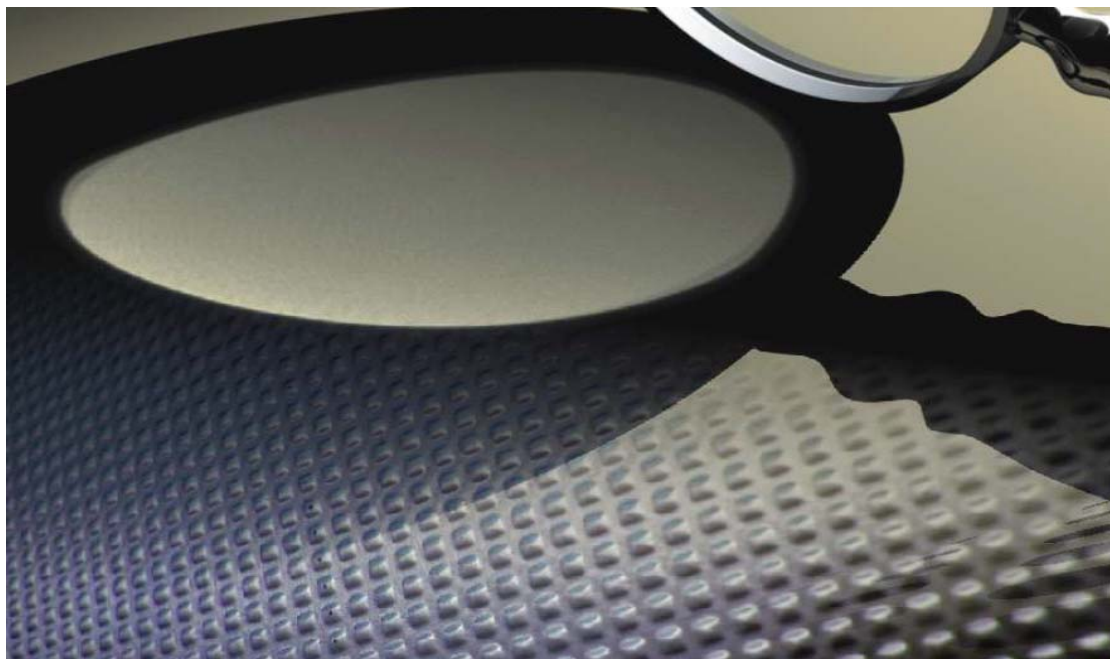




Report of the
**Overview & Scrutiny
Committees**

Annual Report

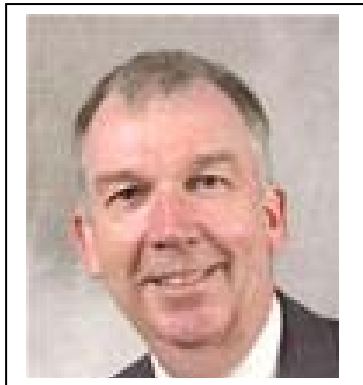
MAY 2012 TO APRIL 2013



Contents

HEADING	PAGE NO.
Foreword – by Councillor Robin Guest Chairman of the Constitution Committee	5
Observations from the Leader of the Council	7
Observations from the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team	9
Overview & Scrutiny and Officer Support	11 - 12
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13 - 14
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15 - 16
Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17 - 18
Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19 - 20
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Meeting at Ysgol Cae'r Nant, Connah's Quay	21 - 22
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23 - 24
Playscheme Task & Finish Group	25 - 26
Local Government Wales Measure 2011 – Protocols for Public Engagement with Overview & Scrutiny	27
Wales Audit Office – Scrutiny Improvement Study	29
Appendix 1 – Committee Membership 2012/13	31 - 32
Appendix 2 – Topics covered and activity information	33 - 37

Foreword



As chair of the Constitution Committee it is with great pleasure that I write to introduce the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2012/13. This gives account of the work which has been undertaken in our six overview & scrutiny committees, and show how effectively the overview & scrutiny function contributes to effective corporate governance.

The traditional committee system, where many of us cut our political teeth had developed over more than a century. The current system, combining cabinet as the decision makers with overview & scrutiny as challengers, monitors and examiners, has only been operating for just over a decade. In that time, however, huge strides have been made.

Making effective changes is hard work, and in the initial stages we recognised that there was too much of an air of 'them and us' about the relationship between the Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny members. Now the benefits of effective overview & scrutiny to underpin the work of the cabinet are recognised: within our committees is the capacity to test the validity of new policies, to examine them thoroughly before they are considered by the Cabinet.

For Scrutiny to do its job properly members must be pro-active in selecting topics for review. The members of the overview & scrutiny committees have such a range of knowledge and life experience that they are able to make a significant contribution to the process.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 has put into legislation much that we in Flintshire have long recognised as good practice and put into place. I like to think that we were at the forefront to effective overview and scrutiny in the early years and have not relinquished this despite the reduction in resources over the years. We still recognise that effective scrutiny needs effective support.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone has been involved in the scrutiny process, whether as an external or internal contributor, a scrutiny member or as one of the officers. The whole is very much greater than the sum of its parts.

**Cllr Robin Guest,
Chair of the Constitution Committee.**

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY – A CABINET PERSPECTIVE



I believe that this is the first time that the Leader of the Council has been asked to make an introduction to the Annual Report of the Overview & Scrutiny function in Flintshire. I was pleased to be asked, because I know the benefits of effective overview & scrutiny and how it contributes to effective corporate governance, and thus I am more than happy to comment on it.

In the last year, we have made great use of our overview & scrutiny committees to test the validity of new ideas and, in the case of Corporate Resources, to comment on the monthly budget position, before that same report is submitted to Cabinet.

Thus overview & scrutiny offers a counter-balance to the Cabinet, contributing the collective wisdom of its members to the issues which face us. Whether it is in Corporate Resources, where as the cabinet member for finance I am able to discuss the budget position with my fellow councillors, or at another committee, where we might be contributing to discussions on a new policy, I know that we are all going to benefit from the experience: there is a wealth of knowledge amongst our members.

One of the principal roles of Overview & Scrutiny is to hold the cabinet to account, which could easily become an adversarial relationship. I much prefer to think of overview & scrutiny as being a critical friend – where the relationship is strong enough not to be afraid of saying the right thing when it needs to be said. We have sufficient political maturity to recognise that each elected member has a different part to play in ensuring that Flintshire strives to be as good as it can be. No mean feat in the challenging times we have faced and which we shall continue to face for the foreseeable future.

Cllr Aaron Shotton,
Leader of the Council

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE – COLIN EVERETT



Overview and Scrutiny in Flintshire has continued to mature and develop over the last year and performs an effective 'check and balance' in accountability for the transparency of decision-making, the use of public money and in the performance of local services and partnerships.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees have developed internal expertise, and often concentrate their energy on specific reviews of key services and topical issues. Having the expertise gives confidence and purpose for members to explore and challenge; concentrating energy gives members some real reward as they can see tangible results for their work. Through specific reviews organised on a 'workshop' or 'task and finish' basis we have seen big changes and improvements in many services and functions. This work adds real value to policy development and service improvement over and above the basic constitutional role of being a 'check' on accountability for performance of the executive functions of the Council.

Flintshire is recognised by external regulators as a progressive and performing Council; Overview and Scrutiny has played its part in getting us to this positive position.

The recent sharing of ideas and expertise with neighbouring councils, facilitated by the Wales Audit Office, has helped generate ideas for how to make the scrutiny function develop further.

The Council is continuing to modernise and improve its systems for performance reporting, scrutiny and management. A more 'outcome-based' new style Improvement Plan for 2013-14 is evidence of this. The system for quarterly reviews of performance, assessing and protecting against risk, and business continuity, are resilient. Overview and Scrutiny has contributed to the development of these systems as well as their effective operation, and elected members have developed their expertise and skills in knowing how to understand and challenge services and their performance. Member guided 'turnarounds' in the performance of some services is evidence of this.

We have extended the remit of Overview and Scrutiny into the work of partners and partnerships and the changing world of collaboration within the public services. This work has contributed to improving the governance and performance of partnerships. The adopted protocol for collaborative projects with other councils and public services partners ensures that the 'business cases' for new collaborations have a rigorous challenge before they are adopted, and that the transition to the new is well managed.

The Overview and Scrutiny function is well-placed to support the Council through the difficult times ahead with growing demand for key services and national reductions on funding for local government and local services.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY AND OFFICER SUPPORT

Local authorities in England and Wales have, since the Local Government Act 2000, operated executive arrangements that place the decision-making powers in the hands of a Cabinet or Executive. In the case of Flintshire, following the County Council elections in May 2012, it has been styled 'the Cabinet' and in 2012/13 was made up of 8 Councillors including the Leader, Deputy Leader and 6 Cabinet Members. The overview & scrutiny function was established to hold the Cabinet/Executive to account for its decision, and contribute to evidence-based policy making in the council, as well as monitoring performance. Overview & Scrutiny do not make decisions, but they can make recommendations to the Cabinet or full council. Flintshire has also always placed a positive emphasis on overview & scrutiny engaging with external organisations, using the general powers available under section 21 (2) (e) of the Local Government Act 2000.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) continues to provide a range of support services to assist with the development of overview & scrutiny in Wales including bespoke support for individual authorities, production of publications and the facilitation and coordination of Regional and National Scrutiny Champions Networks.

The roles of overview & scrutiny outlined in the National Assembly for Wales Guidance on Executive & Alternative Arrangement 2006 are:

“The role of councillors exercising overview and scrutiny is:

- To hold the executive to account for the efficient exercise of executive functions – especially the performance of the executive as measured against the standards, objectives and targets set out in the policies and plans which it is implemented;
- To assist in the improvement and development of the council’s policies by evaluating whether they are achieving their stated objectives, whether those policies and the way they are being implemented reflect the needs and priorities of local communities and by reporting and making recommendations to the executive or the full council;
- To review and make reports on issues which affect the authority’s area or its residents; and
- To examine whether the systems the executive has in place to deliver its functions are robust and are being properly observed.”

In 2012/13 we had 6 Overview & Scrutiny Committees as illustrated below:-



The support which Overview & Scrutiny enjoys from officers across the Council is essential to ensure its smooth and effective running.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUPPORT

The Scrutiny Team are:-

- ❖ Robert Robins – Member Engagement Manager
- ❖ Margaret Parry-Jones – Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
- ❖ Ceri Owen – Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator (who joined the team from February, 2013)
- ❖ Janet Kelly – Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer

Samantha Roberts, the facilitator for the Environment and Housing Overview & Scrutiny committees left the Council in September 2012.

The team are an independent resource supporting the scrutiny function and its Members. The Team's main responsibility is to ensure that the scrutiny process is effective. Other responsibilities include:-

- ❖ Advising on the strategic direction and development of the scrutiny function;
- ❖ Co-ordinating the work programmes for the six Overview & Scrutiny Committees;
- ❖ Advising, supporting and assisting in the development of scrutiny members;
- ❖ Undertaking research and information analysis to help inform reviews;
- ❖ Producing reports and presentations on behalf of members;
- ❖ Offering independent advice and guidance in relation to policy development and performance management;
- ❖ Acting as a key contact point to members, officers, external organisations and the public in relation to scrutiny matters; and
- ❖ Facilitating task & finish groups.

COMMUNITY PROFILE & PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Chairman –
Cllr Brian Dunn**



**Vice-Chair –
Cllr Robin Guest**

This committee was set up following the 2010 review of the overview & scrutiny committee structure, and the terms of reference were designed to give this committee a more 'outward facing' approach than the other five committees. In so doing, we were anticipating the implementation of the new powers given Local Authorities in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. Flintshire has always placed a positive emphasis on overview & scrutiny engaging with external organisations, using the general powers available under section 21 (2) (e) of the Local Government Act 2000.

Given the external emphasis of this committee, it became the Council's statutory crime & disorder committee as required under the Crime & Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, instead of the former Corporate Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In that role, we have received regular reports on the creation of the Police & Crime Commissioners and Police & Crime panels. This culminated in the invitation to the newly elected Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales, Mr Winston Roddick QC to attend our April meeting. Another element of our crime & disorder role was the presentation by the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit.

In terms of the committee's role in monitoring the Authority's 'community profile', we have invited and considered presentations on the Community Strategy and Local Service Board, Strategic Partnerships Performance and the Community Endowment Fund. We have also considered and commented on the Authority's proposals for an Armed Forces Community Covenant, which it is intended will be signed in the summer of 2013.

The guidance on who would become 'designated persons' under the Local Government (Wales) was not issued during the year, a source of great frustration to our Members and which has resulted in representations being made to the Minister for Local Government. We have been keen to be able to show to potential 'designated persons' that appearing at an Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be a beneficial process. And so have continued with our programme of external engagement. Thus the Committee has invited the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council to attend meetings which have been mutually beneficial. The outreach

director at Clwyd Theatr Cymru also attended to give a presentation on the Theatre for Young People programme

During 2012/13, our Scrutiny Officers have attended meetings of the National Scrutiny Network where discussions have been held around the guidance from the Welsh Government on 'designated persons'. All Scrutiny Officers present were keen for this guidance to be published as soon as possible to give greater emphasis on building relationships with organisations in the future.

Councillor Brian Bunn

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Chairman –
Cllr Richard Jones**



**Vice-Chair –
Cllr Clive Carver**

The nature of its remit, covering the corporate core of the Council but also the overview for its activities means that the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee can seem to have a greater number of items than any other Overview & Scrutiny Committee. At each scheduled monthly meeting there is a budget monitoring item which mirrors the report to be submitted to Cabinet. This means that comments and /observations made by Members of the Committee can be reported to Cabinet the following week. The budget monitoring reports provide monthly information on the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and both Revenue and Capital. Suggestions on how these reports could be improved, including how budget variances within each department are reported, have been implemented.

Other regular items include the Quarterly Performance reports where the four corporate heads of service or their representatives provide an insight into the progress being made within Finance, Human Resources & Organisational Development, ICT & Customer Services and Legal & Democratic Services.

As the 'finance' scrutiny Committee, Corporate Resources also leads on the scrutiny responses to budget proposals and during January 2013 held a number of meetings to fulfil that function. A great emphasis is placed on the need for a transparent process with all Members being given the opportunity to challenge and suggest changes to the budget proposals.

The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive and Head of Finance provided an overview of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Medium Term Financial Plan (MFTP) and advised of ongoing development work during a meeting of the Committee on the 12 July, 2012. The presentation set out how the Council's priorities were being developed prior to announcement of the provisional settlement from the Welsh Government (WG) and how the Committee could play its part in ensuring robust financial strategies were in place.

The Head of ICT and Customer Services introduced a report to provide the Committee with an overview of the Flintshire Futures programme and mid year progress report. The Council had developed the Flintshire Futures

Programme as its corporate programme for modernising and transforming the organisation and to make best use of its resources and secure efficiencies. The report was the subject of detailed consideration and constructive challenge with the Committee recommending that all five Flintshire Futures work streams (Assets, Customers, Finance, Procurement and Workforce), become the subject of separate reports to future meetings of the Committee.

Representatives of the Wales Audit Office attended the Committee to present the Council's Improvement Assessment Letter from the Auditor General for Wales. The assessment had been undertaken to establish whether the Council was working effectively and efficiently. The Leader of the Council and Chief Executive welcomed the report which overall presented a 'clean bill of health'. The report was the subject of detailed consideration and constructive challenge, with both Members of officers offering their insight into particular aspects of the report. The report was also considered by the Audit Committee, Cabinet and full Council.

Cllr Richard Jones

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Chairman –
Cllr Matt Wright**



**Vice-Chair –
Cllr Nancy Matthews**

The challenges facing both the environment and the local economy continue to increase and ensuring that services are provided in a well planned, timely and effective manner to meet those challenges are a really important part of the work of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee keep an eye on key areas of service delivery through quarterly performance reporting. Each quarter we focus on 3 areas and invite the relevant Service Managers to come to the meeting to present their reports and answer questions. This approach enables Members to question Cabinet members and officers in detail regarding trends, pressures and priorities.

This has resulted in a number of requests for additional information including:-

- The possibility of an Energy Switching Scheme
- Winter maintenance
- Recycling Income
- Asset Management
- Planning
- Town Centre Action Planning
- Deeside Enterprise Zone

The Streetscene review

The Committee have been involved in the review since 2010 when a Streetscene Task & Finish group was set up by the Environment O & S Committee to work with officers in developing proposals for integrating services to form a single and consolidated Streetscene operation. Their work continued into 2011/12 and the work came into fruition when the new service was launched in March 2012.

Over the last 12 months the Committee have taken an active interest in how Streetscene has embedded and have visited the Alltami site and the Call Centre to talk to staff. In October we received a report on the progress made

by the service since the launch, including feedback and comments on the new service and on the objectives of why the original project had been undertaken.

- Improving Customer Access to the Service – All Streetscene services are now accessed by a single telephone number or via a dedicated webpage. The majority of member Concerns had related to the time taken to answer calls rather than the concept or operation of the new service. We were told that the position had improved and it was anticipated that service performance targets set would be achieved.
- Raising Public Awareness of the Service – Call volumes into the contact centre have remained strong with calls to the original contact numbers reducing.
- Operational Changes to deliver a joined up Service – The generic operational contract now delivers a flexible, multi-skilled workforce who can work across the full service area enabling far greater coordination and efficiency. The arrangements have also lowered the requirement to employ agency staff and have given staff a broader job role and more job satisfaction.
- Standards – Members had set challenging targets for Streetscene. The report we received indicated that the standards generally had been achieved and that once operations had stabilised all would be achieved.

The Committee congratulated everyone involved on the progress made and were pleased that the saving's target for the 2011/12 financial year of 0.250m and 0.500m per annum thereafter had been achieved. The Committee will continue to monitor Streetscene over the coming months.

Regional developments

Members of the Committee are kept up to date with important regional developments and key issues affecting Flintshire including the North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project and the Sub-Regional Food Waste Project.

Cllr Matt Wright

HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Chairman –
Cllr Ron Hampson**



**Vice-Chair –
Cllr George Hardcastle**

The challenges facing council tenants continue to increase following the introduction of the welfare reforms and how best the Council can meet those challenges is a really important part of the work of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee received a report at its meeting on the 23 January, 2013 which provided an update on the work in progress to develop and implement a range of measures that will help mitigate the full negative impact of the welfare reforms from falling upon vulnerable households. The report also sought to ensure that the Local Authority's statutory homelessness duties would be fulfilled as cost effectively as possible. This report was the subject of detailed consideration with the Committee seeking to ensure that council tenants were supported as much as possible.

The Committee also received a report on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) 2013/14 at its meeting on the 21 March, 2013. The purpose of the report was to seek the Committee's views on the revised Policy for 2013/14. During the meeting the Committee were informed on the background to the DHP and following discussion the Committee supported the revised Policy with its views being reported to Cabinet in April, 2013.

The Committee continues to monitor performance levels within the Housing Service areas through the Quarterly Performance reports and updated on the repairs and maintenance service. This provides the Committee with the opportunity to praise the workforce where improvements have been made and monitor areas where improvement was needed.

The Director of Community Services introduced the revised Private Sector Housing Renewal & Improvement Policy to the Committee at its meeting on the 27 June, 2012. This followed the work of the Task & Finish Group which provided valuable contributions to the formation of the Policy. Following consideration of the Policy the Committee supported the revised Policy which was later adopted by Cabinet and continue to receive update reports on the delivery of the Policy

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Community Services and Head of Housing on the Draft Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2012-17. The main features of the presentation were:-

- Achievements in 2011-12
- Objectives such as more housing and choice, improvement homes and communities and better services
- Next steps

The Strategy had been jointly written with Wrexham County Borough Council, which had a similar housing profile and demographic trends to Flintshire. This partnership shared resources and highlighted opportunities for joint working in line with the Welsh Government's principles and the Housing White Paper's promotion of effective regional collaboration. Following consideration of the Strategy, the Committee endorsed the proposals contained within it.

Further topics considered by the Committee are detailed within the Appendix to the report.

Cllr Ron Hampson

**LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – MEETING
AT YSGOL CAE'R NANT, CONNAH'S QUAY**



**Chairman –
Councillor Ian Roberts**



**Vice-Chair –
Mr. David Hytch**

Following a discussion about the Forward Work Programme of the Committee which contained an item on School Meals, the Committee accepted a suggestion from the Chairman that Members should sample a school meal and in doing so; visit one of Flintshire's new schools, Ysgol Cae'r Nant/Brookfield Primary School in Connah's Quay. The Committee also decided to invite the School Council to address the Committee on their school meals service.



Following the Committees arrival at the school, Members and officers were invited to sample the school meal which the school children had been offered earlier in the day. The Committee all enjoyed the school meal and thanked the catering staff.



Following the school meal, the Committee were invited by the Headteacher, Mrs. Fox-Parry, to take a tour of the school which opened in September, 2012. The Committee commented on the excellent facilities at the school and happily engaged with the children who were keen to share their work with the Committee during the tour.

Following the tour, the Committee were invited to the studio room where the meeting started at 2.00 p.m. The School Council had been invited to address the Committee on their school meal service and this had been included as the first item on the agenda.

The School Council members were:-

- ❖ Ben Kendrick
- ❖ Ethan Henning-Pearman
- ❖ Harry Gorst
- ❖ Ffion Cooper
- ❖ Matthew Dodd
- ❖ Adam Woosey

The School Council gave a presentation to the Committee on the outcome of a survey that had undertaken of the view of the school children on their school meal service. The School Council then answered a number of questions from the Committee and was thanked for giving an excellent presentation.

Following the meeting, the Chairman wrote to each member of the School Council individually thanking them for the presentation which the Committee had felt was interesting, informative, very well researched and very well delivered. The Chairman also wrote to the Headteacher thanking her and all the staff at the school for making the Committee feel most welcome.

The Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee hopes to hold a number of their future meetings at various venues across Flintshire as appropriate.

Cllr Ian Roberts

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



**Chair –
Cllr Carol Ellis**



**Vice-Chair –
Cllr Cindy Hinds**

The Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee has had a busy 12 months and has scrutinised a wide range of topics. Here is a flavour of some of the items considered.

Joint Working

The drive towards joint working as a key to efficiency has resulted in the committee being actively involved in scrutinising regional collaborative projects. The Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring hub for high cost, low volume residential placements in social care/ health and education is unique in Wales and serves the six local authorities and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. In February we received a report on the progress achieved by the regional hub since it became operational in October 2012. The Committee had supported the establishment of the hub in Feb 2012 subject to adequate governance arrangements being in place to allow for sufficient scrutiny. Members were delighted that annual cashable savings of £298,000 had been realised across the North Wales region. Other regional/sub-regional services that we have scrutinised include that the North Wales Adoption Service and the Emergency Duty Team.

Health Care in North Wales is Changing

The Social & Health Care O & S Committee held a special meeting to enable Members to look at the proposals put forward by the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. Due to the huge importance and potential impact of the proposals on all Flintshire residents we opened up the meeting to all Members of the Council. Several Members of the public attended the meeting too. We arranged for Senior officers of the Trust to come along to ensure that Members had an opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion particularly concerning local issues. One of the issues was the proposals to introduce a Community Care Model for home enhanced care. Members were particularly concerned around the impact of the loss of beds in the community hospitals, the impact on carers, and the potential impact on the social care budget in Flintshire.

National Developments

The Committee have also been kept informed about developments nationally e.g. Social Services Bill, the Welfare Reform Act and the Mental Health Measure and the Carers Strategy Measure. All of these aim to improve the well-being outcomes for people who need care and support and their carers.

Comments, Compliments and Complaints

The committee receive a report annually on Comments, Compliments and Complaints received by Social Services for Adults and Children. The report gave Members an opportunity to consider the complaints received, the wide variety of methods used for putting complaints right, and importantly that Members were given assurances that complaints are dealt with effectively and that lessons learnt are acted upon to improve service delivery.

Safeguarding

Members considered the Flintshire's Annual Adult protection Monitoring report which detailed the activity and developments within Adult Safeguarding. There had been an increase in referrals to 250 compared with 212 cases in the previous year. Members were given assurances that checks were made to see if any alleged perpetrators had previous records and if evidence was found this would be discussed and that trend analysis of cases was also undertaken. Concern was expressed regarding the high number of alleged abuse by independent sector staff in the home and care home setting. Officers advised that the increase in referrals reflects the increased awareness of adults safeguarding in society, prompted by high profile cases such as the Winterbourne View Inquiry. Members welcomed the additional £45,000 for 2012-13 with full year effect of £90,000 for future years due to a pressure bid agreed by the Council demonstrating the high priority given to Adult Safeguarding. Safeguarding will continue to be a high priority for scrutiny especially following the findings of the Francis Inquiry and the need to drive up the quality of care and safeguarding across the health and social care sectors.

Members of the Committee also undertake Rota Visits which gives an opportunity to visit social care establishments and are focused on the wellbeing of service users.

Cllr Carol Ellis

LIFELONG LEARNING PLAYScheme TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Membership:-

Councillor Marion Bateman
Councillor Ron Hampson
Councillor David Mackie
Councillor Nancy Matthews
Councillor Carolyn Thomas

The task group was set up in January 2013 following consideration by the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the 'Leisure Strategy 2009-2014' and a suggestion that a task group be formed by a small number of Members to consider the arrangements for play schemes for 2013 and beyond.

The task group has met on four occasions with the first meeting held on the 15 January, 2013 at Deeside Leisure Centre. During this meeting the group discussed and agreed their specific objectives and emphasised the importance of good partnership working with Town and Community Councils. The group also felt that it was important that a generic and fair view be taken when considering the best options available within the budget constraints to provide play provision across the County.

During a meeting of the group held on the 18 January, 2013, Members considered the responses from Town and Community Councils on the proposed changes to arrangements for play schemes in 2013. Following discussions the group agreed that it would not be appropriate to suggest specific times and a location for play scheme sessions as it was for local determination based on local need. The group also agreed that a 3 week scheme would be appropriate and that extra funding would be requested to support match funding for areas which had a higher population density or extreme rurality.

At its final meeting prior to the 2013/14 budget being set, the group unanimously proposed that:-

Having considered the available evidence the Group proposed that Town & Community Councils who were keen to increase the compliment of Playscheme sites in their area above the 2 offered are given the opportunity to increase the provision through match funding. The importance of maintaining positive relationships and working in partnership with Town & Community Councils was emphasised.

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend a pressure bid of up to £11,700 to support match funding for Town & Community Councils in areas that have schemes which appear to be in jeopardy for 2013.

The group's proposal was put forward by the Chair, Councillor Carolyn Thomas and seconded by Mr. David Hytch during the budget meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 25 January, 2013. This proposal was supported by the Committee and also at County Council on the 1st March, 2013 during consideration of the Council Fund Revenue Budget 2013/14.

Following the Council's adoption of the Revenue Budget 2013/14, the Group reconvened on the 26 April, 2013 with Councillor David Mackie Chairing the meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to enable the Group to consider recommendation for the 2014 Summer Playscheme. During the meeting the Group felt that before making any recommendations for the 2014 Summer Playscheme, feedback was needed from parents on the changes introduced to the scheme for 2013 in order to assess the impact this may have had on children/families. Following discussion the Group proposed:-

That following collation of feedback from users of the Summer Playscheme 2013, a further meeting of the Task and Finish Group would be arranged for sometime in September, 2013 to consider the feedback and proposals for the 2014 Summer Playscheme.

It was also agreed that if a decision around the level of funding for the 2014 Summer Playscheme were required earlier than September, 2013, Lawrence Rawsthorne and the Facilitator would contact the Group to organise a meeting at an earlier date.

Further updates will be provided to the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee in due course.

PROTOCOLS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

From the outset, public engagement has been recognised as an essential for effective Overview & Scrutiny. Flintshire has had a number of initiatives for public engagement, including a facility on our website since 2003 to enable members of the public to suggest topics for Overview & Scrutiny, together with our officers attending meetings of town and community councils, school sixth forms and the Over-50s forum.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Guidance arising from that have recommended that Local Authorities develop Four Protocols to assist in the consistent application of public engagement practices.

A report titled 'Four Protocols for Public Engagement with Overview & Scrutiny' was presented to the Constitution Committee at its meeting on the 30 January, 2013. The Constitution Committee were asked to consider and agree the following four draft public engagement protocols:-

- ❖ Public speaking arrangement at Scrutiny Committee / joint Overview & Scrutiny Committees (to include call in);
- ❖ Public involvement in sub-committee and all Task & Finish Group meetings;
- ❖ Managing a request for Scrutiny (including Petitions); and
- ❖ Dealing with requests for public co-option.

Following discussion, the Constitution Committee agreed the Protocols for use in engaging with the public.

WALES AUDIT OFFICE SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT STUDY

The Wales Audit Office recognises that Scrutiny has a key role in promoting improvement, efficiencies, and collaboration across public services. The changes brought about following the Local Government elections in May 2012, the introduction of the Local Government Measure 2011, together with improving self-scrutiny and regulation, meant that it was considered timely for the Wales Audit Office to work with Local Government to support and develop stronger Scrutiny arrangements.

The Auditor General in his letter to Chief Executives on the 13 March 2012 stated that he planned to conduct a number of all-Wales improvement studies each year, focusing on those issues that most hinder transformation and give rise to the greatest efficiencies. He aimed to identify areas of common learning that will support councils' efforts to improve and help resolve some of the tensions between central and local government that often impede progress.

As a result the Wales Audit Office Regulatory Programme this year includes an Improvement Study on Scrutiny. This has taken place in all councils across Wales. The proposals for Flintshire were put to the Constitution Committee in the autumn and the Flintshire Learning Exchange Team was identified: Cllr Billy Mullin, the cabinet member for Corporate Management, Cllr Richard Jones, the Chair of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny, Cllr Carver, the vice-chair of that committee, Cllr Dave Mackie and Robert Robins, the Member Engagement Manager. Margaret Parry-Jones was the project co-ordinator and lead officer.

The Peer Learning Exchange Team from Wrexham County Borough Council (made up of Members and officers) and representatives of the Wales Audit Office observed a meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 6 February, 2013 and a meeting of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the 14 February, 2013. At the close of both meetings, the Team were given the opportunity to feedback a summary of their observations to the Committee around the following areas:-

- What went well
- What could be done better
- What could be done differently
- Any best practice which they observed

A meeting between Overview & Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the Peer Learning Exchange Team from Wrexham County Borough Council and a representative of the Wales Audit Office took place on the 18 April, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was for the Team to seek comments from the Chairs and Vice-Chairs on their own observations of how they feel Overview & Scrutiny works in Flintshire and to comments on the observations the Team had following their attendance at the two Scrutiny meetings. The outcome of the review is being awaited and will be reported to Members at the earliest opportunity.

**Appendix 1 –
List of Overview & Scrutiny committees 2012/13**

HOUSING

R Hampson (Chair)
A Bragg
D Cox
P Curtis
R Davies
G Diskin
R Dolphin
J Falshaw
A Halford
G Hardcastle (Vice Chair)
R Hughes
B Lloyd
M Reece
G Roberts
S Williams

SOCIAL & HEALTH

Carol Ellis (Chair)
M Bateman
P Curtis
A Davies-Cooke
D Evans
V Gay
C Hinds (Vice Chair)
S Jones
B Lloyd
M Lowe
D Mackie
H McGuill
G Roberts
I Smith
D Wisinger

CORPORATE RESOURCES

R Jones (Chair)
H Bateman
M Bateman
C Carver (Vice Chair)
P Curtis
I Dunbar
R Hampson
P Heesom
T Howorth
R Lloyd
M Lowe
P Shotton
I Smith
N Steele Mortimer
A Woolley

LIFELONG LEARNING

I Roberts (Chair)
M Bateman
A Bragg
A Davies-Cooke
I Dunbar
R Hampson
S Jones
C Legg
P Lightfoot
D Mackie
N Matthews
A Minshull
P Shotton
N Steele-Mortimer
C Thomas

Co-Opted Members

C Burgess
D Hytch (Vice Chair)
R Price
R Stark
S Williams

**COMMUNITY PROFILE &
PARTNERSHIPS**

B Dunn (Chair)
R Davies
G Diskin
C Dolphin
I Dunbar
R Guest (Vice Chair)
R Hampson
D Hutchinson
B Lloyd
D Mackie
M Reece
T Sharps
P Shotton
I Smith
N Steele-Mortimer

ENVIRONMENT

M Wright (Chair)
H Bateman
D Butler
P Curtis
C Dolphin
D Evans
V Gay
C Hinds
D Hutchinson
J Johnson
C Legg
N Matthews (Vice-Chair)
A Minshull
P Shotton
C Thomas

Appendix 2 Topics covered and activity information for 2012/13	
Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee – has met 7 times between May 2012 and April 2013	
28 May, 2012 16 July, 2012 15 October, 2012 26 November, 2012	7 January, 2013 11 March, 2013 22 April, 2013
Strategic Partnership Performance – Mid Year Review Police & Crime Commissioners and Police & Crime Panels Flintshire Community Endowment Fund Update Report: Police & Crime Commissioners and Police & Crime Panels Community Strategy and Local Service Board – Mid Year Review	Clwyd Theatr Cymru – Theatre for Young People Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) Domestic Abuse Safety Unit Community Covenant North Wales Fire & Rescue Service North Wales Police & Crime Commissioner
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee – has met 13 times between May 2012 and April 2013	
11 June, 2012 5 July, 2012 12 July, 2012 13 September, 2012 11 October, 2012 19 November, 2012 13 December, 2012	17 January, 2013 28 January, 2013 31 January, 2013 14 February, 2013 14 March, 2013 18 April, 2013
Single Status Revenue Budget Monitoring 2011/12 (Outturn) Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring 2012/13 Capital Programme 2011/12 (Outturn) and Capital Programme 2012/13 – Quarterly Monitoring Reports	People Strategy Adoption of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2013/14 Asset Management as a Flintshire Futures Workstream Budget Consultation 2013/14 Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) Policy 2013/14

<p>Workforce Information – Quarterly Performance Reports</p> <p>Quarter 4 / Year End Performance Review 2011/12 and Performance Reporting 2012/13</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy & Plan</p> <p>Flintshire Futures Mid Year Review</p> <p>Corporate Debt Policy</p> <p>Fair Debt Policy</p>	<p>Workforce as a Flintshire Futures Workstream</p> <p>Improvement Assessment Letter (WAO)</p> <p>Proposed Regional Emergency Planning Service</p> <p>Customer Services as a Flintshire Futures Workstream</p> <p>Information Commissioner’s Office Data Protection Audit</p>
<p>Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – has met 12 times between May 2012 and April 2013</p>	
<p>23 May, 2012</p> <p>21 June, 2012</p> <p>11 July, 2012</p> <p>12 September, 2012</p> <p>17 October, 2012</p> <p>21 November, 2012</p>	<p>9 January, 2013 (Call-in meeting)</p> <p>24 January, 2013</p> <p>6 February, 2013</p> <p>6 March, 2013</p> <p>10 April, 2013</p> <p>10 April, 2013 (Call-in meeting)</p>
<p>Quarter 4 / Year End Performance Reporting 2011/12 and Performance Reporting 2012/13</p> <p>North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project</p> <p>Winter Maintenance</p> <p>Hanson Cement Investigation Report</p> <p>Town Centre Action Planning</p> <p>Streetscene Review</p> <p>Review of the Council’s Waste Strategy</p> <p>Energy Switching Scheme</p>	<p>Communities First</p> <p>Rural Development Plan and European Structural Funds</p> <p>Speed Limit Review</p> <p>Deeside Enterprise Zone</p> <p>Review of Public Conveniences</p> <p>Budget Consultation for 2013</p> <p>Proposals for a review of subsidised bus services within Flintshire</p> <p>North East Wales Food Waste Treatment Project</p> <p>Recycling Income</p>

Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee – has met 10 times between May 2012 and April 2013	
30 May, 2012 27 June, 2012 26 September, 2012 31 October, 2012 5 December, 2012	22 January, 2013 23 January, 2013 21 February, 2013 21 March, 2013 24 April, 2013
Welsh Government White Paper – (Homes for Wales – Better Lives and Communities) Delivering Private Sector Housing Renewal Quarter 4 / Year End Performance Reporting 2011/12 and Performance Reporting 2012/13 Local Housing Strategy Secure / Introductory Tenancy Agreement Update on the Repairs and Maintenance Service Estate Management Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy	SARTH Gypsy / Travellers Needs Assessment Budget Consultation for 2013/14 Homelessness & Welfare Reform Sustainability in Housing PDA & Capita Update Resident Involvement Sheltered Housing Improvement Project Discretionary Housing Payments 2013/14 Supporting People Commissioning Plan
Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee – has met 9 times between May 2012 and April 2013	
14 June, 2012 12 July, 2012 20 September, 2012 6 December, 2012	10 January, 2013 25 January, 2013 14 February, 2013 14 March, 2013 25 April, 2013
School Modernisation Estyn Action Plan and Quarterly Monitoring Reports on its implementation Estyn Monitoring of Flintshire County Council	School Exclusions School Balances Salix Scheme Health & Safety in Schools

School Performance Monitoring	Leisure Strategy 2009 – 2014
Leisure Centres Development Report	Cost of Repairs and Maintenance – School Buildings
Quarter 4 / Year End Performance Reporting 2011/12 and Performance Reporting 2012/13	Budget Consultation for 2013/14
Community Play Project	Pupil Attainment 2011-12
Formula Review Update/Budget Strategy	Healthy Schools
School Modernisation Update	Incidents of Arson, Vandalism and Burglaries in Flintshire schools
School Transport Policy	Saltney Library Update
Educational Development of children with a sensory impairment	Flintshire Play Sufficiency Assessment & Action Plan
Estyn LAESCYP Inspection – Self Evaluation	Ysgol Cae'r Nant School Council
Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (RSEIS) Update	School Meal Service
Flintshire Arts Strategy	School Music Service
	A Strategy for Flintshire's Libraries 2013 – 2016
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee – has met 11 times between May 2012 and April 2013	
24 May, 2012 2 July, 2012 26 July, 2012 19 September, 2012 4 October, 2012 1 November, 2012	17 December, 2012 24 January, 2013 28 January, 2013 28 February, 2013 11 April, 2013
Comment, Compliments & Complaints	North Wales (Draft) Information and Consultation – Carers Strategy
Social Services Bill	Adult Protection Report – April 2011 to March 2012
Quarter 4 / Year End Performance Reporting 2011/12 and Performance Reporting 2012/13	Fostering Inspection 2012
Rota Visits	CSSIW Annual Letter
	CSSIW Inspection Action Plan

Inspection of Children's Assessment and Care Management	Update on Adult Social Care Transport Policy
Children's Integrated Disability Service / Direct Payments	Young Person's Drug & Alcohol Team
Short Break Provision at Arosfa	Safeguarding and Child Protection (Joint report from Safeguarding Unit)
Healthcare in North Wales is changing	Integrated Family Support Service
North Wales Adoption Service	Budget Consultation for 2013/14
Flying Start Strategic Plan 2013 – 2015	Welfare Reform Act – Overview, Impacts and Mitigation
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Public Law Outline and Associated Matters
Emergency Duty Team Update	Regional Commissioning Hub
Mental Health Measure Update	Annual Council Reporting Framework
Joint Lifelong Learning and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees – has met once between May 2012 and April 2013	
21 March, 2013	
Children and Young People Partnership	Families First

Member's attendance at each of the Committee meetings is recorded on the Modern.gov Committee system which is accessible via the Council's own internal *Infonet* or externally on the Council's own website.