10 and 11 pupils in the county in relation to their subject choices, to make sure that they receive sufficient support the whole way through from choosing their subjects to achieving their results. The purpose of this work is to establish whether improvements can be made throughout their educational journey to support subject choice and potential career pathways.

### 3. Improving roads



Denbighshire's roads are its 'arteries' and consequently are an integral part of the

infrastructure required to enable the local economy to develop. It is therefore important that they are maintained on a regular basis to support the transport of supplies and people in and out of the county. In addition they connect people and communities, enhancing access to activities which contribute towards creating vibrant communities. Through its work in examining the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan Scrutiny monitors the maintenance of the Council's road network. Whilst this work focusses on the condition of road surfaces it does not take into account the condition of highway structures i.e. bridges, culverts, retaining walls etc. The loss, or temporary closure of one of these structures has the potential to cause major disruption for business, communities, public and school transport and emergency vehicle access. As Scrutiny had concerns in relation to the condition of these structures across the county it decided to look at the matter in detail. It examined a ten year strategy which has been drawn up to address the backlog of work on highway structures, such as bridges etc. in a bid to reduce the risk of major disruption in future. Scrutiny endorsed the strategy and proposals to undertake a prioritised programme of maintenance work over a ten year period to rectify major problems. This is a complex long term project, as a number of the bridges in particular are listed structures and will therefore need specialist maintenance.



The safety of the county's roads and road users has also featured in Scrutiny's work during 2016-17. It has examined the

assessment process for determining safe and hazardous routes to schools and the associated revised draft Home to School Transport Policy prior to it being published for public consultation. Following concerns raised by a councillor on the process undertaken to conduct road safety audits relating to planning applications Scrutiny requested that a workshop was arranged for officers and elected members to examine the concerns in detail. This resulted in a number of changes being recommended to the road safety audit process and in a protocol being drawn up to clarify each party's role in the process.

#### **4. Ensuring that vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible**

Advances in medical science and lifestyle changes in recent years have resulted in people living longer. This trend is expected to continue into the future. As a result the Welsh Government has, through legislation, changed its expectations of health and social care services in Wales. It wants them to focus more on reabling people to live independently and to support them to live independently for as long as possible. This has meant that both the Health Service and the Council has to work closer together to provide better 'joined-up' services to people who need them. To make sure that this is happening Scrutiny has met with Health Board officials on a number of occasions throughout the year to examine areas such as the GP Out of Hours Service, the development of the North Denbighshire Community Hospital and Healthcare Facility, Healthy Prestatyn and Rhuddlan Iach Primary Healthcare Project as well as community health and social care arrangements to support timely hospital discharge. It has also looked at plans to streamline the management of the Supporting Independent

Living (SIL), Reablement and Health and Social Care Support Worker (HSCSW) Services across the county. These changes should help both health and social care workers to work more effectively together to improve the lives of people who use their services. April 2018 sees the introduction of 'pooled health and social care budgets' for the purpose of funding care home accommodation, Scrutiny has been examining the progress made with the preliminary work for establishing 'pooled budgets'. Work in this area will continue during 2017-18.



The Task and Finish Group established a few years ago to look at the future of local authority provided residential social care services in Denbighshire has continued with its work during the year. Having regard to the reduced demand for traditional residential care provision and the increase in demand for more reablement services it has made a number of recommendations, which Scrutiny has supported, in relation to Hafan Dêg Day Centre in Rhyl, Dolwen Day and Residential Care Centre in Denbigh and Awelon Residential Care Centre in Ruthin. The recommendations made, which Cabinet supported, will see the Council transferring the assets over to other providers who will deliver a wider range of day care services to people who use the day centres in Rhyl and Denbigh, the expansion of day and residential care in Dolwen to include services for dementia sufferers and the demolition of Awelon in Ruthin to enable more extra-care housing facilities to be built on site and to

accommodate a new community centre, which will also deliver social care intervention services.



As in previous years Scrutiny has examined the Director of Social Services' Annual Report on the Services' performance during the previous year and its objectives for the following year, as well as the Council's performance in safeguarding both adults and children across the county.

## 5. Having clean and tidy streets

The cleanliness and neat appearance of the county's streets and public places is often a cause of concern for residents and businesses alike. A clean, litter free environment not only helps promote the area to tourists it also acts as a source of local pride which can potentially bolster the local economy. In a bid to ensure that the minority of individuals who behave irresponsibly and impair others' enjoyment of the county's environment are dealt with appropriately Scrutiny has during the year examined the effectiveness of the Council's Dog Fouling Strategy in reducing incidents of dog fouling across the county. In response to the level of complaints received the previous year Scrutiny examined the measures put in place to monitor the contract for ground maintenance at Council owned properties to ensure that the authority's own actions promoted its ambition to have clean and tidy

streets. Scrutiny also considered proposed arrangements for undertaking highway grass cutting in the county's rural areas during 2016-17, making recommendations which attempted to effectively balance road safety and biodiversity considerations.

The Council's Public Realm responsibilities extend to the public cemeteries which it owns and manages. For some time there has been concern about non-compliance with the rules in place for lawned cemeteries across the county, and about people exercising their dogs in Council owned cemeteries. Whilst acknowledging that rules relating to memorials etc. on graves is an extremely sensitive topic Scrutiny felt that it was important that the Council's rules for lawned cemeteries were complied with. It therefore recommended that measures being proposed to improve compliance with the rules be implemented, following a pre-implementation awareness raising campaign in the local press and media.



It also recommended the introduction of legally enforceable dog control orders in the county's cemeteries.

Whereas dog fouling and littering have long been considered to be unsightly and can deter people from visiting and spending money in an area, 'seagulls' on the other hand were until recently regarded as an everyday part of coastal life. Nevertheless, in recent years, the 'seagull' population has grown considerably. The reason for this is

that they have been designated as a 'protected species'. Not only are they now confined to coastal areas but, due to the need to secure a regular stock of food, they live in large numbers in inland areas and are in many places regarded to be a pest. As well as being noisy and messy, they also pose a threat to humans, particularly children, the elderly and infirm.



In a bid to address the problems caused by 'seagulls' across the county Scrutiny endorsed an action plan drawn up to reduce the impact they were having on residents, businesses and visitors to Denbighshire. The plan will include engaging with the public and educating people not to feed seagulls, ensuring that all food waste left out for collection is secure and is not accessible to birds and other wildlife, and the introduction of a byelaw or a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to deter people from feeding seagulls with the imposition of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for individuals who persistently disregard warnings received in relation to this practice.

Another aspect of modern day life which received Scrutiny's attention during the year, although not directly linked to 'clean and tidy streets', is the nuisance posed to individuals by 'unmanned aircraft' or drones.



Scrutiny examined this particular subject to determine whether there was any merit in recommending the introduction of a byelaw to ban people from flying them from Council owned land or buildings. During its examination of this particular subject it became evident that the use of drones was already fairly well legislated and an individual's rights to privacy was safeguarded by other legislation. On this basis Scrutiny decided that the introduction of local byelaws to ban people from operating them from council land and buildings would not be required. The Council itself made use of drones to survey landscapes and dangerous buildings. They were also used by search and rescue organisations to aid their humanitarian work and the UK Government had consulted recently on the safe use of drones for the purpose of unlocking the UK's digital economy.

## 6. Access to good quality housing

A key factor for improving and sustaining the quality of residents' lives is ensuring that they have access to good quality housing. During the past year Scrutiny has monitored the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy. This Strategy, which spans the period from 2016 to 2021, encompasses all aspects of housing related matters in both the public and private sector, including meeting local demand, creating a supply of affordable homes, making sure homes are safe and healthy, developing purpose built homes and support for vulnerable residents e.g. Extra Care Housing, whilst promoting and supporting communities.



Successful delivery of the Strategy is dependent upon all Council services working effectively together. To ensure this happens Scrutiny will continue to monitor progress with the Strategy's delivery, including examination of individual aspects of it, for the foreseeable future. During 2016-17 Scrutiny, through the work of the task and finish group on the future of adult social care, recommended a way forward to meet the housing and support needs of vulnerable people in Rhyl, Denbigh and Ruthin. It also examined the Council's performance in re-letting its own residential properties following concerns that its performance was not meeting national performance indicators. However, Scrutiny was satisfied that there was a valid reason for not meeting this specific performance target as the Council had taken a conscious decision, in order to ensure that its own properties were re-let as 'quality' homes, to refurbish them to a high standard prior to moving tenants in as not to inconvenience them at a later date. It felt that this resulted in a better outcome for the families concerned.



During the year Scrutiny continued to monitor the progress of improving the quality of housing in west Rhyl. It also continued its work to develop a regulatory procedure to ensure that all caravan sites in the county comply with the conditions granted to them under planning and licensing laws. This approach should help make sure that individuals, some of whom could be vulnerable, are not living in 'holiday' accommodation on a permanent basis. It should also ensure that the Council is aware of all residents who live in the county and use its services. The effectiveness of this new procedure will be examined during the forthcoming year.



## **7. Modernising the Council to deliver efficiencies and improve services to customers**

Despite facing a prolonged period of funding cuts throughout its term of office the Council has been determined to deliver the majority of its Corporate Plan ahead of the 2017 local authority elections.

To achieve this whilst living within its means the Council has had to devise different ways for delivering services, in some cases working with others to deliver services on its behalf. In addition, recent Welsh Government legislation i.e. the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, have also meant that the

Council is required to plan and deliver its services in a different way.

Scrutiny has had a crucial role in ensuring that savings have been realised without seriously compromising the quality of services delivered to residents. This work was undertaken on Scrutiny's behalf by the 'Cutting Our Cloth' task and finish group. The findings of its work are summarised later in this report.

For the purpose of developing options for the future delivery of adult residential social care services which align to the Welsh Government's vision of promoting independence, the Future of Adult In-house Social Care Task and Finish Group was established. Scrutiny has throughout the year considered its findings and recommendations, and will continue to do so during the new Council's term. Other aspects of modernising health and social care services i.e. Single Point of Access (SPoA), Supporting Independent Living (SIL), Health and Social Care Pooled budgets, various aspects of joint working between Health and Social Services, have regularly been examined and monitored during the year.

Following the Council's decision to withdraw from providing the non-statutory CCTV service in towns where it had previously provided the service, Scrutiny decided to monitor the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements established to deliver an alternative service. Further work will be undertaken in the forthcoming year with respect to monitoring the partnership's progress in securing the CCTV service's long-term future and the potential to expand it to other areas of the county.



Austerity cuts have resulted in some local authorities closing libraries and other community facilities. Denbighshire on the other hand decided not to close any of its libraries but rather to invest in them and extend the services on offer to the public at its libraries, by developing them into 'community hubs'. In addition to monitoring the Library Service's performance in delivering traditional services Scrutiny has examined the progress made with developing their assets into 'community hubs' along with proposals to develop them further i.e. for provision of services for young people, tourist information services and as locations for staff to use when working remotely.



A controversial area which has received Scrutiny's attention during the year is the Home to School Transport Policy. Efforts made in recent years to strictly apply the policy in order to keep the cost of school transport within the allocated budget, met with resistance from some parents. It also highlighted a number of anomalies and variances within the policy. On this basis Scrutiny asked that a comprehensive review

of the Policy was undertaken to make sure that it was clear, unambiguous and fair to all pupils. The revised policy has recently been out for public consultation. The results of the consultation exercise will be reported to Scrutiny during the summer along with any proposed amendments.

In April 2015 the Council entered into a partnership with CIVICA to deliver Revenues and Benefits Services to Denbighshire residents. At the time Cabinet asked Scrutiny to review the partnership's effectiveness in delivering the services on the Council's behalf, and in particular in delivering services through the medium of Welsh, meeting financial expectations and growing its business in the area.

Some 18 months after entering into the partnership agreement Scrutiny examined the above areas and concluded that whilst the business growth aspect had not developed as originally expected, mainly because of uncertainties relating to local government reorganisation in Wales, CIVICA had delivered a quality service to residents in both languages and achieved the required efficiency savings. Scrutiny was also encouraged to learn that Civica was working closely with other organisations, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) on matters such as debt advice and management.

## Cutting Our Cloth Task and Finish Group



Mention has been made in previous years' reports to the establishment of the '**Cutting our Cloth Task and Finish Group**'. This task and finish group took its name from the efficiency savings exercise which the Council undertook when setting its budget for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 financial years. For these financial years it had to find £17m worth of savings from the services it delivered. As reduction in management costs and other internal efficiencies had already been realised in preceding years it was only service delivery costs which could now be reduced in order to save the required £17m.

Unfortunately, these types of budget savings have a direct effect on residents' lives. Whilst the anticipated impact of individual budget savings had been assessed by the Council prior to them being approved and implemented, scrutiny wanted to assess whether the actual impact was any worse than expected. It also wanted to establish whether other services or organisations had filled any gaps that were left after the Council had withdrawn from delivering services.

During both 2015/16 and 2016/17 the Task and Finish Group worked reviewing the impact of the budget savings on Denbighshire's citizens and its communities. When selecting 'budget savings' for examination the Group focussed on those areas which had drawn high levels of public criticism or media attention, as well as those which had the potential to affect the Council's

reputation if the impact of their implementation was far more detrimental than originally predicted. Amongst the budget savings reviewed by the Group were those made to the Streetscene Service, the transfer of the Welfare Rights Unit (WRU) to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), the partnership between the Council and CIVICA for operating the Revenues and Benefits Service, and the withdrawal of the Council's funding to the school music service.

In early 2017 the Group concluded its work and reported its findings and final recommendations to Performance Scrutiny Committee, the committee that had established the Task and Finish Group

In brief, the Task and Finish Group concluded that controversial budget savings made through the transfer of services formerly provided by the Council's own Welfare Rights Unit (WRU) to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and the withdrawal of the funding for the School Music Service, both of which had been widely reported as having a detrimental effect on the most vulnerable and deprived in Denbighshire's communities, had actually resulted in better services and outcomes for service-users and residents. Individuals using the alternative services, which had been established as a result of the Council reducing resources in these areas, had benefited from receiving better quality and more holistic services provided by external organisations.

Whilst the Group acknowledged that not all aspects of implementing the budget savings had gone according to plan from the outset, and that other 'savings' were taking longer than originally anticipated to realise i.e. future provision of in-house adult social care (which was being driven forward by a separate task and finish group) it was satisfied that when problems came to light they were addressed as soon as possible.

Looking ahead to the term of the 'new' Council in the knowledge that even more difficult budget decisions lie ahead, the Group recommended that it would be useful for the Council to consider adopting a similar approach to the one used when setting the budget for 2015/16 and 2016/17, when setting future budgets. The reason for this is that the Group felt that it was an extremely effective method for setting the Council's budget, as it gave all councillors an opportunity to shape and influence the budget. It also recommended that the impact of future budget decisions or the introduction of new service-delivery methods should be evaluated post their implementation to assess whether the impact on residents was actually better or worse than originally anticipated. The mandatory Well-being Impact Assessments, now being undertaken for all decisions, will in future be useful evidence when conducting post implementation reviews.

The full text of the Task and Finish Group's report can be read by following the link below:  
<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/your-council/about-the-council/cutting-our-cloth-task-and-finish-group-en.pdf>

## **Public Engagement, Outcomes and Feedback**

The agenda and reports for all scrutiny committee meetings are published on the Council's website and are therefore accessible to the public, unless they contain restricted information. Ahead of formal committee meetings the Council's social media pages are used to highlight the topics that will be discussed at forthcoming scrutiny meetings, emphasising that members of the public are welcome to attend. When members of the public do attend, if they have pertinent questions to ask or points to raise they can ask the Chair's permission to speak.

Generally, permission is given for them to raise their points at the end of the discussion on the topic. Amongst the subjects which attracted the public's interest during 2016/17 were the future of adult social care establishments, impact of the increase in car parking charges, the discussion with the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust (WAST) and the regulation of unmanned aircraft (drones). Members of the public in attendance were given an opportunity to address committee members on all the above items. Their contribution to the discussions were valuable and constructive. During the discussion on the regulation of drones a licenced drone user who attended the meeting was able to share with the committee his expertise on the extent of current legislation on the use of drones and advise who the public should contact in the event of an unmanned aircraft causing a nuisance or intruding on their lives. Similarly, a member of the public who attended scrutiny's discussion with the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) was able to share his unsatisfactory experiences of the Service's response to an emergency call with Service officials. This resulted in the WAST investigating his concerns further with a view to improving their services.

A county councillor who had longstanding concerns about the process for undertaking road safety audits in relation to planning applications acknowledged her gratitude to Scrutiny for examining those concerns in detail. Accepting that there were complexities involved with the road safety audit process Scrutiny secured the holding of a training workshop for councillors on the process. At the conclusion of the workshop a number of measures to strengthen the process were agreed and an undertaking was given to draw up a protocol outlining the process and procedures to follow.

## Additional Work

Scrutiny members continue to undertake scrutiny work outside of formal committee meetings. Every committee has a nominated representatives serving on a variety of internal 'groups', tasked with working with officers to discharge corporate functions and to try and continually improve services despite government funding cuts. Via these groups, such as the Strategic Investment Group, the School Standards Monitoring Group (SSMG), the Economic and Community Ambition Programme Board and the Corporate Equalities Group, scrutiny members have an opportunity to shape, influence, develop and monitor policy through alternative means, complementing the work undertaken by the committees at their regular meetings.

A representative from each scrutiny committee serves on the Council's Service Performance Challenge Groups (where services' performance and priorities are reviewed). If there are concerns regarding a service's performance the Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee or the committee's performance lead may meet with the relevant Head of Service and appropriate officers to examine matters in closer detail. If concerns still persist the matter can then be escalated for detailed examination by the whole committee.

Members who serve on these various groups regularly report back to their Committee on their discussions, findings and conclusions.

### Improving Outcomes for Residents:

The purpose of scrutiny at the end of the day is to improve outcomes for residents. In 2014 the Auditor General for Wales published a national report, 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question!'<sup>1</sup> That report concluded that whilst local authorities were enthusiastic to learn and improve their approach to scrutiny, they were struggling to demonstrate the impact of scrutiny. In some councils there seemed to be some lack of clarity around scrutiny's role in holding decision makers to account, which therefore led to some people questioning the importance and value of scrutiny. It concluded nevertheless that when particularly tough decisions need to be taken, the importance of effective scrutiny should not be underestimated.

As a result of this study a national set of 'Outcomes and Characteristics for Effective Scrutiny' were agreed. These characteristics, which are divided into three specific categories, are essential components of effective scrutiny. They are:

- Better outcomes
- Better decisions
- Better engagement

The Council regularly evaluates the effectiveness of its scrutiny function. During this Council's term of office the main themes emerging from the evaluation exercises were that:

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<sup>1</sup> The following link will take you to the Auditor General for Wales' report 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question' (2014): [https://www.wao.gov.uk/system/files/publications/WAO\\_Scrutiny\\_Report\\_English\\_2014.pdf](https://www.wao.gov.uk/system/files/publications/WAO_Scrutiny_Report_English_2014.pdf)

- scrutiny had a clear and valued role in the Council's governance arrangements;
- scrutiny generally operated on a non-political basis and was councillor-led;
- having Cabinet members presenting reports and being held to account by scrutiny for their areas of responsibility worked well; and
- on the whole a high level of mutual trust existed between scrutiny and Council attendees and partner organisation representatives who attended scrutiny

Amongst the areas identified for improvement were:

- the need to provide training on scrutiny specific skills on a regular basis;
- improving member attendance at some scrutiny committee meetings;
- improving communication with the public and encouraging residents to engage with scrutiny on matters of concern or interest; and
- to explore the potential of webcasting some scrutiny committee meetings

During the new Council's term of office the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group will continue to work to address the above areas.

### External Organisations

With an increased expectation from Welsh Government (WG) for public services to be delivered either in partnership with external organisations or commissioned from external providers, scrutiny has to adapt its work to be more externally focussed. During the past year a number of external organisations have been invited to attend scrutiny meetings to discuss progress with joint initiatives, or areas of concern for the Council or residents. Amongst the external organisations who participated in the scrutiny process during the year have been WG, the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), GwE (the regional school improvement service), the Co-operative Group, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and PeoplePlus, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and CIVICA. Some of these organisations have attended scrutiny on more than one occasion during the year and will continue to attend during the forthcoming year. Whilst Scrutiny does not have powers to compel external organisations to attend committee meetings to discuss matters of concern, most organisations accept an invitation to attend scrutiny to explain their plans or the rationale behind their decisions. It was therefore disappointing that the Nat West Bank declined an invitation to attend a scrutiny meeting to discuss with councillors the impact on Denbighshire's communities of their decision to close all but one of their branches in the county.

Amongst external organisations already invited to attend scrutiny during the forthcoming year are the Health Board, Ambulance Service and GwE.

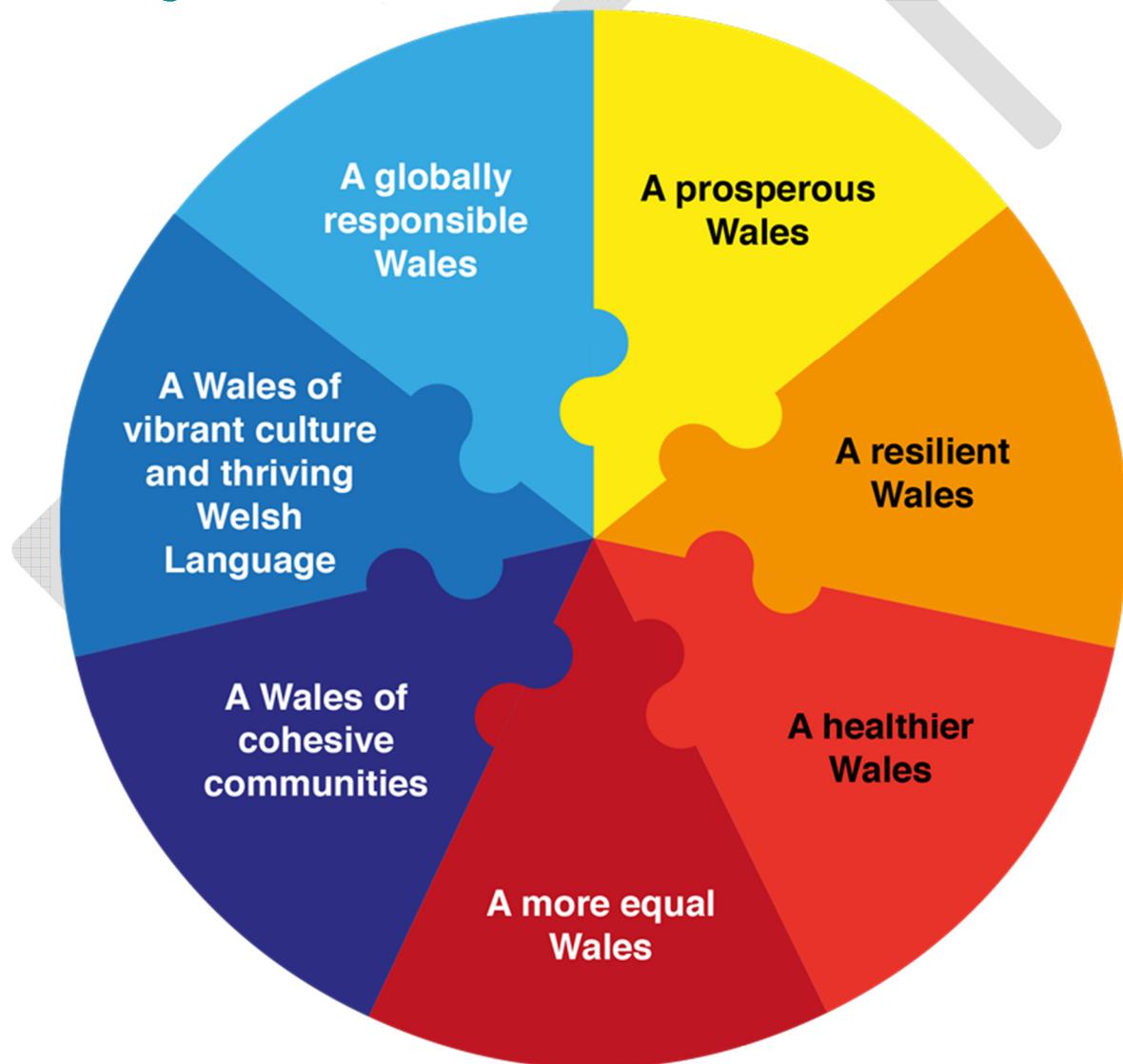
## Looking forward

As previously mentioned one of the biggest changes, if not the biggest change, during 2016/17 was the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The focus of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act requires all public bodies (which includes local authorities) to think more long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach when making decisions. The aim is to help create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. To make sure we are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals. All of these goals are inter-linked and dependent on each other.

The Well-being goals, and the links between them, are illustrated below. More information about them and the Act can be found on 'Future Generations Commissioner for Wales' website by following this link: <https://futuregenerations.wales/>

## The Well-being Goals



Scrutiny, through the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) has during 2016/17 been monitoring the Council's plans to embed the Act's goals and principles into its day to day business. During the term of the new Council Scrutiny will be expected to robustly challenge the conclusions of Well-being Impact Assessments presented to them in relation to policies, service changes etc.

## Communities Scrutiny Committee



Huw Hilditch-Roberts  
Independent **Chair**



Rhys Hughes  
Plaid Cymru **Vice-chair**



Brian Blakeley  
Labour



Bill Cowie  
Independent



Peter Evans  
Independent



Martyn Holland  
Conservative



Bob Murray  
Labour



Anton Sampson  
Conservative



David Simmons  
Labour



Cefyn Williams  
Plaid Cymru



Cheryl Williams  
Labour

	Current Membership	Political Balance
<b>Labour</b>	4	4
<b>Independent</b>	3	3
<b>Conservative</b>	2	2
<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	2	2

## Partnerships Scrutiny Committee



Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones  
Labour  
**Chair**



Ray Bartley  
Independent  
**Vice-chair**



Pat Jones  
Labour



Gwyneth Kensler  
Plaid Cymru



Pete Prendergast  
Labour



Arwel Roberts  
Plaid Cymru



Bill Tasker  
Labour



Huw O Williams  
Conservative

	<b>Current Membership</b>	<b>Political Balance</b>
<b>Labour</b>	4	4
<b>Independent</b>	1	3
<b>Conservative</b>	1	2
<b>Plaid Cymru</b>	2	2

Sadly Partnerships Scrutiny Committee lost its Vice-Chair, Councillor Raymond Bartley in December 2016. This was a great loss to the Committee as he was a valued and highly respected member of the Committee

## Performance Scrutiny Committee



Barry Mellor  
Labour  
**Chair**



Arwel Roberts  
Plaid Cymru  
**Vice-Chair**



Ray Bartley  
Independent



Meirick Lloyd-Davies  
Plaid Cymru



Huw Hilditch-Roberts  
Independent



Colin Hughes  
Labour



Geraint Lloyd-Williams  
Labour



Dewi Owens  
Conservative



Gareth Sandilands  
Labour



Joe Welch  
Independent

	Current Membership	Political Balance
Labour	4	4
Independent	3	3
Conservative	1	2
Plaid Cymru	2	2

The late Councillor Raymond Bartley was also a valued and well respected member of this Committee as well as of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. He had also been a key member of In-house Adult Social Care Task and Finish Group.

## Summary of Communities Scrutiny Committee agenda items and recommendations 2016/17

12 May 2016	<p><b>Delivering with less – Leisure Services:</b> the Committee discussed the Wales Audit Office's (WAO) national report on Leisure Services and Denbighshire's performance in delivering leisure services. The Council was encouraged to promote the various opportunities available in Denbighshire, through the Council's Leisure and Countryside Services, as well as in the voluntary sector to support residents' health and well-being.</p> <p><b>Housing Grounds Maintenance Contract Update:</b> in response to complaints received from tenants regarding the contract for maintaining the grounds of the Council's own housing the Committee examined the measures taken to manage the contract in future and mitigate against similar problems arising. As a result it recommended that further work be undertaken to support the delivery of a co-ordinated approach by the Council to grounds maintenance work in communities.</p> <p><b>The Council's Rural Grass Cutting Arrangements for 2016/17:</b> the Committee examined the Council's proposals for undertaking rural highway verge grass cutting which tried to balance highway safety with the biodiversity requirements of the Highways Act of 1980 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act of 2006. Members accepted that balancing road safety and biodiversity requirements was not always easy and consequently recommended to support the policy subject to robust highway safety risk assessments being undertaken in relation to areas designated for biodiversity verge cuts.</p> <p><b>Cemetery Rules &amp; Enforcement:</b> the Committee discussed and endorsed proposals for stricter management and enforcement of cemetery rules across the county's lawned cemeteries. The policies included enforcement of cemetery rules, controls on the placing and use of memorial benches and the introduction of legally enforceable dog control orders in Council owned cemeteries.</p> <p><b>Draft Caravan Sites Regulatory Procedures:</b> in response to long-held concerns on the potential cost implications to the Council of people living on 'holiday' caravan sites in Denbighshire all year round the Committee examined draft regulatory procedures to deal with owners or site-operators who did not comply with the planning and licensing permissions granted for their caravan sites. In endorsing the procedures the Committee asked officers to report back to the Committee in twelve months' on the effectiveness of their implementation, identifying any problems or anomalies encountered during the implementation and enforcement process.</p>
30 June 2016	<p><b>Review of the Home to School Transport Policy:</b> the impact of the implementation of the new school transport policy for secondary school pupils, from September 2015 was considered by the Committee. As the new policy had attracted considerable public attention the Committee recommended that officers initiate a review of the policy, having regard to matters raised by parents and councillors following the implementation of the 2015 policy. Members also asked that once the review had been concluded that the revised draft policy be presented the Committee for consideration.</p>

	<p><b>Supported Independent Living:</b> the Committee examined the progress made with the Supported Independent Living (SIL) scheme in meeting the housing related support needs of older people across the county. It consequently asked that a report on the potential benefits of adopting a streamlined approach for managing Supported Independent Living (SIL), Reablement and the Health &amp; Social Care Support Worker Services (HSCSW) across Denbighshire be presented to members in due course.</p>
8 September 2016	<p><b>Residents Survey:</b> the Committee considered the key findings of the Residents Survey. Due to the disappointingly low response rate to this particular survey the Committee asked that information be presented to members in early 2017 outlining the proposed contents and questions to be contained in the 2017 Residents Survey, along with the methodology(ies) under consideration for undertaking the survey.</p> <p><b>Primary and Secondary School Absenteeism:</b> in response to concerns raised by councillors with respect to school absenteeism rates the Committee considered a report detailing the definition of ‘authorised’ and ‘unauthorised absences’ and the process followed prior to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). Having considered the information the Committee endorsed the Council’s policies and strategies for improving pupil attendance in the county’s schools. It congratulated the Council on its improved performance in this area, but registered concerns that not all authorities across Wales were applying the policies and procedures relating to unauthorised absences as stringently as Denbighshire.</p> <p><b>Hazardous Routes To School:</b> in response to concerns raised on the process for determining the safety of home to school journeys the Committee considered the legislative framework which governs the designation of ‘hazardous routes to schools’, as well as the assessment process followed by the Council to assess the safety of a walking route to school. Having considered the information the Committee endorsed the method by which the Council applied the Welsh Government’s operational guidelines with respect of risk assessing walked routes to schools. In addition, it recommended that school routes which lie within areas subject to bio-diversity grass cutting schedules, and which had not been assessed within the preceding 12 months, be assessed at the earliest possible opportunity. It also asked that Member Area Groups (MAGs) be informed and consulted on an annual basis on the routes due for review in their area, and supported proposals to carry out periodic reviews of home to school walking routes every five years, unless significant changes to traffic volumes or flows were reported, or requests were received for a review to be undertaken.</p>
27 October 2016	<p><b>DWP PeoplePlus Provision in Denbighshire:</b> at the Committee’s request representatives from both organisations attended the meeting to discuss with members the reasons behind the decision to relocate services to help unemployed people into work, from Rhyl to Flint.</p> <p><b>Managing Supported Independent Living:</b> the Committee considered the potential benefits of streamlining the management of the Supporting Independent Living (SIL) and the Reablement Services, whilst retaining the independence of the operational delivery side of both services. Having received assurances that streamlining the management functions would not affect</p>

	<p>frontline service delivery and would actually support the delivery of effective integrated health care and support services to residents, the Committee asked that a further report on the progress in streamlining the management structure, including information on the indicators to be used to measure the services' effectiveness in delivering the intended outcomes be presented to members in early 2017.</p> <p><b>Flood Risk Management Strategy:</b> being acutely aware of residents' fears and the devastation caused by flooding in Denbighshire in recent years the Committee examined the findings of the WAO report on 'Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management in Wales'. It also considered the Council's own progress in implementing the objectives, outcomes and measures listed in its Flood Risk Management Strategy. Having considered all the information it endorsed the Council's approach to discharging its responsibilities as a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Authority and for carrying out the measures and objectives set out in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. It also extended an invitation to representatives from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to attend a future meeting to discuss water management/flood mitigation matters and to explore potential areas where the Council could work effectively with NRW to reduce the risk of flooding in local communities.</p> <p><b>County-wide Impact of the Increase in Car Parking Charges:</b> in response to public concerns on the impact increased car parking charges were having on the county's towns the Committee considered the matter. Following consideration of various data and representations from elected members and members of the public, the Committee recommended that the county-wide car parking scheme be retained. It also recommended that a car park asset management plan be developed with a view to improving the environment in and around the Council's car parks and that various other options be explored, including initiatives with local businesses to increase car park usage and customer footfall in a bid to boost the local economy. Officers were requested to report on progress with the development of these to the Committee in six months' time.</p> <p><b>Process, Methodology and Criteria for Undertaking Road Safety Audits in Relation to Planning Applications:</b> in response to concerns raised by a county councillor the Committee examined the process and methodology used for undertaking road safety audits in relation to planning applications, including the criteria which merited the requirements for a road safety audit to be undertaken. At the conclusion of this examination, in order to ensure that all councillors were familiar with the process and fully understood it, the Committee asked that a half-day training workshop be arranged for all members of the Council's Planning Committee on the process, methodology and criteria for road safety audits and their application in relation to planning applications.</p>
15 December 2016	<p><b>Denbighshire's Home to School Transport Policy:</b> the Committee considered the draft revised policy following its recent review and supported the proposal to progress with the consultation phase in due course, once legal counsel's opinion had been received. However, it was requested that prior to public consultation the revised draft policy be referred back to the Committee for approval to consult.</p>

	<p><b>Water Management and Flood Mitigation:</b> in response to the Committee’s invitation a representative from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) attended the meeting, along with the Council’s Senior Engineer – Flood Risk Management, to discuss water management and flood mitigation measures in Denbighshire. As a consequence of the discussion, and on the clarity received on the County Council and Natural Resources Wales’ statutory responsibilities with respect of water and flood management, including coastal and river maintenance responsibilities, the Committee recommended that a presentation should be given post the May 2017 local authority elections for the purpose of assisting all councillors to understand how both organisations work together to mitigate the risk of flooding. It also requested that a press release be prepared and issued for inclusion in the Farm and Country supplement of the Daily Post on how riparian landowners could apply for permits to undertake periodic maintenance work on watercourses that traverse their land.</p>
<p>2 February 2017</p>	<p><b>Police and Crime Commissioner:</b> the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner attended the meeting at the Committee’s invitation to discuss his vision and priorities for the region. At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee agreed to write to the Chief Constable to seek clarity on the powers conferred on Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Special Constables with respect to enforcement action, and to invite the Chief Constable to a future meeting to discuss his vision and priorities for North Wales.</p> <p><b>Denbighshire’s Draft Home to School Transport Policy:</b> the Committee considered the progress made with the review of the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy. At the conclusion of the discussion it agreed to support the approach outlined in the new draft policy and to progress to the consultation phase, requesting that the results of the consultation exercise be presented to the Committee during the summer of 2017, along with information on proposed re-aligned school routes</p> <p><b>Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST):</b> WAST representatives attended the meeting at the Committee’s request to discuss the problems and pressures faced by the service in Denbighshire and across Wales, and how they were addressing those pressures. Following an open and constructive discussion the Committee extended a further invitation to Welsh Ambulance Service Trust representatives to attend another meeting at an appropriate time in the future to discuss progress.</p> <p><b>Denbighshire County Council’s Resident’s Survey 2017:</b> as per its earlier request the Committee was presented with the proposed process for undertaking the 2017 Residents Survey in Denbighshire. Having considered the proposals the Committee supported the new arrangements for undertaking the Survey and requested that the draft Residents Survey be submitted to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chair’s Group (SCVCG) for comments prior to its publication.</p>
<p>23 March 2017</p>	<p><b>Regulation of Unmanned Aircraft:</b> following a request from County Council in response to a Notice of Motion calling for a ban on drones over all public spaces in Denbighshire the Committee considered the extent of current legislation regulating the use of drones in public places and the feasibility of introducing local byelaws relating to their use. Having considered the information provided,</p>

along with evidence received from a licensed drone user, the Committee decided that no further action was recommended at present with respect to the regulation of drone use in Denbighshire, as it felt that current legislation and guidance sufficiently governed their use. Nevertheless, if the findings of the UK Government's recent consultation on the safe use of drones, 'Unlocking the UK's High Tech Economy', merited further consideration of the matter it suggested that a further report be submitted to Scrutiny on potential local regulation.

**Corporate Approach to Managing 'Seagulls' Across the County:** residents regularly raised problems caused by 'seagulls' with their local councillor, on this basis the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) asked the Committee to consider whether there were any measures the Council could take to reduce the nuisance caused by the birds, which were a protected species. The Committee considered an action plan for managing seagulls across the county and agreed to the recommended actions listed within the action plan, which included measures such as actively discouraging the public from feeding them, reducing the availability of food waste, buildings to be fitted with seagull deterrent measures, introduction of contraception measures, 'out of hours' enforcement' action, introduction of local byelaws and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in relation to feeding seagulls.

**Managing Supporting Independent Living (SIL), Reablement and the Health and Social Care Support Worker Service (HSCSW) in Denbighshire:** the Committee considered the progress made in delivering a co-ordinated Supporting Independent Living (SIL), Reablement and Health & Social Care Support Worker Service in Denbighshire and requested that once the draft pooled health and social care budget package had been finalised that it be presented to Scrutiny for detailed examination.

## Summary of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agenda items and recommendations 2016/17

26 May 2016	<p><b>West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project:</b> the Committee met with representatives from Welsh Government (WG), Clwyd Alyn/Pennaf Housing and North Wales Housing to discuss progress to date with delivering one element of the Rhyl Regeneration programme – the West Rhyl Housing Improvement Project (WRHIP). The Committee was also given an insight into proposed future developments which would contribute towards the Project’s delivery in its entirety.</p>
7 July 2016	<p><b>North Denbighshire Community Hospital – Health Facility Project:</b> as part of its continued monitoring of the development of this project, which would eventually see a community hospital and health facility built in Rhyl to replace the former Royal Alexandra Hospital, the Committee discussed the project’s progress with representatives from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). At the conclusion of the discussion BCUHB representatives were asked to attend a meeting of the Committee in the autumn with details of the Outline Business Case for the new facility.</p> <p><b>Healthy Prestatyn and Rhuddlan Iach Primary Healthcare Project:</b> Health Board representatives discussed with the Committee the model developed for delivering primary healthcare services in the Prestatyn and Rhuddlan areas, since the Board had taken responsibility for delivering GP services to patients registered at 5 surgeries in the area. This model of primary healthcare had enabled the Health Board to extend the range of services available to patients registered at the surgeries. The Committee felt that this approach for delivering healthcare services improved outcomes for patients and therefore recommended to Health Board representatives that similar models of primary healthcare should be rolled-out to other areas of North Wales in due course.</p> <p><b>North Wales Safeguarding Boards:</b> Committee members considered the Adult and Children’s Regional Safeguarding Boards’ first Annual Report since its establishment. As this was Regional Boards’ first annual report its main focus was on the progress made with the establishment of regional safeguarding arrangements. Therefore the Committee, with a view to ensuring that the Boards’ arrangements were being embedded across the region and consequently protecting the area’s most vulnerable residents, asked that a further progress report on the Boards’ development from April 2016 onwards be submitted to the Committee in early 2017.</p>
06 October 2016	<p><b>Denbighshire Wellbeing Plan:</b> Committee members considered the former Conwy and Denbighshire Local Services Board (LSB) now Joint Public Service Board’s (PSB) performance in delivering its well-being plan for Denbighshire, ‘Supporting Independence and Resilience’, during the period between 2014 to 2016.</p> <p><b>Community Safety Partnership 2015/16 Annual Update:</b> in its role as the Council’s designated Crime and Disorder scrutiny committee the Joint Community Safety Partnership’s (CSP) annual report for 2015/16 was</p>

	<p>examined. Observations were also provided to the CSP on its proposed projects for 2016/17.</p>
<p>24 November 2016</p>	<p><b>North Denbighshire Community Hospital – Health Facility Project:</b> further discussions took place between the Committee and representatives from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) with respect to the development of a 28 bed community hospital and health facility for the north Denbighshire area, on the site of the former Royal Alexandra Hospital, Rhyl. Floor plans and drawings were shown to the Committee of the new development, including an overview of the facilities and services which would be available on the site. The Committee registered its support for the work underway to deliver the new Community Hospital and Health Facility in Rhyl.</p> <p><b>CCTV Partnership:</b> members examined the governance arrangements in place for the CCTV partnership and its effectiveness in delivering a CCTV service in the Rhyl, Prestatyn and Rhuddlan areas since its formation in April 2016. Having examined the evidence the Committee registered its support for the Council's role within the Partnership and recommended that the Partnership should be retained. It also requested that a progress report be presented to members in the first half of 2017 outlining measures taken to secure the Service's long-term future, including potential options for rolling the CCTV service out to other areas of the county.</p> <p><b>Strategy For Supporting Independence In Denbighshire:</b> members considered the Council's corporate approach for enabling the county's residents to maintain their independence and well-being in their own homes. A number of potential amendments were recommended for inclusion in the Strategy document prior to the Committee endorsing the Council's corporate strategy for meeting the needs of citizens who require support to enable them to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.</p> <p><b>Denbighshire Supporting People – Local Commissioning Plan 2017-18:</b> following consideration of the Council's proposed Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan for 2017-18 the Committee registered concerns that the Welsh Government had been cutting the Supporting People grant to the Council year on year for a number of years. Whilst it acknowledged that contingency plans had been made within the Supporting People Local Commissioning Plan for 2017-18 to accommodate further cuts, it recommended that if the Supporting People Grant monies was maintained at its current level that the funding should remain within Supporting People services to maintain services provided.</p>
<p>19 January 2017</p>	<p><b>Community Health and Social Care Arrangements to Support Timely Hospital Discharge:</b> in response to a concerns raised by councillors, as well as extensive media coverage, on the impact of delayed transfer of care of patients from hospitals on the availability of hospital in-patient beds, the Committee examined arrangements in place within community health and social care services to monitor and address delays in arranging transfer of care. During consideration of the evidence it became apparent that delayed transfer of care was not a widespread problem in Denbighshire. When it did occur it was due to the need to secure very complex care packages, which required a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to deliver them. Work was already underway in an attempt to increase the number of people with the required skills to deliver these</p>

types of care packages across North Wales. With a view to securing progress in this area the Committee asked that a further report be submitted to it in the autumn of 2017 on 'Timely Hospital Discharges'. It also requested that information on the 'Development of Health and Social Care Pooled Budgets' be presented to it in April 2017.

**Revenues and Benefits Partnership Agreement:** when entering into a partnership agreement with Civica to deliver revenues and benefits services on its behalf, the Council had asked that Scrutiny, approximately 18 months into the contract, review the partnership agreement's effectiveness in delivering Revenues and Benefits services to Denbighshire residents. Following examination of the evidence the Committee concluded that it was satisfied that the Partnership was working effectively in the four key areas of new business/commercial opportunities, service delivery, meeting financial expectations, and provision of services through the medium of the Welsh language. It also requested further information on the Partnership's work in relation to debt management in the county, discretionary housing payments and the weekly direct debit pilot for the payment of Council Tax.

**Communities First In Denbighshire:** representatives from the Co-op Group attended at the Committee's invitation to discuss with members the progress made during 2015/16 and the first two quarters of 2016/17 with the Communities First programme in Denbighshire. At the conclusion of the discussion, and having regard to a recent Welsh Government Ministerial announcement on the future of the Communities First programme, the Committee recommended to the Tackling Poverty Working Group that it should request Council officials to work with Co-op Group officers to highlight to the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children the benefits realised to date from the Communities First Programme in Denbighshire and make representations to him on the importance of securing at least the same amount of funding for the area as part of the proposed 'new approach'

2 March 2017

**Update on Maternity & Women's Services/Sub-Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (SuRNNIC) at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd:** representatives from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) attended the meeting to discuss the progress made to date with delivering the improvement plan for Midwifery and Women's Services across the Health Board area, and particularly at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. Discussions also took place in relation to the development of the SuRNNIC Unit at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and the progress made to date in relation to the timetable for the Unit's opening. Committee members were encouraged with the progress made with respect of women's services and the SuRNNIC project.

**GP Out of Hours Service:** following concerns raised by councillors and residents on the responsiveness of the GP Out of Hours Service at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd the Service's Divisional Lead for North Wales (Central) attended the meeting at the Committee's invitation to discuss its performance, and how it worked with other healthcare and associated services to alleviate pressures elsewhere within the Health Service. At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee acknowledged the improvements achieved by the GP Out of Hours Service over recent months and the crucial role it played in alleviating pressures on Emergency Departments and the Ambulance Service etc. It also invited the Service representative to attend a future meeting of the Committee, in

conjunction with representatives from the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust (WAST), to outline how both services work together to complement each other's work and alleviate pressures on the Ambulance Service.

**Launch of Consultation on the Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board's (PSB) Well-Being Assessment:** in its role as a statutory consultee the Committee considered the joint PSB's first Well-being Assessment. Following consideration of the draft Assessment the Committee recommended to the Public Service Board, subject to the observations made at the meeting that it endorsed the approach taken in developing the Well-being Assessment and the ideas for its future use. It asked the PSB to ensure that that the data included within the Well-being Assessment was updated on a regular basis, and that all PSB partner organisations be recommended and encouraged to use the information contained within the Well-being Assessment as the basis for their future strategic planning activities. The Committee also requested that an Executive Summary of the Well-being Assessment be written in order to provide readers with an overview of its purpose and contents. A request was also made that a programme of training events and material on the principles and requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, including the purpose and importance of the Well-being Assessment, be arranged for all Councillors following the May 2017 Local Authority elections.

6 April 2017

**Development of Health and Social Care Pooled Budgets:** in response to an earlier request from the Committee, members were given an opportunity to examine the work undertaken to date in developing health and social care pooled budgets in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. At the conclusion of its consideration the Committee acknowledged the scale of the amount spent across the region on services for older people, along with the complexities associated with the financial governance aspect of pooled budgets. Bearing in mind the resource requirements needed to complete the development of pooled budgets within the timescales set out in the Act, and potential costs and funding sources to deliver it, the Committee asked that further information be presented to it in the autumn of 2017 detailing the progress made with their development, including proposed pooled budget models.

**North Wales Safeguarding Boards:** the Committee considered information on the progress made in embedding the Regional Safeguarding Boards' work across North Wales. Members acknowledged the progress made in standardising policies and protocols and in sharing expertise across the region, as well as the Boards efforts to safeguard vulnerable children and adults in Denbighshire in the face of increasing pressures and evolving demands.

## Summary of Performance Scrutiny Committee agenda items and recommendations 2016/17

<p>9 June 2016</p>	<p><b>Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter 4:</b> as part of its performance monitoring role the Committee considered the Council's performance in delivering the Corporate Plan 2012-17 as at the end of Quarter 4 2015-16 and requested to examine at a future meeting the Council's performance in delivering its Anti-Fouling Strategy, taking enforcement action and introducing Dog Control Orders</p> <p><b>Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Annual Report 2015/16:</b> the Committee considered the 2015/16 annual update on Health and Safety management within Denbighshire County Council</p> <p><b>Your Voice Report Quarter 4 - 2015/16:</b> members examined the Council's performance in dealing with compliments, suggestions and complaints received in line with its customer feedback policy "Your Voice" during Q4 2015/16.</p> <p><b>Director of Social Services Annual Report 2015/16:</b> Committee members scrutinised and endorsed the Director of Social Services Annual Report on the Services' performance during 2015/16 and priorities for 2016/17, prior to its submission to the Regulator, Care &amp; Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).</p>
<p>14 July 2016</p>	<p><b>Re-letting of Council Homes:</b> in response to a request from a councillor who had concerns that the Council was not meeting the target for re-letting properties as set out in the Corporate Plan, the Committee examined the Council's performance in this area. At the conclusion of the examination the Committee agreed with the Lead Member and officers' view and approach that it was better for residents, and represented better value for money for the Council, to refurbish houses to a high standard prior to re-letting them than to 'chase a meaningless target'. This approach was conducive with securing better outcomes for tenants and communities.</p> <p><b>Dog Fouling Strategy Update:</b> in response to the Committee's earlier request members were presented with information on the progress made in implementing the Council's Dog Fouling Strategy, including details on the number of reported incidents and known hot spots. Having reviewed the data the Committee supported the excellent work undertaken by officers across Council services to tackle dog fouling in the county.</p> <p><b>Corporate Risk Register Review June 2016:</b> consideration was given to the latest version of the Council' Corporate Risk Register, including explanations on why risk categorisations for some 'risks' had been amended and others had been removed or scaled down to Service risks rather than corporate risks.</p>
<p>29 September 2016</p>	<p><b>Teacher Assessments and Provisional Examinations Results:</b> the Committee undertook its annual review of the provisional teacher assessments and external examination results for the county's school pupils. At the conclusion of its consideration the Committee congratulated the county's pupils on their educational achievements, and the Council on its performance against external benchmarks. It also recommended that all schools should be provided with appropriate support to enable them to secure the best possible outcomes for their pupils.</p>

**Progress on Delivering Denbighshire’s Housing Strategy. Theme 2 – Creating a Supply of Affordable Housing:** the Committee reviewed the progress made in delivering the key outcomes and actions relating to affordable housing identified in Denbighshire’s Housing Strategy, adopted by the Council in December 2015. Having reviewed the information the Committee recommended that Scrutiny should schedule regular monitoring of the delivery of each of the Local Housing Strategy’s themes into a Committee’s Forward Work Programme.

**Your Voice Quarter 1 Report – 2016/17:** as part of its performance monitoring role the Committee reviewed the Council’s performance during Q1 2016/17 in dealing with compliments, suggestions and complaints received under the Council’s Customer feedback policy “Your Voice”.

**Annual Report on Safeguarding Adults in Denbighshire 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016:** members examined progress in this key area of work during the 2015/16 year by reviewing data submitted by the Local Authority to the Welsh Government Data Unit and progress made in relation to areas of concern raised by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) in its Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance for 2014-15. Whilst the Committee raised concerns in relation to additional resource and financial pressures placed upon the Social Services budget and social care staff due to external influences, it commended the excellent work and leadership undertaken by Denbighshire’s Social Services Department in order to protect vulnerable adults in the county and to address issues raised by CSSIW. It also acknowledged the important nature of adopting a corporate approach to the safeguarding of adults at risk, and the Council’s responsibility to regard this as a key priority area and place it alongside the commitment and significance given by the Authority to Child Protection.

**In-House Care Services Update:** the Task and Finish Group established to examine the future delivery of in-house social care services presented the Committee with a progress report on the Group’s work to date, which included its recommendations in relation to the future provision of services at Hafan Dêg Day Centre, Rhyl and Dolwen Day Centre and Residential Care Home, Denbigh. Following careful consideration of the report and proposals put forward the Committee agreed to recommend to Cabinet that it should initiate a formal tender process with respect to the provision of services at Hafan Dêg with a view to transferring the building to an external organisation, commissioning a day care service within the building and, in addition, enabling 3rd sector agencies to provide early intervention activities for older people that reduce social isolation, support independence and promote resilience. It also recommended that Cabinet should start a formal tender process with respect to the provision of services at Dolwen with a view to transferring the building and the whole service to an external organisation that would register Dolwen to provide elderly mental health (EMH) day and residential care services. All tender documentation should specify requirements to evidence the quality of care and Welsh language provision that would be provided at both establishments. At the conclusion of the tender process bids should be evaluated and analysed for potential impacts by Performance Scrutiny Committee prior to being presented to Cabinet with recommendations on the preferred provider for each establishment.

	<p><b>Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter 1 – 2016/17:</b> the Committee continued with its performance monitoring role in relation to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2012-17, specifically in relation to performance during the first quarter of 2016/17. Performance was generally good with only one outcome at present not being met.</p>
<p>6 January 2017</p>	<p><b>Update on the Options Appraisals for In-House Care Services:</b> the Future of In-House Social Care Services Task and Finish Group presented the Committee with the findings of a detailed feasibility study for the provision of future services on the site of the current Awelon Residential Care Centre at Ruthin. Following detailed consideration and discussion on the proposals put forward by the Task and Finish Group the Committee recommended to Cabinet that it should authorise discussions to commence between local Members, officers, Grŵp Cynefin and the committee of Canolfan Awelon to work through Options 2a, 2b &amp; 3a to take forward the best configuration for Extra Care housing on the site with a view to meeting all parties' needs and providing least disruption for existing residents/tenants. The discussions should also include floor space requirements for the Canolfan Awelon Community Centre</p> <p><b>Procurement Strategy and Revised Contract Procedure Rules:</b> the Committee considered the Council's progress in implementing the Procurement Transformation Programme, specifically the impact of the implementation of the Procurement Strategy and the revised Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs). Whilst acknowledging that the introduction of the new Procurement Strategy and revised CPRs had resulted in improved performance across the Council in relation to procurement activity, members did suggest that it would be useful to collate data on the number of local people employed under each contract let by the Council as this would be a useful statistic to measure the local impact of the Strategy and its consequential, impact on the Council's corporate priority of developing the local economy.</p> <p><b>"Your Voice" Complaints Quarter 2 – 2016/17:</b> members continued to monitor the Council's performance in responding to complaints, compliments and suggestions received under the corporate 'Your Voice' customer feedback policy during quarter 2 of the 2016/17 year, including complaints received in respect of services delivered on the Council's behalf by external providers.</p> <p><b>Corporate Plan Quarter 2 – 2016/17:</b> during consideration of the Council's performance in delivering its Corporate Plan 2012-17 during quarter 2 of the 2016-17 year, attention was drawn to a number of matters. These included the effectiveness of the new approach adopted for handling investment enquiries which had successfully secured investment by Wagg Foods in Bodelwyddan, the lack of capacity identified for businesses who wanted to expand and grow in the county, the fact that asbestos checks in the Council's housing stock would only be required to be undertaken once, and the increase in the number of exclusions from the county's schools and school absenteeism.</p>
<p>26 January 2017</p>	<p><b>Key Stage 4 Examination Results:</b> the Committee considered the verified performance data on Denbighshire schools' external examinations results at Key Stage 4 (KS4) and post 16 in 2016, and how the county's schools had performed in comparison to other local authorities. In congratulating the schools and their pupils on their performance members did raise concerns with respect</p>

to whether GwE was delivering value for money for the Council with regards to school improvement services. As a result the Committee requested that a report detailing GwE's new structure, the anticipated impact and timelines for the realisation of the expected outcomes, be presented to the Committee at the earliest opportunity in the term of the new Council. Members also asked officers to report to the Committee at a future meeting on the findings of the work to be undertaken in the near future to measure pupils' progress from choosing their subjects in Year 10 to achieving their results at end of year 11.

**Corporate Risk Register:** during its examination of the latest version of the Corporate Risk Register the Committee highlighted a number of areas which in members' views could pose some considerable risk to the Council in future.

These included

- (i) the digital era – this had the potential to transform the way the Council transacted all its business. The Authority would need to be ready for this change and ambitious in the way it approached it to ensure that it was not left behind;
- (i) the cost of social care in future was expected to 'outstrip' the available resources. The Council would therefore need to manage this risk closely. Central Government should also be making a concerted effort to try and address resource shortages in this area; and
- (ii) risks relating to post-surgical care of patients once it was determined that they would not require care in an acute hospital setting.

**Bridge Maintenance Strategy:** in response to members' concerns on the condition of bridges across the county details were presented to the Committee on the extent of the backlog of work required on bridges, highway structures and culverts across the county and the associated cost. In knowledge of the fact that addressing the backlog of work was a long-term project which required significant financial resources a highway structure assets plan had been drawn up to manage the work. Following detailed examination of the managed approach to undertaking and financing the work the Committee agreed to support the approach being taken by the Highways Service to address the backlog of works and mitigate risks to road and pathway users.

16 March  
2017

**Library Service Standards and Performance:** the Committee discussed the Council's performance in meeting the national library standards set out in 5<sup>th</sup> performance framework of Library Standards, along with the requirements of the forthcoming 6th performance framework. 17 Of the 18 core entitlements had been met, the only one which had not been fully met was an indicator relating to expenditure on books and resources for public use. The reason this one had not been met was that a decision had been taken, as part the Council's budget setting process, not to strive to meet this target but instead to realise maximum benefits from expenditure by targeting spending on specific types of books and resources based on library users' preferences. The Committee felt that this was a commendable approach to take. At the conclusion of the discussion it commended the Service on meeting the public's expectations and on progressing the development of the county's libraries into community hubs for the delivery of a range of services. With a view to monitoring the Service's performance and progress the Committee requested that a further report be presented to it in 12 months' time detailing the Council's performance in

delivering the 6<sup>th</sup> performance framework and on the development of libraries as community hubs.

**Your Voice Report Q3 2016/17:** a further report on the Council's performance in dealing with customer feedback in line with its 'Your Voice' corporate feedback policy was examined. At the conclusion the Committee requested that future quarterly reports include information on complaints which are upheld and partially upheld along with the lessons learnt from those cases. Members also considered information on the effectiveness of the associated Customer Effort Dashboard project and requested that a further performance report in relation to the Dashboard data be presented the Committee in twelve months' time.

**Progress on Delivering Denbighshire's Housing Strategy:** the Committee, as part of Scrutiny's monitoring of the delivery of the Council's Housing Strategy, examined the progress made to date in realising the key outcomes and actions in the Strategy. Following detailed examination they commended the progress achieved to date in delivering the action plan and requested that a briefing be arranged for all county councillors, as part of the forthcoming Member Development Programme, on the objectives of the Local Housing Strategy, its delivery programme and proposed future development. It also asked the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) to periodically monitor the delivery of the Strategy's action plan and to identify areas for closer examination by individual committees.

DRAFT

## How can residents participate in Scrutiny?

Would you like scrutiny to look at a particular matter?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**YES/NO**

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

Your name:  
Address:

Postcode:  
Email:  
Telephone number:

*PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATOR, LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES, COUNTY HALL, WYNNSTAY ROAD, RUTHIN LL15 1YN or e-mail it to [rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk)*

## Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny

### Proposal Form/Request received

(careful consideration given to reasons for request)



### Does it stand up to the PAPER test?

- **P**ublic interest – is the matter of concern to residents?
- **A**bility to have an impact – can Scrutiny influence and change things?
- **P**erformance – is it an underperforming area or service?
- **E**xtent – does it affect a large number of residents or a large geographic area?
- **R**eplication – is anyone else looking at it?

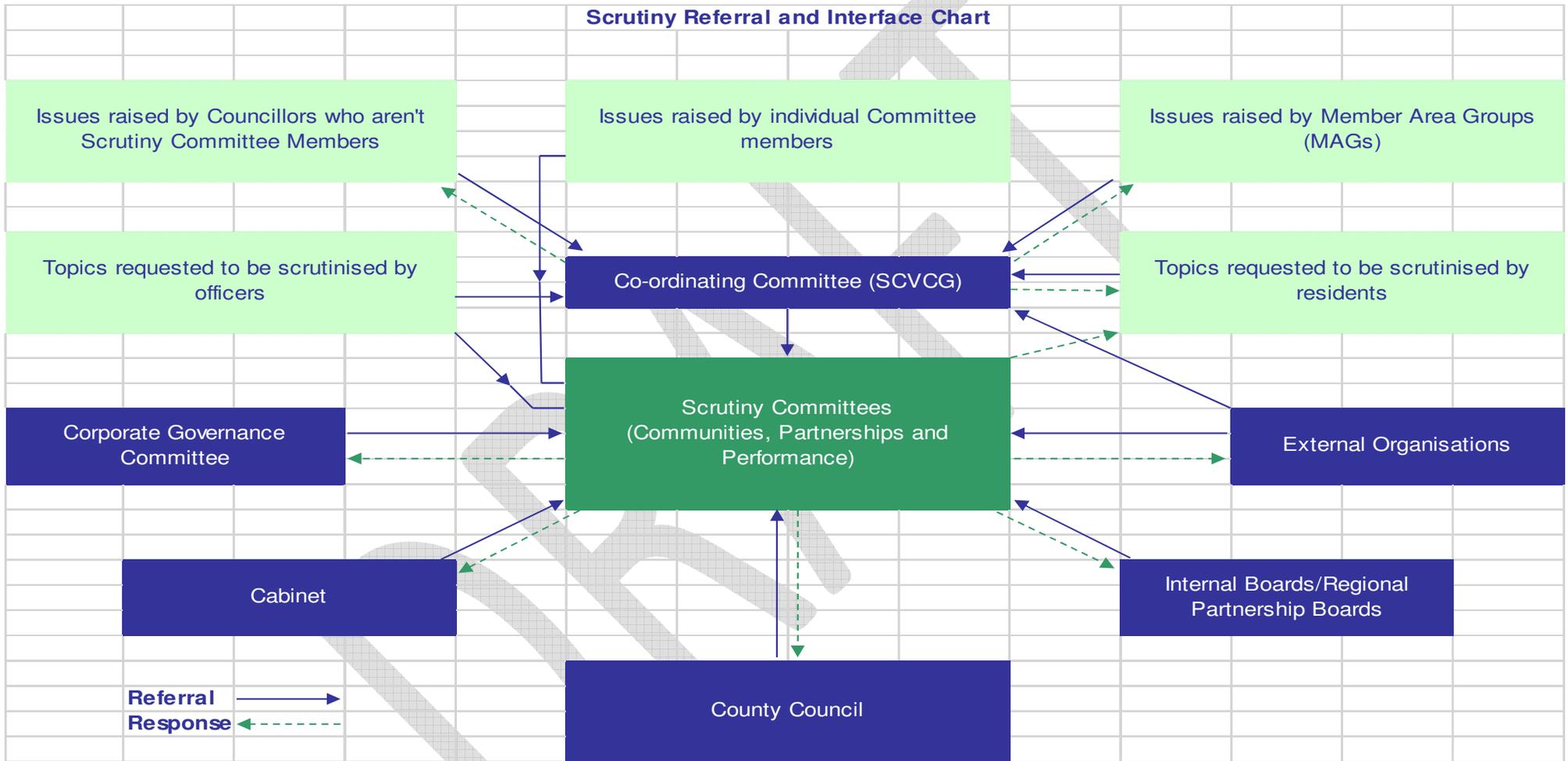
YES

NO

No further action required by scrutiny committee. Refer elsewhere or request information report?

- Determine the desired outcome(s)
- Decide on the scope and extent of the scrutiny work required and the most appropriate method to undertake it (i.e. committee report, task and finish group inquiry, or link member etc.)
- If task and finish route chosen, determine the timescale for any inquiry, who will be involved, research requirements, expert advice and witnesses required, reporting arrangements etc.

## Scrutiny Referral and Interface Chart



 anyone wishing to request that a matter be considered for scrutiny should contact the Scrutiny Co-ordinator or the Democratic Services Officer to obtain the relevant referral form (contact details are shown on the preceding pages)