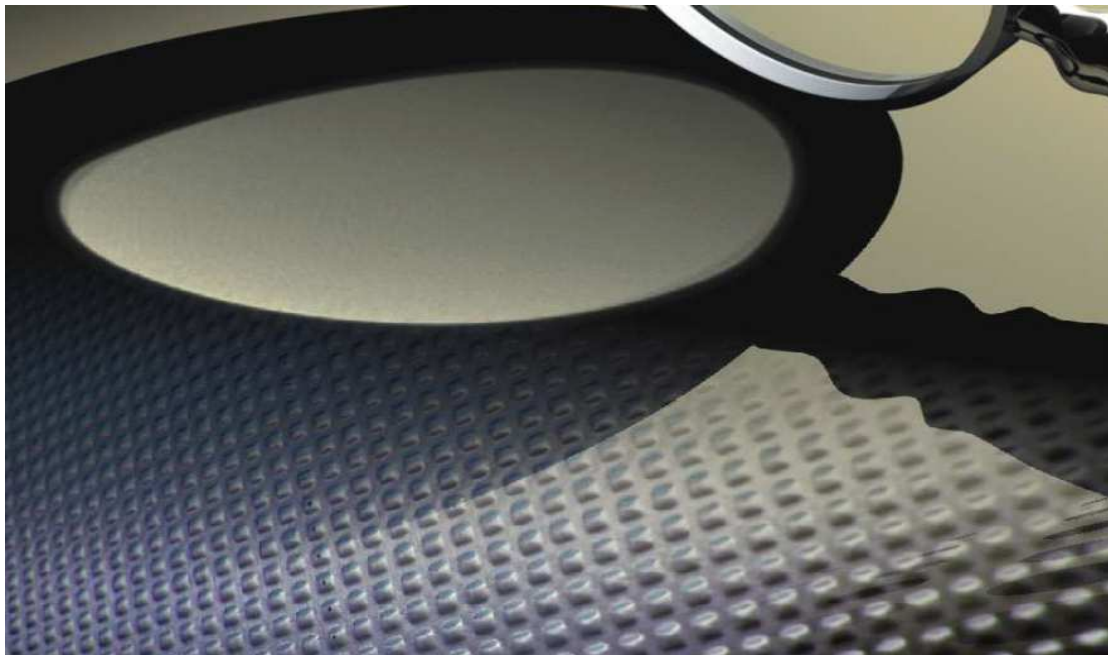




Report of the  
**Overview & Scrutiny**  
Committees

**Annual Report**

**MAY 2011 TO APRIL 2012**



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## Foreword



It is my pleasure to introduce the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report. This year, we have followed the same report format we have adopted in the two previous annual reports, by giving insights into aspects of overview & scrutiny that have taken place during the last municipal year. The Scrutiny Committees have remained the same and are aligned to the Directorates.

Overview & Scrutiny is a vital part of Flintshire County Council's responsibility to its residents. It works on behalf of residents to highlight issues of concern and makes recommendations for improvement to the Council and local partners.

It is important for Overview & Scrutiny to become involved with decisions at an appropriate stage to apply real influence and therefore play the important role of 'critical friend' to the Executive. With the continuing financial challenges faced by Local Government on a national basis, Flintshire will not escape the pressures and overview & scrutiny will play a vital role in ensuring services are delivered more effectively and efficiently.

The new Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 aims to strengthen overview & scrutiny, which will mean a more demanding role for the members undertaking scrutiny. We will be able to conduct joint scrutiny reviews, and require information and responses from organisations outside the council that provide services to the public in Flintshire. But, we will also need to take into account the views of the public, and we will need to consider methods that will encourage the public to engage in the overview and scrutiny process.

I hope that you find this annual report interesting and informative. It has been designed to provide a snapshot of the work of the overview & scrutiny committees. If you would like to find out more, all Scrutiny Committee meetings are open to the public and the support officers will be pleased to supply you with more information. Contact details are listed at the end of this report.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the scrutiny process during the past year, in particular the Councillors who have given their time to take part in the various scrutiny workshops, task & finish groups and seminars.

**Councillor Hilary Isherwood**  
**Chairman of the Coordinating Committee**

## OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE – COLIN EVERETT



Overview and Scrutiny in Flintshire has matured and developed over time and now performs an effective 'check and balance' in accountability for the transparency of decision-making, choices in the deployment of public money and in the performance of local services and partnerships.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees have developed internal expertise, and often concentrate their energies 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 'task and finish' method we have seen big changes and improvements made in services from housing to environment to education to social care. 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.

Using workshops and other fora, involving all members and being co-led by Overview and Scrutiny Chairs, has helped build a consensus for action in the face of the toughest local challenges. Developing an effective Medium-Term Financial Strategy and a budget plan for 2012/13 onwards, and steering a path to restore trust and confidence in a public consultation process on the emotive subject of school re-organisation are two notable examples of the success of this approach.

The Council has modernised and improved its systems for performance reporting, scrutiny and management markedly over the past four years. 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.

More recently we have expanded 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 from health and well-being to regeneration to housing, to building purposeful partnerships with key partners such as Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and locality working, and has ensured robust business cases and governance arrangements for new collaborative models of service provision most recently the Regional School Improvement and Social Services Commissioning services.

The Overview and Scrutiny function has strong foundations for an incoming Council.

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY AND THE SUPPORT IT RECEIVES

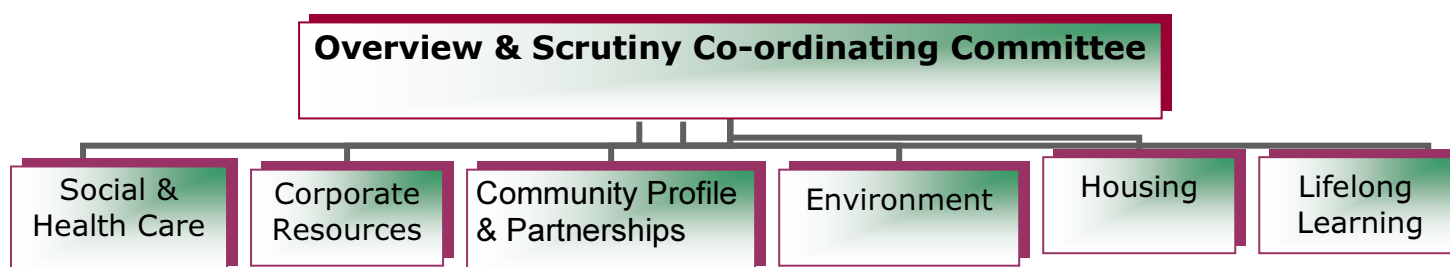
Local authorities in England and Wales have, since the Local Government Act 2000, operated executive arrangements that place the decision-making powers in the hands of a Cabinet or Executive. In the case of Flintshire until recently it was styled 'the Executive' and in 2011/12 was made up of 9 councillors including the Leader, Deputy Leader and 7 Executive Members. The overview and scrutiny function was established to hold the Cabinet/Executive to account for its decisions, and to contribute to evidence-based policy making in the council.

The roles of overview & scrutiny outlined in the National Assembly for Wales Guidance on Executive & Alternative Arrangements 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 implementing;
- 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 2011/12 we had an overarching Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and 6 Overview & Scrutiny Committees as illustrated in the diagram below:



## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUPPORT

The Scrutiny Team are:-

Robert Robins - Member Engagement Manager  
Margaret Parry-Jones – Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator  
Samantha Roberts – Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator  
Janet Kelly – Overview & Scrutiny Support Officer

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 seven 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.
- Facilitating task & finish groups.

## **INSIGHTS INTO THE WORK OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

Any effective Overview & Scrutiny regime will be prepared to use a number of different ways of working in order to reach its conclusions. In Flintshire we have experimented with a number of approaches, the favoured amongst which have become consideration by a whole committee, assigning a task to a task & finish or working group, holding a workshop and going out and actually having a look at a particular problem in situ. For any one issue, a combination of approaches may be appropriate. We always place great emphasis on the task & finish group, workshop or site visit reporting back to the parent committee and of ensuring that the process is a transparent one.

Some of our committees are more likely to use task & finish groups than others, as the following pages will illustrate. Other committees, such as Corporate Resources, tend to conduct their work through the presentation of reports and then holding discussions with the relevant Executive Member or Members and the supporting officers. It isn't necessarily a question of one technique being right or wrong, more about selecting one particular tool to do a job, from a number which are available.

As Overview & Scrutiny is now reaching a state of some maturity (we started with Overview & Scrutiny in the autumn of 2001) we have learned a lot from experience. Working methods which we have used in the past, but which have been set aside for various reasons, include meeting like a parliamentary select committee over a period of some days, or the assigning of aspects of work to pairs of Members. Neither approach was intrinsically wrong, but in terms of successful outcomes they tended to be rather resource intensive.

The case studies which follow show how the Environment and Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny committees have used the task group approaches. For Housing, Social & Healthcare, Corporate Resources and Community Profile & Partnerships we have detailed some of the work undertaken.



## STREETLIGHTING REVIEW

At a meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny committee on 21 September 2011, it was agreed that a task & finish group would be established to review Street lighting services in Flintshire. The task group would be made up of five members from the committee.

The task group met on three occasions which included a site visit to Raikes Lane, Mold and Wepre Park. They were able to see examples of various dimming options already being trialled.



The purpose of the first meeting was to learn about how Flintshire currently provide the service, the growing cost of the service, what types of street lighting were available, information on energy savings and to develop terms of reference. It was at this stage that the group agreed there would be no advantage in switching off any County owned highway lights as the cost savings would be nominal,

which would be out weighed by the community and safety benefits.

At the second meeting, the group continued to learn about classifications of lighting, the relevant statutory requirements and legislation, and available funding. In addition they received details on street lighting provided by town & community councils and how they were currently maintained. It was evident that there were inconsistencies across the County on how the service was delivered, and the group were concerned about how these inconsistencies could be addressed without it having a significant impact on the budget available. The town and community Council's are currently responsible for approximately 3,500 street lights across the County and whilst some town and community Councils have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure the safety of their lighting units, others have not.

There were four options the group considered to address the inconsistencies:

### 1. **No Change**

Benefits:

- would require no investment.

Disadvantages:

- there would be varying standards,
- difficult for residents to understand who owns what and where to report faults,
- the rising energy costs for town & community councils.



**2. Adopt all lights**

Benefits:

- Simple for residents to understand
- Maximises energy procurement potential
- Single maintenance contractor so consistent standards

Disadvantages:

- Prohibitively expensive
- town and community councils reluctance to hand over lights

**3. Ensure all footway lights are maintained by the town & community councils**

Benefits:

- Equitable and fair to all town and community councils

Disadvantages:

- Some Councils would be reluctant to take on the lights
- Would require a full survey to classify Carriageway/footway lighting across the County
- Varying standards for maintenance
- Difficult for residents to understand who owns what

**4. Continue with existing arrangement with central inventory of all Street lights**

Benefits:

- Requires no change to current maintenance arrangement
- Single point of contact for reporting faults
- Allows town and community councils to benefit from the County Council's energy procurement rate

Disadvantages:

- Would require a survey to identify all lighting units, the cost to visually inspect and map lighting stock prior to inclusion on council inventory would be £10 per unit.

The task group agreed that these issues and options should be shared with town & community councils and the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and views should be sought. A report on the options was considered by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny committee on 22 February 2012, resulting in a number of observations which will be considered further by the task & finish group. Under the terms of reference of the group options for improving the efficiency of the lighting stock will be discussed with a view to producing a consistent Council policy for street lighting which will include guidelines and options for part night lighting and or dimming.

## **GRASS CUTTING POLICY AND STREETSCENE STANDARDS**

In the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report of 2010/11 we reported on the work of the Streetscene Task & Finish group on working with officers in developing proposals for integrating services to form a single and consolidated Streetscene operation based in the Environment Directorate. Their work has continued into 2011/12, in developing service standards and launching the new service on 5 March 2012.

A report was submitted to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th February 2011 outlining the task and finish group's recommended standards for the service in the future. Following this the task and finish group have produced targets for delivering each of the proposed standards for the new service. In recommending the standards Members invited Officers from all elements of the service to make comment and to ensure the standards were realistic and achievable whilst remaining challenging for the service, acceptable to Members and within the proposed budgets for the service.

The Streetscene standards and targets will form part of the quarterly performance management report submitted to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny and will be the mechanism for establishing the progress and success of the Streetscene service in the future. The targets for each standard will be challenged and reviewed by Members at the Performance Setting Workshop each year.

Because of the conflicts between ecology and aesthetics in regards to grass cutting standards, a Members workshop was held in November 2011 to consider the subject and was attended by 18 Members. The meeting received information from operational teams and the Council's Biodiversity Officer. The advice from both the operational teams and the Biodiversity Officer were considered by Members at the workshop, prior to the task & finish group proposing the new Grass Cutting Policy.

## LIFELONG LEARNING PLAY AREAS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The task group was set up in January 2011 following consideration of the Play Areas Survey and a suggestion that a task group be formed to participate in a programme of assessment visits to play areas identified in the 'red' category in the report and give further consideration to the sustainability of play areas in Flintshire.

The task group met on 3 occasions and undertook site visits to the 'red' play areas identified in the Play Areas Survey. The task group also visited The Bonc, a newly refurbished play area in Mynydd Isa.



Members of the task group all agreed that free, open access play areas where children can come and go as they please without relying on parents to take them there are important to a child's development. Doorstep play areas are important so young children know that their parents are nearby if needed and also for parents to allow their children to go out to play. It was stressed that if children have a fear of playing they will not go out to play.

It became evident that there appeared to be a lack of provision for older children which needed to be addressed.

Of the sites visited, one site was a cause of concern because the space was not ideal for encouraging play. Members suggested that consultation should take place with the local ward members and the local community as to whether the site should be decommissioned or have some other use within the local community.

Members suggested that the planning protocol working group give further consideration to provision for play areas within planning mechanisms to ensure sustainable play provision in the future;

The match funding scheme with town and community councils had proved to be extremely successful with a good take up from town and community councils and members of the group felt strongly that the scheme should be continued. Due to the success of the scheme it suggested that criteria should be agreed for the allocation of match funding for future years.

Some suggestions from the group included:-

- Priority should be given to applications from town & community councils who have a play area in the 'red' category

- The Play Areas Survey should form the basis of decision making regarding match funding with regard to the following
  1. condition of existing equipment
  2. safety of existing equipment and surfaces
  3. recent/previous investment in site
  4. local needs
  5. Amber sites to be considered if match funding still available
  6. Limit of £10,000 per site per annum maximum contribution from match funding scheme.
  7. Emphasis on one site in locality to meet older children's needs.

In addition it was suggested that town & community councils should be made aware of the results and implications of the Play Areas Survey especially for those with 'red' category sites.

Members suggested that an advice booklet on grant funding should be developed to give community groups information on what grants are available and how to access them. Consideration should also be given to identifying mentors to work with groups to encourage local communities to improve play areas.

The Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the findings of the task group in June and unanimously supported the recommendations. A report was considered by the Executive in November and they resolved that the findings of the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee Play Area Task & Finish Group be received and noted; and (b) that a further report be submitted to the Executive in 2012.



## **SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

We have developed good working relationships with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. Senior officers and the Chairman of the Board have attended the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee to keep Members informed of the developments taking place within the National Health Service in North Wales. Senior officers have agreed to attend the Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee twice a year. We have also developed communication mechanisms to ensure effective communication and information sharing with elected members including a 'key issues' document which is circulated to members giving a monthly update on developments.

Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny members have actively scrutinised the Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring Hub project for Flintshire.

The outline business case had been developed by the North Wales Social Services Improvement Collaborative to explore options for developing a regional commissioning, procurement and monitoring hub for high cost, low volume residential care in areas including Children's Services, Learning Disabilities, Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment and Mental Health.

In February we received the Full Business Case for comments prior to consideration by the Executive.

We agreed the following resolution to inform the Executive decision making process:-

"That subject to adequate governance arrangements to allow for scrutiny of the hub, the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the establishment of a Regional Commissioning, Procurement and Monitoring Hub in North Wales to serve the six local authorities and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board following completion of the Full Business Case."

The Committee have also asked for regular updates on the work of the newly established monitoring hub.

Overview & Scrutiny committees receive quarterly performance updates to enable Members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance. Members take their role as Corporate Parents seriously and both the Social & Health Care and Lifelong Learning Committees have been actively involved in monitoring the numbers and cost of out of county placements for looked after children. Both Children Services and Lifelong Learning have demonstrated a commitment to reducing the need for high cost, intensive intervention by focusing on preventative work, early intervention and developing robust commissioning arrangements. This has already resulted in a positive outcome with fewer out of county placements and a significant reduction in expenditure over recent months.

## HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

### PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY

The Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee were receiving regular reports relating to the Private Sector Housing Renewal project, and in July 2011 a task and finish group was established to work with Officers in developing a revised Private Sector Housing Renewal and Improvement Policy.

The evidence gathered during the private sector stock condition survey identified the need to revise the Private Sector Housing Renewal & Improvement Policy which had last been updated in 2005.

The Task & Finish Group met between August 2011 and April 2012, and a series of meetings were held on various theme areas, including amongst others; empty homes, disabled adaptations and options to support a high quality private rented sector.

The Task and Finish Group consisted of Councillor Marion Bateman, Councillor Haydn Bateman, Councillor Ron Hampson, Councillor Gareth Roberts and Councillor Patrick Heesom. The Group provided valuable contributions to the formation of this Policy.

The new Policy is centred around the following four themes: -

- Client focused – targeting vulnerable, older and disabled people living in the poorest housing.
- Theme focused – tackling issues such as empty homes and energy efficiency
- Tenure focused – improving and encouraging the private rented sector
- Area based – supporting neighbourhood initiatives including the Council's Renewal Area

A review of the existing Policy identified that there are gaps in provision which exist; below is a summary of the main changes.

**Support for Disabled Facilities Grant applicants**, who cannot meet their means tested contribution.

**Energy Efficiency Support** - The new Policy proposes to retain the top up loan given in the form of an interest free loan, to Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) applicants where the grant falls short of the cost of the work, with a new fuel poverty calculation in the event of a need to prioritise the applicants for support.

**Empty Homes Support** - Provide interest free loans to property owners who wish to renovate an empty property for the purpose of rent or sale, along with the offer of repayment loans, to top up the existing loans that Flintshire offers under its existing Policy.

**Addressing Housing Supply** - The new Policy includes extending interest bearing repayment loans to the private rented sector, to tackle some of the properties in the poorest conditions.

**Equity and Interest Bearing Loans** - The new Policy will ensure that there is earlier recycling of resources through a hierarchy of approach to support.

The draft Policy will be considered by the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee in June 2012 before approval is sought with the Cabinet in July 2012.



## **COMMUNITY PROFILE & PARTNERSHIPS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Following the review of the Overview & Scrutiny structure and in anticipating the new powers to scrutinise 'designated persons', in September 2010, we redesignated one of our committees as 'Community Profile & Partnerships'. Following its inception, that committee then set about developing relationships with organisations which it was anticipated could become 'designated persons' under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. The committee also became the Council's statutory crime & disorder committee as required under the Crime & Disorder (Overview & Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

As we were still awaiting the issuing by the Welsh Government of the guidance on the Measure as to who 'designated persons' would be, the emphasis on building relationships for the future was recognised as being essential. In this we were keen to be able to show to potential 'designated persons' that appearing at an overview & scrutiny committee is a beneficial process as the collective experience and knowledge of the Members means that a great deal can be contributed by such 'critical friends'.

Meaningful and constructive scrutiny can only be achieved if the Members understand the issues around a service and thus are able to ask useful questions and make informed comments and judgements. Over the last year, the committee has built up a knowledge profile which has created a legacy which the successor committee in the 2012 Council will be able to build on.

The committee has engaged with the North Wales Police Authority and Force, Glyndwr University, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Deeside College, Flintshire Community Safety Partnership, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, the Executive Director of Public Health and the Royal British Legion as well as monitoring the work of the Local Service Board. Hannah Jewell, a Welsh Government appointed Climate Change Champion attended to give an insight into her awareness raising work.

The focus of the committee isn't wholly external and thus presentations were also received from Flintshire officers on the pilot project on Climate Change Adaptations and Resilience Planning, the Joint Emergency Planning Service and the Flintshire County Forum, which has redefined and reinforced the relationship between the County and our town and community councils.

In 2011/12, our Chief Executive and Director of Lifelong Learning respectively chaired their professional organisations SOLACE Wales and the Association of Directors of Education in Wales. This offered an opportunity for the committee to learn more about those organisations and the Association of Directors of Social Services in Wales, the Executive Council of which our Director of Community Services is a member. The Council's relationship with Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) was the subject of a lively and thought provoking presentation by the Chief Executive of the Association who demonstrated the benefits to Flintshire of continued membership.

## **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

By its nature, the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee has a greater number of regular items than the other Overview & Scrutiny committees. For instance, at each scheduled monthly meeting there is a budget monitoring item, mirroring that which is to be submitted to the Executive, which generally meets the day after. These reports cover general fund and the housing revenue account and both revenue and capital. This means that the Executive is able to take account of any of the observation on the budget which have been made by their scrutiny colleagues. Suggestions to make the budget information more accessible to and meaningful for Members have been made and subsequently adopted.

Other regular items are 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. Other quarterly reporting on Matrix/MASS (managed agency staffing solution) and Workforce information is provided by the Head of HR & OD.

As the 'finance' scrutiny committee, Corporate Resources also leads on the scrutiny response to budget proposals and during January held a number of meetings to fulfil that function. A great emphasis is placed on the need for a transparent process and an audit trail of items which are put forward.

The Welsh Local Government Association was commissioned to carry out a peer review of Flintshire's finances. This was reported to the committee in May: the main purpose of the review had been to concentrate attention on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Council's financial future. The MTFS is to structure and manage our finances over the medium term (rolling four years) to enable the Council to achieve its vision and strategic objectives. The results of the review and the emerging proposals received robust consideration.

Representatives of the Wales Audit Office attended the committee to present the Auditor General's Annual Improvement report for 2011 which included the auditor's Annual Audit Letter. This was the subject of detailed consideration and constructive challenge, with both Members and officers offering their insight into particular aspects of the report. The report was also considered by the Audit Committee, the Executive and full Council.

The Chief Executive introduced a report to enable the committee to consider the 'Compact for change' between the Welsh Government (WG) and local government in Wales. On 5th December 2011, the Welsh Government and the WLGA had signed a Compact and asked that each local authority 'sign up' to demonstrate their commitment to delivering the Compact. The Compact reflected the current position in the ongoing discussion with the Welsh Government and the WLGA had emphasised that its delivery will help to strengthen the case for investment in Councils ahead of the next spending review.

Flintshire has already committed to working in collaboration on a number of projects and service areas, not only with local authorities but across all public sector organisations. Within the Compact the implications of not participating or of the Compact not delivering were clear: 'delivery of the Compact by local government will help to strengthen the case for investment in councils ahead of the next spending review' and 'non delivery would see recourse to a range of legislative and other options by Welsh Government to determine the future structure and directions of services'.

The principal benefit of the Compact to Flintshire - in common with all local authorities - is that the expectations and responsibilities of local government and the Welsh Government are set out. There is a clarity which should reduce wasted effort in establishing 'new' relationships each time a collaborative project is embarked upon, making it easier for all parties to the Compact to do business with each other.

Other topics to which the committee has contributed are identified in the appendix.

The committee took a particular interest in the proposals relating to the Design & Print service, holding a special meeting with both management and union representatives to examine the issues. A number of constructive observations were made and which were considered in advance of the final proposals which were considered in September.



The Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its last meeting in 2011/12

## SCRUTINY OF QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE PROCESS

A significant element of the work of the Overview & Scrutiny committees is in considering service performance. This is achieved through the detailed examination of the quarterly performance reports which are prepared for each service area. During the year, a review of the process and content of Quarterly Performance Reports was undertaken, with a group consisting of Overview & Scrutiny Chairs, officers from each Directorate and Corporate Services meeting to discuss possible solutions to the issues. Subsequently a small sub-group (including Member representation) prepared a set of guidance notes for the proposed revised format of quarterly reporting

### **Background**

The following issues were raised by both members and officers in relation to the Quarterly Performance Reports:

- Lengthy documents which were time-consuming to produce and often duplicated what had been reported in previous quarters, especially where performance had been good.
- Lack of standardised content and a logical layout.
- Debate about whether full Strategic Assessment of Risks and Challenges (SARC) templates should be attached to the reports.
- Incorporation of reporting against the Improvement Plan with the quarterly performance reports.
- Quarterly performance reports had not always been a good reflection of actual performance against the service plan.

### **Summary of Key Revisions**

The new approach which was adopted at the beginning of 2012 is based on **exception reporting** and splits the reports into 3 distinct sections: -

1. **Foreword** – to summarise key information that the Head of Service feels Members should be aware of, including both good and poor performance. Emerging issues should also be highlighted in this section e.g. a new SARC red risk being identified.
2. **Performance Summary** – This section now contains an ‘at a glance’ summary of performance for the quarter against the following:
  - **Improvement Plan** – giving a summary of the Red, Amber and Green (RAG) statuses for the progress and outcome.
  - **SARC** – a summary of the risk RAG status at the end of the quarter
  - **Performance Indicators** – as a minimum this section will include all (PIs) classified as Improvement Targets and those which are aligned to the Improvement Priorities for the purpose of measuring outcomes. The summary will show target and outturn performance with a RAG status and trend.

- **Improvement Target Action Plan** – this section summarises whether actions to support the achievement of Improvement Targets are ‘on track’ or ‘behind schedule’.
- **Key Actions from the Service Plan** – summarises whether key actions / areas for improvement are ‘on track’ or ‘behind schedule’. (This will include other key areas of work not already identified.)
- **Internal & External Regulatory Reports** – summarises regulatory work reported in the quarter and its outcomes and intended actions.

**3. Exception Reporting** – This section of the report is broken down in the same way as the service plan is sectioned e.g. by Service Teams. This section is used to report in detail the emerging issues and poor performance identified in Section 1 and also any poorer performance identified in Section 2. The detail includes the reason for the issue / poor performance arising and what is to be done to rectify the situation.

The Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee received ‘pilot’ reports for quarters 1 and 2 which followed a similar format to the guidance described above. The reports were well received by the committee members.

Historically there has been mixed reporting of corporate resource information e.g. workforce and financial information. This information is already reported to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and this was seen as duplication. Further work needs to be undertaken to agree with the Corporate Heads of Service the issues which should be included within the quarterly performance report from Quarter 1 2012/13.

Each of the committees considers performance relating to its own remit: observations on the format, or concerns are passed on to Corporate Resources, which has the performance overview. If necessary, those comments are then forwarded to the Executive.

## **The Way Forward**

The new Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, poses new challenges for Scrutiny. The Measure promotes new ways of working and strengthens the role of scrutiny within Welsh Local Government. With the introduction of the Measure, local authorities will have the ability to form joint overview and scrutiny committees between two or more local authorities. In addition the Measure will enable scrutiny committees to require information and responses from organisations outside the council that provide services to the public in their area, and to require representatives of such organisations to attend committee meetings. The Measure also poses other challenges including the need to take into account the views of the public.

### **How the Public can become involved in Overview & Scrutiny**

By letting us know your views, you can help improve the services you receive. Of course Overview & Scrutiny cannot promise to form the same conclusions as you, but your comments will be acknowledged and considered.

Overview & Scrutiny committees welcome suggestions for topics to be considered for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme.

We also welcome views on the contents of the Annual Report, and any suggestions which can be made to make Overview & Scrutiny even better.

Contact details : [scrutiny@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@flintshire.gov.uk)  
 (01352) 702320

**Appendix 1 –  
List of Overview & Scrutiny committees 2011/2012**

**CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

M Bateman  
C S Carver  
B Dunn  
E F Evans  
R J T Guest **(VC)**  
R G Hampson  
G Hardcastle  
R Hughes

H Isherwood **(C)**  
R B Jones  
R P Macfarlane  
H J McGuill  
T Newhouse  
M J Peers  
I B Roberts

**HOUSING**

J B Attridge  
G H Bateman  
M Bateman  
J C Cattermoul  
P J Curtis  
Q R H Dodd  
R Dolphin  
A M Halford  
R G Hampson **(C)**  
G Hardcastle **(VC)**  
N M Jones  
S Jones  
E W Owen  
H G Roberts  
A P Shotton

**CORPORATE RESOURCES**

D Barratt  
G H Bateman  
M Bateman  
C S Carver **(VC)**  
B Dunn **(C)**  
J E Falshaw  
R J T Guest  
R G Hampson  
P G Heesom  
R B Jones  
R P Macfarlane  
D L Mackie  
B Mullin  
P R Pemberton  
A P Shotton



## **ENVIRONMENT**

E G Cooke  
Q R H Dodd  
C J Dolphin  
J F Falshaw  
G Hardcastle  
C Hinds  
C M Jones  
N M Jones **(VC)**  
S Jones  
C Legg  
D I Mackie  
A Minshull  
M J Peers **(C)**  
Carolyn Thomas  
David Wisinger

## **LIFELONG LEARNING**

R C Bithell  
R Dolphin  
E F Evans  
F Gillmore  
H T Howorth  
H Isherwood  
C Legg  
R P Macfarlane **(C)**  
D I Mackie  
D L Mackie  
H J McGuill  
T Newhouse  
I B Roberts  
C A Thomas **(VC)**  
W O Thomas

### ***Co-opted Members:***

Ms C Burgess)  
Mr D Hytch  
Mrs R Price  
Mrs R Stark  
Mrs T Millington

## **COMMUNITY PROFILE & PARTNERSHIPS**

K Armstrong-Braun  
R Baker **(VC)**  
P J Curtis  
A Davies-Cooke  
G D Diskin  
F Gillmore  
R J T Guest  
R Hughes  
R P Macfarlane  
D McFarlane **(C)**  
D I Mackie  
D L Mackie  
E W Owen  
A P Shotton  
D Wisinger

## **SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE**

D Barratt  
M Bateman  
J C Cattermoul  
D Cox  
P J Curtis  
A Davies-Cooke **(VC)**  
V Gay  
C Hinds  
T Howorth  
H T Isherwood  
R B Jones **(C)**  
D I Mackie  
D McFarlane  
H J McGuill  
E W Owen

<b>Appendix 2</b> <b>Topics covered and activity information</b>	
<b>Co-ordinating Committee</b>	
Arrangements for the co-option of a Welsh Medium Education representative to the Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report  Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 - Consultation on Draft Statutory Guidance
<b>Joint Meeting of Lifelong Learning &amp; Social &amp; Health</b>	
Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 "Making a Positive Difference"  Attainment of Looked after Children	Flintshire and Wrexham Local Safeguarding Children Board  Annual Update on Corporate Parenting Activity
<b>Joint Meeting of Housing &amp; Social &amp; Health Care Committees</b>	
Wales Audit of Mental Health Services and the Mental Health Measure  Establishment of a Shadow Regional Collaborative Committee for Support People Services	
<b>Community Profile &amp; Partnerships</b>	
Local Service Board & Strategic Partnership Update  Climate Change adaptation and Resilience Planning  Site Visit to Dangerpoint, Telacre  Flintshire Community Safety Partnership  Welsh Government Climate Change Champion  Flintshire County Forum  Presentation by Steve Thomas, Chief Executive of WLGA	Flintshire Local Voluntary Council  Professional Officer Associations Deeside College  Presentation by Royal British Legion  Clwyd Theatre Cymru 'Shared Purpose – Shared Delivery' – Welsh Government Consultation on Integrated Plans and Partnerships  Digital Mapping  Presentation on Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning

<b>Corporate Resources</b>	
<p>Corporate Health and Safety</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy and Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) Finance Peer Review</p> <p>MATRIX Contract updates/ (Managed Agency Staff Solution)</p> <p>Workforce Information Reporting Performance Review 2010/11</p> <p>Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring 2011/12</p> <p>Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2014/15</p> <p>Capital Programme 2010/11 (Outturn)</p>	<p>Design and Print Review (part 2)</p> <p>Quarterly performance reports 2011/12</p> <p>Agricultural Estates</p> <p>Asset management</p> <p>People Strategy Updates</p> <p>The Management of the Capital Programme</p> <p>Phase 2 Trent Implementation</p> <p>Improvement Priorities mid year Review</p> <p>A compact for change between the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government</p> <p>Early Retirement Summary</p> <p>Budget Process for 2012/13</p> <p>Annual Improvement Report 2011 by the Auditor General for Wales</p> <p>Voice Recognition Technology (VRA) update</p>
<b>Environment</b>	
<p>Review of the Winter Maintenance Service</p> <p>Dog Fouling Enforcement – Position Statement</p> <p>Rural Development Plan for Wales (RDP) 2007 – 2013</p> <p>A Development Partner for Flintshire</p> <p>Quarter 4 / Year End Performance Review 2010/11 and performance reporting</p> <p>Local Land Charges - Highway</p>	<p>Food Waste Treatment Facility</p> <p>Collaborative working between Flintshire County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council in public protection</p> <p>Advertisements on the highway</p> <p>Review of the Public Convenience Service</p> <p>Local Land Charges – Highway Road Schemes</p> <p>Flintshire County Council Fleet Strategy</p>

<p>Road Schemes</p> <p>Report on the outcome of the Streetscene Task &amp; Finish Group</p> <p>North Wales Residual Waste Treatment Project</p> <p>Review of Streetlighting Service</p> <p>Demand responsive Transport Re-tendering</p> <p>Review of the Council Household Recycling Centres</p> <p>Communities First Bid</p>	<p>Budget Process 2012/13</p> <p>Grass cutting Policy and Streetscene Standards</p> <p>Groundwork Wrexham and Flintshire</p> <p>Supermarket Pricing Offers</p> <p>Review of the new Waste Collection Service</p> <p>The Council's Highways Asset Management Plan</p>
<b>Housing</b>	
<p>Quarterly Performance Reporting</p> <p>Anti Social Behaviour Policy</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Renewal – an Evidence Based Approach</p> <p>Sheltered Housing Improvement Project</p> <p>Update on Repairs and Maintenance Service</p> <p>Flintshire Local Housing Strategy 2011</p> <p>Common Access Routes to Housing</p> <p>Estate Management &amp; Communal Areas</p>	<p>Housing Service Plan 2011/2012</p> <p>Housing Repairs and Building Maintenance Trading Account</p> <p>Supporting People National Review Update</p> <p>Welfare Reforms - Managing the Impact</p> <p>Delivering the Connah's Quay, Shotton, Queensferry Renewal Area</p> <p>Developing an Assess Management Strategy</p> <p>Building Maintenance Trading Account</p> <p>Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>Actions to Improve Empty Property Performance and consideration of a minor amendment to the Allocations Policy</p>

<p>Providing Disabled adaptations in Council properties</p> <p>Rent Arrears Update</p> <p>Delivery of Housing Renewal Services – 6 monthly update</p>	<p>Flint Maisonettes</p> <p>Supporting for First Time Buyers to Access Home Ownership</p> <p>Development of Community Based Warden Support Service</p>
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	
<p>Play Areas</p> <p>14 – 19 educational provision</p> <p>Performance Reporting</p> <p>School Balances 2010/11</p> <p>Exclusions from Primary Schools</p> <p>Exclusions from Secondary Schools</p> <p>Schools Modernisation Secondary Review</p> <p>Creating an active Flintshire</p> <p>Welsh Public Libraries Standards Annual Report 201/11</p> <p>Panel for the appointment of LEA Governors</p> <p>Primary School Phase Strategic Plan for 2010/11</p> <p>Secondary School Phase Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Playgroup Progress Report</p> <p>Incidents of arson, vandalism and burglaries in Flintshire Schools</p> <p>Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015</p> <p>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service Project – Governance Option Appraisal</p> <p>Estyn Inspections</p> <p>Leisure Centres Development Report</p> <p>Schools Admission Arrangements 2013/14</p> <p>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service Project</p> <p>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service –Full Business Case</p>

<b>Social &amp; Health Care</b>	
Annual Council Reporting Framework	Families First Programme
Performance Reporting	Social Services Annual Performance Report
Quarterly Reporting	Flintshire Surefleet Project
Parenting Strategy Group	Social Services Regional Commissioning Hub
Rota Visits	Fostering Care Inspection Report 2011
Supporting People National Review update	Foster Care Recruitment Update 2009 - 2011
Budget process	Flintshire Community Parents Project
Annual Report of the Social Services representations and Complaints procedure	Supporting People Programme Guidance
Social Services Training update	Regional Collaboration Projects in Social Care and Housing
Overview of Flintshire Youth Justice Service	Flintshire & Wrexham Local Children's Safeguarding Board
Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	Feedback from Member Task & Finish Group on the Social Services Annual Performance Report (ACRF)
Safeguarding & Child Protection Report to include Munro report implications	Final Draft of the Social Services Annual Performance Report (ACRF)
Leaving Care Trainee Project	Regional Commissioning Procurement & Monitoring Hub for Flintshire
Adult Protection Report 2010/11	

<b>Key:</b>	
<b>H</b>	= Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>E</b>	= Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>LL</b>	= Lifelong Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>CP &amp; P</b>	= Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>CR</b>	= Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>S&amp;HC</b>	= Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

