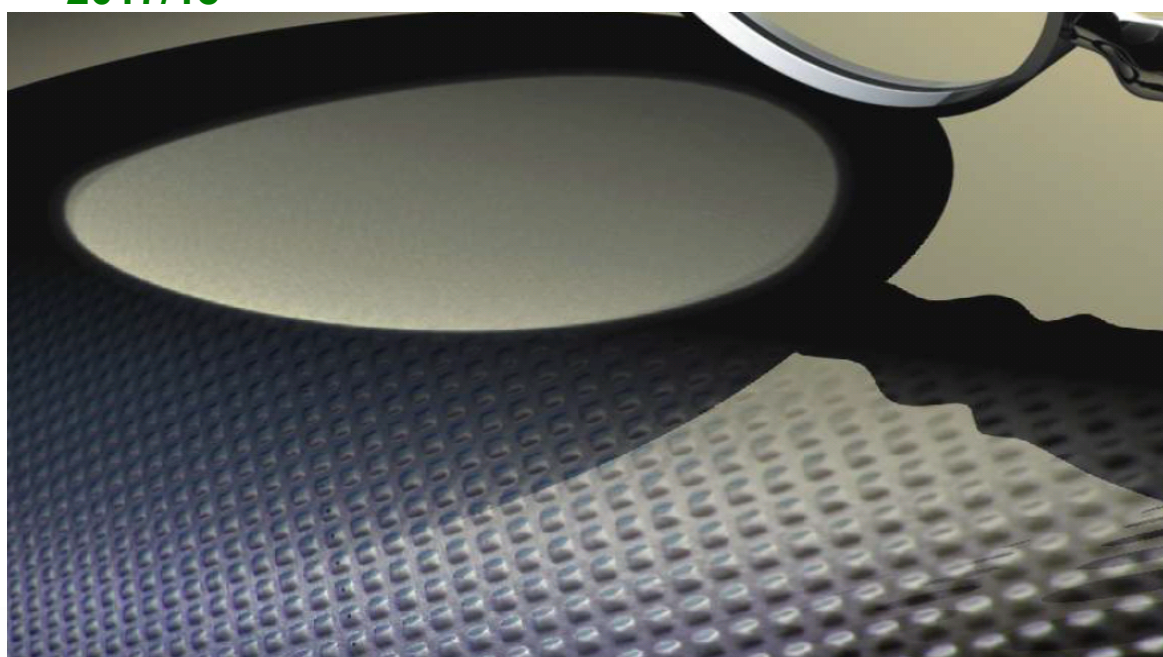




Overview & Scrutiny

Annual Report

2017/18



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## **FOREWORD BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**



The County Council elections, which were held in May 2017, saw a 28% change in the membership of the Council, with 20 new members being elected. This is a significant change and one which has influenced 'how we do scrutiny' during the year.

We recognise the need for effective induction of new members, but also for our returning members, some of whom were in new roles. This meant that the first meetings of each committee were induction sessions as the committees were introduced to the Cabinet Members and the Chief Officers and other senior managers whom they would be working with.

Then the committees built their work programmes, informed by the Council Plan's priorities, which are reflected in the committee commentaries which follow.

As we have sought increasingly imaginative ways of addressing the budget gap, the role of Overview & Scrutiny as a critical friend to the Cabinet has become more and more apparent: we know that we would be unable to deliver another round of budget efficiencies without an effective scrutiny function which challenges to think further and harder.

We lost a scrutiny stalwart in August 2017, when Councillor Ron Hampson, who had been a leading scrutineer and committee chair and vice-chair since the introduction of Overview & Scrutiny in 2000 passed away. This was a sad loss to both Members and Officers, and Ron is remembered fondly by us all.

**Councillor Aaron Shotton,**  
Leader of the Council

## **COLIN EVERETT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Perspective for the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18**



We have long accepted that to be effective and efficient we must be able to embrace change and make it work to our advantage. But with each successive year, the punishing financial situation has meant that our seeking changes to be able to continue to deliver our services has become harder.

During 2017/18, the Wales Audit Office carried out a survey of local authority scrutiny functions. It could be argued that to do this after authorities had just seen significant change in their membership after the County Council elections was premature, but it was also an opportunity to use the influx of new people to give new perspectives.

The Wales Audit Office representatives observed at a number of meetings and carried out a series of interviews with the Leader, other Cabinet members, experienced elected members and co-optees and a group of members who had only recently been elected. The council's statutory officers were also interviewed as part of this process.

During the year, we carried out extensive consultation with Members of the Council to advise our budget consultation process. We have always sought to innovate to ensure that our Members are as well informed and involved in the budget process as possible. This had meant that we had gone beyond the constitutional requirement to consult on budget proposals and needed to redraft our commitments: it was acknowledged that process which was contained in the Constitution was written for simpler times.

The Constitution & Democratic Services Committee considered a series of recommendations following the consultation. This resulted in a new staged budget process which has the strength, flexibility and integrity which we need. This was approved at the end of the year for approval by the Council at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

The portfolio overview & Scrutiny have placed a renewed emphasis on monitoring performance and risk management, with the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee now receiving the full set of performance data which is also submitted to Cabinet. All of the six overview & scrutiny committees ensure that the risk issues within their respective remits are properly considered and in a timely fashion.

The Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee heard the call in of a cabinet decision to introduced garden waste collection charges in Flintshire. During the debate, a number of issues such as the promotion of home composting, the need to gauge the effect of charging on vulnerable people and the potential risk of an increase in fly tipping were examined. It was agreed that the provision of home compost bins would be investigated: this is just an example of Overview & Scrutiny making a positive intervention.

**Colin Everett,**  
Chief Executive

## **How ‘Call in’ works**

### **1. The Arrangements**

The arrangements for calling in a decision are to be found in paragraph 16 of the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained within the Council’s Constitution. The legal authority is derived from section 21 (3) of the Local Government Act 2000.

The ability to call in a Cabinet decision is a significant power for non-executive members. It is not something which should be considered unless there is no alternative: if the power is over-used, or used in such a way as to be thought of as frivolous, its significance or importance would be lost.

### **2. Decisions of the Cabinet**

Following a meeting of the Cabinet, the record of the decisions made is published within two days. Copies are available at County Hall, and are sent to all Members of the County Council.

The decision record specifies that the decisions will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of five working days after the publication of the decision, unless it is called in.

### **3. Calling in a Decision**

If the Chief Officer (Governance) or Democratic Services Manager receives a call in notice from the Chair of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee or at least four members of the Council, a call in meeting is arranged.

Either the Democratic Services Manager or one of the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitators notifies the decision takers (the relevant Cabinet members and Chief Officers) of the call-in, and then arranges a meeting of the appropriate committee within seven working days of the decision to call-in

### **4. The Call-in Meeting**

Call-in meetings are held at short notice (i.e. within seven working days of the call-in decision) and generally be the only item of business on the agenda. However, from time to time it is expedient to consider a call in at a meeting which has already been convened.

There is a suggested procedure for dealing with a call in. This is intended to make the meeting as simple and transparent as possible. This procedure is part of the agenda at each call in meeting, and the officer advising the committee will take members through it during the meeting.

### **5. The Call in decision**

At the end of a call in meeting, the committee must make a decision based on one of four options. Options 1 and 2 allow the decision to be implemented immediately Option 3 is to refer back to Cabinet for further consideration and Option 4 is to refer to Council. However, executive functions' are solely within the remit of the Cabinet. Thus Council can consider the issue, but not change the decision: it can only recommend to Cabinet that the decision be reconsidered.

## **6. Call in during 2017/18**

During the last municipal year, only one Cabinet decision was called in. This was the introduction of garden waste charges in Flintshire. (Record of decision number 3469). The call in was heard by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Following an extensive discussion, the committee resolved that it was satisfied with the explanations given by the decision makers and that the introduction of garden waste collection charging could be implemented.



## **COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**



**Chair**  
**Cllr Ian Dunbar**



**Vice Chair**  
**Cllr Ted Palmer**

I would firstly like to pay tribute to Councillor Ron Hampson, the former Chair of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee, who sadly passed away in August 2017. He had been Chair of this Committee for a number of years and had been extremely dedicated to the role and will be missed by all Members of the Committee.

The Committee has had another busy year scrutinising a wide range of topics. Prior to the start of the September 2017 meeting, a short presentation on the North Wales Economic Growth Strategy was provided to the Committee in order to update Members on progress and proposed outcomes of the Strategy. We also had a short presentation on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) prior to the start of the December 2017 meeting. The Committee found this extremely informative as it assisted Members in their consideration of the HRA 2018/19 report in January 2018.

Below is a summary of some of the topics the committee have considered over the last 12 months.

### **Statement regarding Grenfell Tower and Flint High Rise Assurance**

In June and July 2017, the Committee received a verbal update and report to assure Members of the protective measures the Council had in place to ensure the safety of tenants following the sad and shocking fire at Grenfell Tower.

The July 2017 meeting was held at Castle Heights, Flint and the Committee was provided with a copy of a Cabinet report which outlined the measures taken and planned with regard to fire safety of Flintshire County Council high rise properties. The Committee expressed their appreciation to officers for the prompt action taken to reassure tenants and local residents and sought an assurance that protective measures were also in place to protect tenants in low rise properties. These assurances were given and the Committee was satisfied with the responses provided.

### **Welfare Reform Update**

We have continued to receive regular update reports on the impact Universal Credit and other welfare reforms were having on Flintshire residents and the work ongoing to mitigate and support households.

The Committee raised concerns around the pressures being placed on the Council's homelessness budget and the need to continue to monitor the levels of rent arrears. We also sought an assurance that tenants slipping into rent arrears were being contacted as soon as possible and were provided with the relevant information and support needed. These assurances were given and we were satisfied with the responses given around the ongoing work to manage the impacts of welfare reforms.

We will continue to monitor the impacts through regular reports which have been built into our Forward Work Programme.

### **Next Phase of Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) Schemes**

We took part in a site visit to The Walks, Flint in July 2017 to view the progress made in the construction of the 92 new homes as part of the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP). Members were given the opportunity to walk around the Council properties and were very pleased with the quality of the work carried out for future Flintshire tenants.

Mel Evans, Housing Strategy Manager presented a report to the Committee in March 2018 to seek its support to progress the next steps of the Council's SHARP. The report set out proposals to develop 92 new social and affordable homes at sites across Flintshire and was welcomed by the Committee. Following assurances from officers and the Cabinet Member that local Members would continue to be consulted on consultation events, the Committee supported the proposals to Cabinet.

We will continue to monitor the SHARP through regular update reports which have been built into our Forward Work Programme.

### **Flintshire Street Market Review**

We considered a report in March 2018 which outlined recommended options for the future of street markets in Flintshire. The report was submitted following a review on the sustainability of smaller street markets in Flintshire and sought the Committee's view in order to inform the Cabinet decision.

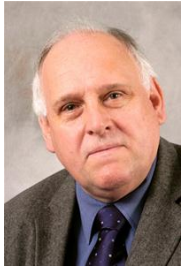
Whilst disappointment was raised around the proposed closure of Flint street market, the Committee acknowledged the general decline in shopping in street markets due to competition from large retailers and on-line shopping. Following a debate, the Committee supported the proposals to Cabinet.

### **Councillor Ian Dunbar**

Chair of the Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee



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



**Chair**  
**Cllr Clive Carver**



**Vice-Chair**  
**Cllr Paul Johnson**

The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to the **Serving Council** and **Supportive Council** priority themes in the Council plan. The report below focuses on some of the relevant priority themes considered by the committee. Appendix 1 of this report gives a full list of the items considered at the 10 meetings held over the year.

**Embrace digital channels as the default in service design where possible to provide access to online services at a time and location convenient to the customer.**

At the February meeting, we received a report on the proposed approach to modernise and improve the Council's delivery of customer services via digital technology. The Committee welcomed the initial one-off investment of £0.550m which should result in customer benefits and service efficiencies in the future. Members were reassured that customers preferring to use more traditional means of contact would not be negatively impacted. Members were asked to give initial feedback on the service when implemented in March. A further report was requested on digital best practice models operated by Councils of a similar size to Flintshire.

**Ensuring Community benefit through our commissioning of goods and services and their impact.**

In November 2016, the Cabinet approved a joint procurement strategy with Denbighshire County Council. The Council spends £150m per year on buying goods and services. The Procurement Strategy sets out how the Council intends to use that purchasing power to support its wider policy aims. The strategy includes two high level outcomes to achieve value for money from the goods, services and work procured and to improve the contribution its procurement activity had on the local economy, especially social enterprise. At the September meeting, we received the Procurement Strategy Action Plan and Members were pleased that the plan gave further detail on the steps to be taken to deliver the outcomes and measures to be used to track progress and recommended to Cabinet that the plan be adopted.

**Implement the People Strategy to ensure the council has sufficient capability and capacity to operate effectively as a smaller organisation.**

At the January meeting, we endorsed the revised People Strategy including the vision, outcomes and priorities and the specific roles and responsibilities of Human Resources and Development, Chief Officers, Managers, Supervisors and employees in implementing the

strategy. The Chief Executive thanked the Committee for its past role in helping develop the Strategy and the need for a wide level of ownership.

### **Budget Monitoring**

We continue to consider the budget monitoring reports before they go to Cabinet the following week. When we make observations or recommendations they are formally reported to the Cabinet as part of the presentation of the report. We also refer items to one of the other Overview & Scrutiny committee if we feel that an item within their remit, such as a service overspending, requires further investigation.

### **Budget consultation**

Concerns were raised by the Committee that stage two budget options had not been submitted for consideration to each of the individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees as in previous years. The Committee requested that a report reviewing the process for the setting of the annual budget process be considered by the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee to ensure consistency in the future. This resulted in the creation of a three stage Budget Process, which Council approved in May 2018.

### **Crime & Disorder**

We received the Community Safety Partnership Annual reported and were satisfied that the committee was fulfilling its role as the statutory crime and disorder scrutiny committee for Flintshire. Concerns were raised regarding organised crime gangs targeting the homes of vulnerable people with learning difficulties to deal in drugs. The Partnership members present committed to consider further action on this emerging challenge. The Committee noted the report and the progress made across a range of services including crime and disorder, substance misuse and reoffending issues were supported.

### **North Wales Fire & Rescue Service**

Representatives of North Wales Fire & Rescue Service attended our November meeting. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation on the future of the Fire & Rescue service including Community Safety, Special Service Calls, Response and Business Fire Safety Capital Budget, Reserves and budget pressures.

It was explained that the budget pressures faced by the service had reached a position where further efficiencies needed to be identified. The options for consideration were to request an increased levy from councils or to reduce provision in the region's station cover. Members acknowledged the pressures faced by North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and made several recommendations including that both Cabinet and the County Council be made aware that the Committee had given due consideration of the Fire & Rescue Authority levy charge and the need for an increase; and that the Flintshire representatives on the Fire & Rescue Authority be made aware at an early stage of the Council's position on an increase to North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority funding.

### **Flintshire Public Services Board**

The Chief Executive introduced an overview of the work of the Flintshire Public Services Board and development of the Well-being Plan. The five themes of the Wellbeing Plan are: - Well-being and Independent Living, Community Safety, Resilient Communities, Economy and Skills and Environment. It was advised that extensive consultation on the outline Plan would take place leading to adoption of the final version by the Council in 2018. Members made several suggestions for improvement to the Well-being Plan and were satisfied that steps were in place for the Plan to be completed by the statutory deadline.

## **Performance**

As the lead committee for all performance issues, the Committee requested to receive all Council Plan quarterly information for 2018/19 and thereafter.

## **Councillor Clive Carver**

Chair of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**Chair**  
**Cllr Dave Healey**



**Vice-Chair**  
**Mr. David Hytch**

During the year, a great deal of focus has been placed on school budgets and this was evidenced during the special Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 to consider the 2018/19 Council Fund Budget proposals for the School Funding Formula level. A high number of members of the public were in attendance to watch the debate and I was pleased to invite representatives of the Head Teachers Federation to address the Committee and outline their concern around financial challenges to schools. Following the debate, the Committee acknowledged the work done in previous years to protect schools budgets and recommended that should additional resources become available, the Council should provide an uplift to schools budgets if at all possible.

Below is a summary of some of the other topics the Committee has considered over the last 12 months:-

#### **School Transport Commissioning and Operations Update**

In October 2017, the Committee requested an update on the challenges which had been faced during the transition to the new school transport routes and operators at the beginning of the school year. Members of the Council had received a number of complaints from parents around school transport arrangements, and the Committee felt it was important that they receive an assurance that services had returned to normal and an opportunity to improve arrangements for the future.

The Committee had welcomed the assurance provided, that there had been no risk to pupils and that school transport provision had been maintained throughout the transition process.

#### **Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) – Revised Regional Model for Secondary School Support**

In October 2017, the Committee received a report and presentation from Mr Alwyn Lloyd Jones and Mr Martyn Froggett, Senior Officers from the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) on the new arrangements to give greater support to secondary schools. The Committee welcomed the presentation given the number of concerns which it had raised during previous meetings around learner outcomes and the greater need for support/resources to be directed towards secondary schools.

During the debate, a number of comments were made around teacher recruitment, especially for specialist subjects, e.g. Maths. I had previously written to the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education, on behalf of the Committee, outlining its concerns on the pressure being faced by many teaching professionals and was asked again

by the Committee to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education outlining its concerns around teacher recruitment.

The Committee will continue to scrutinise and receive regular update reports from GWE moving forward with continued focus around secondary education.

### **Social Media and Internet Safety in Schools**

In November, 2017, the Committee received a report which provided details of social media and internet safety provided to schools. The report had been requested in order to reassure the Committee that children and young people in Flintshire schools were receiving appropriate support to develop their skills regarding the use of social media and internet safety.

The report was welcomed by the Committee and I would like to thank Councillor Kevin Hughes who, following the meeting, produced a statement for local newspapers, outlining the support being provided by the Council to children, young people and teachers on social media and internet safety. The Committee agreed that the findings on how effective the work to raise awareness of social media and internet safety had been, would be submitted to a future meeting once completed.

### **School Balances**

In January 2018, the Committee received its annual school balances report which provided an analysis of reserve balances for each school in Flintshire and the overall reserve balances held by schools compared with the previous years.

The Committee has continued to be concerned around the worsening financial position for schools going forward and the potential for more schools to slip into deficit and will continue to monitor this situation.

### **Youth Service and Youth Council**

In April 2018, the Committee received a report on the Youth Service and also an update on progress in establishing the Youth Council. The Committee noted the priorities which had been identified for delivery of the Youth Service within the context of current financial challenges.

The Committee welcomed the update report in establishing the Youth Council and sought an assurance that the constitution of the Youth Council ensured that it would represent a broad range of young people and local communities across Flintshire. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to actively consult with the Youth Council in order to bridge the gap between Local Government and young people, and I look forward to this engagement in the future.

I have, in the course of our meetings thanked officers for their resilience and the passion with which they have carried out their duties against a background of severe financial challenges. I would like to take the opportunity provided by this report to extend these words of appreciation to the staff of schools across Flintshire.

**Councillor Dave Healey**

Chair of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny

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## **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**



**Chair**  
**Cllr Raymond Hughes**



**Vice-Chair**  
**Cllr David Evans**

### **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to the **GREEN Council** priority theme in the Council plan. The report below focuses on the relevant priority themes considered by the committee. Appendix 1 of this report gives a full list of the items considered at the 10 meetings held over the year.

#### **Enhancing the natural environment and promoting access to open and green space**

In March the Committee undertook a scrutiny site visit to the Greenfield Valley Heritage Park where the Committee then held their meeting with representatives of the Greenfield Valley management board in attendance. We received an update on progress to address the finding of the Internal Audit report on the governance, funding and operating arrangements at Greenfield Valley Heritage Park. Members recognised that structural changes had taken place including the appointment of an admin/finance officer to support improvements to back-office systems. Governance arrangements had been strengthened with the appointment of four new Trustees to work alongside some of the longer serving Trustees. Members emphasised the need to publicise the park and welcomed the news that a new website was due to go live. It was suggested that minutes of the Board of Trustee meetings should be accessible in the interest of transparent governance arrangements. The improved links with Holywell Town Council were welcomed. It was agreed that the Committee receive an information update in six months on the progress being made with a further report in the Spring of 2019.

#### **Air quality data**

We received a report on the findings of the regional Air Quality report which had been prepared to consider how the Council could further promote air quality considerations within key strategic and operational decisions. We were given a demonstration of the monitoring used to give an indication of air quality levels within the County at identified points. It was pleasing to note that good standards of air quality were recorded, however the committee recognised that further improvements were needed. The impact of air quality on health was recognised and it was pleasing to hear that air quality was now a priority for the Public Service Board which would promote a much needed multi-agency approach to air quality. Members welcomed the introduction of projects within schools to encourage pupils to carry out their own air quality monitoring to help raise environmental awareness amongst school children.



## **Developing the transport infrastructure and employment sites, and transport services, widening access to employment and training sites and safe and sustainable travel services.**

As part of its evidence gathering, the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee organised two workshops for all Members of the Council. The Operational Transport Workshop was held in November 2017 and the Countywide Review of Subsidies for Public Transport in April 2018. This approach has worked well and helps inform pre-decision scrutiny prior to receiving reports at committee meetings and making recommendations to Cabinet.

## **Improving recycling performance / recycling rates per Household Recycling Centre and modernisation of the Household Recycling Centre network**

At the June meeting we received an update on the new operating arrangements at household recycling centre sites and an update on the following areas :- resident only permits, resident van permits scheme, household recycling centre management, opening times and changes to waste and recycling rounds. We were advised that the new facility in Oakenholt was on track to be opened in September 2018. Assurances were given that the sites in Flint and Connah's Quay would remain open until the new facility in Oakenholt was open. Assurances were given that local Members would be informed of any changes within their ward to collection days or weeks. Members were satisfied with the explanations given and resolved that the proposed changes to the Council's Household Waste Collection and Household Recycling Centre Operations Policy and the proposed changes to the waste and recycling rounds be recommended to Cabinet.

We continued to play our part in the Council's budget process and monitored performance on a quarterly basis. At the October meeting we received a report outlining the Stage 1 Council Fund Revenue budget proposals for 2018/19. Having considered the report, the Committee was satisfied with the approach being taken to Stage One of the Council Fund Revenue budget 2018/19 for the Streetscene and Transportation and Planning and Environment portfolios. At the January meeting we invited all Members of the Council to attend as we were discussing two contentious budget items :- the Stage 2 Review of Car Parking Charges and further consideration of Charging for Garden Waste Services which had been called-in.

## **Response to the Welsh Government A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Consultation Document**

The Committee considered the Council's response and following positive and negative comments with regard to the proposals, when put to the vote the committee supported the options appraisal for the two possible routes and the formal response to the Welsh Government consultation.

## **Information sessions**

We arranged an information session on food safety for the Committee prior to the start of the December meeting to enable members to gain a better understanding of the wide range of services provided by the team. This included approval of food premises, food hygiene inspections, dealing with food and hygiene complaints, food poisoning and infectious disease control and registration of food premises. We will continue to hold appropriate information sessions as the need arises.

I would like to thank everyone who has taken part in the Overview & Scrutiny process – members, officers and partners. Membership of the Committee has remained consistent which has enabled robust challenge and constructive suggestions being put forward to Cabinet for consideration.

**Councillor Raymond Hughes**

Chair of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**Chair**  
**Cllr Dave Mackie**



**Vice-Chair**  
**Cllr Sean Bibby**

The continued focus of the Committee has been around the fundamental changes to how the Authority carries out some of its functions. As well as meeting at County Hall, the Committee has held a meeting at Caffi Isa, Mynydd Isa Library Community Centre where Members were shown around the facility.

Below is a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee over the last 12 months:-

### **Community Asset Transfers (CAT)**

In September 2017, a review of progress around CAT was considered by the Committee. The Council remained committed to supporting CAT programmes and had undertaken a number of year one reviews as part of its commitment to understand their ongoing issues and contribution to Community Benefits. We were pleased to hear that groups were developing wider skill sets within their local communities which were both transferable and which created community resilience. This was an important concept and added additional value to the CAT process by creating more resilient communities which were able to support each other through developing new skills, confidence and knowledge.

#### **Holywell Leisure Centre**

In July, 2017, the Committee considered a progress report on the Holywell Leisure Centre CAT following its first three months of operation. We were pleased to welcome Councillor Tudor Jones, Chair of Trustees of the Leisure Centre and Chris Travers, Manager of the Leisure Centre to the meeting to give their perspective of the progress made since in the transfer.

The Committee was provided with details of the various capital projects underway and a summary of financial performance. We welcomed the achievements made and commended the protection of the Leisure Centre as a much needed asset in the Community. Following a debate the Committee resolved to support the work undertaken relating to the CAT of Holywell Leisure Centre and appreciated the work by the Council's officers and Holywell Leisure Centre Board and employees.

#### **Connah's Quay Swimming Pool – Cambrian Aquatics**

In December 2017, the Committee considered a mid-year progress report on Connah's Quay Swimming Pool – Cambrian Aquatics and were invited to inform the development of the next Business Plan for formal submission to the Council in early 2018. We were pleased to welcome Simon Morgan, Chair of Cambrian Aquatics, to the meeting to present the report and were pleased with the progress which had been made in exceeding community targets. Whilst recognising the challenges ahead, the Committee resolved to continue to support this CAT.

The Committee looks forward to continued work with the Holywell Leisure Centre trustees and Cambrian Aquatics.

### **Alternative Delivery Models (ADM)**

#### **NEWydd Catering and Cleaning ADM**

We received a progress update report on the NEWydd Catering and Cleaning ADM in July 2017 and March 2018. We welcomed Steve Jones, Managing Director and Darren Jones, Chair of the Board to the meeting in July 2017 to share their views on progress since the transfer of the company and were pleased to hear the positive outcomes reported on the transition of employees to the company, along with responses from service users.

In March 2018 we received a detailed report on the NEWydd Catering and Cleaning ADM Business Plan for the 2018/19 financial year. We welcomed the detailed explanations provided to the Committee and the progress of NEWydd in having a strong first year of trading.

#### **Social Care – Learning Disability Day Care and Work Opportunities**

We considered an update report on progress in establishing an ADM at our meeting in January 2018. The report set out the role of the Transition Board in overseeing the project and involvement by service users and their families to ensure due diligence on the completion of the contract. A number of questions around grant funding, the selection process for the service provider and the terms of the contract were raised and clarification on these issues was provided by officers. Members commended the report and asked that progress be regularly reported to future meetings of the Committee.

#### **Aura Leisure**

We welcomed Paul Jones, Business Improvement & Performance Manager and Neil Williams, Company Secretary to a meeting in March 2018 to report on how the transition had progressed and on the Aura Leisure and Libraries Business Plan for the financial year 2018/19. A number of questions around activities for disabled people and future capital investment projects were raised and Paul Jones agreed to take on board the suggestion around providing additional sessions for disabled people.

We will continue to receive regular update reports on all ADMs which have been built into our Forward Work Programme.

#### **Play Wales and Play Sufficiency**

We welcomed Janet Roberts, Play Development Officer and Marianne Mannello, Assistant Director Play Wales, to the December meeting to provide a detailed presentation on Play Sufficiency in Flintshire. Whilst we welcomed the presentation and the Council's continued commitment to play, concerns were raised around the standard of some play areas across the County and Members felt that Town and Community Councils needed to be more creative around play provision. We were pleased to hear that capital funding had been allocated in a 3 year programme to address play areas which had a 'red' status.

**Councillor Dave Mackie**

Chair of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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



**Chair**  
**Cllr Carol Ellis**



**Vice-Chair**  
**Cllr Gladys Healey**

The Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee is aligned to the **SUPPORTIVE Council** priority theme in the Council plan. The report below focuses on some of the relevant priority themes considered by the committee. Appendix 1 of this report gives a full list of the items considered at the 9 meetings held over the year.

### **Sustaining a local market of high quality and affordable service provision for those who are highly dependent on care support.**

The Committee had requested an update on the Care Sector including top-up fees and invest to save care sector support. We were advised of the changes taking place within the care sector in Wales and the challenges faced by the Council including the increase in third party top-up fees charged by independent sector providers. The importance of working with partners and the need to influence Welsh Government to identify solutions to stabilise the fragile care sector was emphasised. We were told that the majority of independent care home providers in Flintshire were applying a weekly charge of between £16.50 and £60. Assurances were given that there was an application process for cases where families demonstrated they were unable to meet care costs and could seek support from the Council.

We were informed of a number of short, medium and longer term objectives that had been identified to develop workable solutions and maximise funding opportunities to support the care sector in Flintshire. I raised concerns regarding the predicted rise in the shortfall of residential elderly mentally infirm beds and asked how many individuals were on the waiting list including those placed out of county, and how many people were waiting for residential care places. Assurances were given that capacity was available in all care categories but with no flexibility on preferred location. Concerns were also raised regarding the shortage of GP's and consultants and were informed that BCUHB were undertaking a range of initiatives to improve recruitment in these areas.

As a committee we continue to recognise the immediate and longer-term challenges faced in Flintshire and welcome the initiatives being progressed to support the care sector.

### **Providing joined-up services with public and third sector partners which support quality of life in communities and for individuals and families**

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board attended our meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September with the main focus of the meeting being Mental Health. We received an overview of the Together for Mental Health in North Wales Strategy and Implementation Plan. Statutory partner agencies across North Wales will be supporting its implementation. Members welcomed the Strategy but expressed concern that the implementation plan did not outline how resources would be used to minimise the need for people to access help via accident and emergency departments. We were given assurances that work had been undertaken with the charity 'Cariad' and an event with health professionals and police to ensure alternatives were being put in place to avoid people accessing services via accident and emergency units. We were also given an outline of the work being undertaken with GP's to ensure that patients can be directed appropriately to services to avoid reliance on A & E departments.

Other concerns raised included mental health services for Armed Forces personnel. Assurances were given that the strategy would link into the Armed Forces Forum. We were also advised that a pilot project undertaken with Glyndwr University and NHS Wales would see armed forces veterans receiving peer support to keep them engaged in receiving positive outcomes.

Members had also been given the opportunity to submit questions prior to the meeting on a wide range of services provided to Flintshire residents which can be viewed on the Flintshire website (minutes of Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017).

The Committee welcomes the excellent working relationship with BCUHB officers and welcome the positive partnership working which continues to evolve.

### **Consultation - White Paper – Services fit for the Future – Quality and Governance in Health and Care in Wales.**

Cllr Mackie (a member of the Community Health Council) raised concerns that the proposals were modelled on the Scottish system which was already being reviewed. It was also reported that the Community Health Council had raised concerns concerning this matter. Members felt there was a need to retain the experience and knowledge of volunteers, recognise the value of the third sector and collaborative working. As a Committee we welcomed the idea of person centred care but raised concern that no funding would be forthcoming to support the proposed changes. The Chief Officer agreed to strengthen the response to Welsh Government to reflect the concerns raised.

### **Rota Visits**

Members of the Committee undertake Rota Visits which gives an opportunity to visit social care establishments and are focused on the wellbeing of service users. Verbal reports are presented to the committee when visits have been completed.

### **Safeguarding**

At our November meeting we received the Annual Safeguarding report for the period 1 April 16 to 31 March 2017 and additional data from 1 April to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017. We noted that there had been an increase in activity across all parts of the Safeguarding Unit. In response to a question regarding the Child Protection Register, confirmation was given that there was



no time limit on how long a child could remain on the register up to the age of 18, with the average time being between 12 and 14 months. Regarding child sexual exploitation and online sexual exploitation we were advised that the Child Exploitation Panel worked closely with the Police ONYX Team. Flintshire were also leading the way in the field of work of child exploitation and work was also ongoing in schools. The Committee was satisfied that safeguarding provision within the County remained robust.

The Committee continues to influence decision making in an open and positive manner by making constructive recommendations to cabinet and helping to drive continuous improvement.

**Councillor Carol Ellis**

Chair of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## **Membership of Overview & Scrutiny Committees 2017/18**

<p><b><u>Community &amp; Enterprise</u></b></p> <p><b>Councillor Ron Hampson (Chair)(passed away in August 17)</b>  <b>Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chair) (16 October 17)</b>  Councillor Sian Braun  Councillor Dave Cox (July to May 18)  Councillor Jean Davies  Councillor Ron Davies  Councillor Adele Davies-Cooke  Councillor Rosetta Dolphin,  Councillor Mared Eastwood,  Councillor George Hardcastle  Councillor Ray Hughes  Councillor Dennis Hutchinson  Councillor Ted Palmer,  Councillor Michelle Perfect, (May- July 17)  Councillor Mike Reece  Councillor Paul Shotton  Councillor David Wisinger (from Oct 17 )</p>	<p><b><u>Corporate Resources</u></b></p> <p><b>Councillor Clive Carver (Chair)</b>  Councillor Haydn Bateman  Councillor Bob Connah  Councillor Paul Cunningham  Councillor Ron Hampson (May to August 17)  Councillor Patrick Heesom  Councillor Andrew Holgate  Councillor Dave Hughes  Councillor Paul Johnson (<b>Vice Chair</b>)  Councillor Richard Jones  Councillor Mike Lowe  Councillor Hilary McGuill  Councillor Michelle Perfect  Councillor Vicky Perfect,  Councillor Andy Williams (Jan to May 2018)  Councillor Arnold Woolley</p>
<p><b><u>Education &amp; Youth Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</u></b></p> <p><b>Councillor David Healey (Chair)</b>  Councillor Janet Axworthy  Councillor Marion Bateman  Councillor Sian Braun  Councillor Geoff Collett  Councillor Paul Cunningham  Councillor Andy Dunbobbin  Councillor Patrick Heesom  Councillor Dave Hughes  Councillor Kevin Hughes  Councillor Tudor Jones  Councillor Dave Mackie  Councillor Ian Smith  Councillor Martin White  Councillor David Williams</p> <p><b>Co-opted Members:</b>  Lynne Bartlett  <b>David Hytch (Vice Chair)</b>  Rebecca Stark  Bernard Stuart</p>	<p><b><u>Environment</u></b></p> <p><b>Councillor Raymond Hughes (Chair)</b>  Councillor Mike Allport  Councillor Haydn Bateman  Councillor Sean Bibby  Councillor Chris Dolphin  Councillor Andy Dunbobbin  <b>Councillor David Evans (Vice Chair)</b>  Councillor Veronica Gay,  Councillor Cindy Hinds  Councillor Dave Hughes  Councillor Joe Johnson  Councillor Colin Legg  Councillor Vicky Perfect  Councillor Paul Shotton  Councillor Owen Thomas</p>

<b><u>Organisational Change</u></b>	<b><u>Social &amp; Health Care</u></b>
<b>Councillor Dave Mackie (Chair)</b> Councillor Janet Axworthy Councillor Marion Bateman <b>Councillor Sean Bibby (Vice Chair)</b> Councillor Geoff Collett Councillor Ian Dunbar Councillor Mared Eastwood Councillor Veronica Gay Councillor Ron Hampson (May to August 17) Councillor Dennis Hutchinson Councillor Tudor Jones Councillor Brian Lloyd Councillor Richard Lloyd (May to June 17) Councillor Mike Reece Councillor Paul Shotton Councillor David Wisinger	<b>Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)</b> Councillor Mike Allport Councillor Marion Bateman Councillor Andy Dunbobbin <b>Councillor Gladys Healey (Vice-Chair)</b> Councillor Cindy Hinds Councillor Andrew Holgate Councillor Kevin Hughes Councillor Rita Johnson Councillor Mike Lowe Councillor David Mackie Councillor Hilary McGuill Councillor Martin White Councillor Ian Smith Councillor David Wisinger

<b>Key:</b>		
<b>C &amp; E</b>	=	Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>CR</b>	=	Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>E &amp; Y</b>	=	Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>E</b>	=	Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>OC</b>	=	Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee
<b>S&amp;HC</b>	=	Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY OFFICER SUPPORT**

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 – Democratic Services Manager  
(principally supporting the Corporate Resources and Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committees).
- ❖ Margaret Parry-Jones – Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator  
(principally supporting the Environment and Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committees)
- ❖ Ceri Shotton – Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator  
(principally supporting the Community & Enterprise and Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committees).
- ❖ Janet Kelly – Democratic Services Support Officer  
(supporting the Overview & Scrutiny Team and task & finish groups)

The team are an independent resource supporting the scrutiny function and its members:

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