Cyngor sir ddinbych denbighshire County Council

Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees 2025 to 2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

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What is scrutiny?

Scrutiny is a key component of the Council's political structure. Many of the Council's important decisions are taken by Cabinet, a group of nine councillors to whom the County Council has given its powers to take decisions relating to policies and procedures on its behalf.

The term 'scrutiny' derives from the Latin word 'scrutinium / scrutari' which means 'to search'. In the context of local government Scrutiny's role is to research and examine policies and decisions, to assess whether they could be improved or strengthened, to deliver better services for residents and visitors to Denbighshire. Scrutiny is often referred to as the Council's 'critical friend', its purpose is to provide constructive criticism in order to continually seek improvements to services, secure better decisions and realise better outcomes. The principles that underpin Scrutiny are:

Accountability: holding decision-makers responsible for their actions and decisions

Transparency: making information about decisions and services public

Involvement: allowing stakeholders to participate in decision-making

Constructive challenge: providing a robust challenge to decision-makers in a non-aggressive way

Public participation: involving the public through meetings, consultation, and feedback

Independent scrutiny: ensuring that scrutiny is carried out by independent-minded councillors

Improvement: using scrutiny to drive improvement in the services provided by the local government

Scrutiny Committees **cannot** take decisions, but they can influence policies, review decisions taken by Cabinet and Officers, make recommendations, and examine a range of topics that affect residents, local businesses, and visitors to the county.

Scrutiny in Action

Scrutiny should at all times work in an impartial way. It should not be influenced by party politics, its focus should be on improving the lives of residents and on securing better outcomes for the county area.

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

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

How does scrutiny work in Denbighshire?

Scrutiny acts as a ‘critical friend’ to the Council’s leadership, driving improvements not only to services delivered by the Council itself, but to services delivered in partnership with other public services in the area by enabling the concerns of the public to be heard.

The Council’s scrutiny work is undertaken by three thematic, cross-cutting Scrutiny Committees, meeting approximately every 7 weeks, and comprising of 11 elected members from all political parties/groups on the Council.

The three committees in Denbighshire are:

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

When examining education matters representatives appointed by the Church in Wales and the Catholic Church, along with representatives elected by parent governors, also serve on the committees. When dealing with education matters these representatives have full voting rights. All three parent governor representative posts on Scrutiny are currently vacant. If you are a parent governor at one of the Council's primary, secondary or special schools, or know anyone who is and may be interested in representing their sector on Scrutiny please get in touch with us (contact details can be found in the 'How residents can participate in Scrutiny' section towards the end of this report). We would really like to hear from you.

Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the three scrutiny committees serve on the Council's Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) along with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Democratic Services Committee. This Group acts as a co-ordinating group for the scrutiny committees' work. Requests for items to be considered by a scrutiny committee, be they from county councillors, Council officers, residents, businesses, other public services/organisations, or the general public are examined by this Group to determine whether they meet the criteria for Scrutiny, or whether they would benefit from being considered by another forum or group. The explanation on the PAPER test on the following page illustrates the criteria and process for determining whether a topic is suitable for scrutiny.

The process for determining a topic's suitability for scrutiny

Step one: considering the request

Proposal form or request received, and careful consideration is given to the reasons behind the request.

Step two: does it stand up to the PAPER test?

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

If not, then no further action is required by a scrutiny committee and the request will be referred elsewhere, or information requested and shared with the individual or organisation who submitted the request.

If yes:

Step three: assessment and planning (this will be done by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group)

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

During 2025/26 a total of 22 requests for items to be scrutinised were considered by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group. Of these 22 requests:

- 7 were submitted by county councillors
- 6 by officers
- 3 requests were received from individuals or organisations external to the Council.
- 6 requests were received from the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee on behalf of the Committee

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group ensures that the scrutiny committees' work programmes are balanced and that subjects are not duplicated. To facilitate this it considers the work programmes of each individual committee every time it meets. It also has a role to play in supporting and strengthening the Council's scrutiny function through the identification of best practice, training or development opportunities for scrutiny committee members and helping to implement any necessary changes to scrutiny practices.

In fulfilling its role of supporting the Council's scrutiny function to operate effectively, during 2025/26 the Group discussed the advantages and disadvantages of extending the timescale for reporting the conclusions and recommendations arising from the review of Cabinet decisions called in under the Council's Call-In Procedure. Following consideration of various options and having compared the Council's current call-in procedure with those of neighbouring authorities, the Group concluded that Denbighshire's policy was sufficiently flexible to enable Scrutiny to comprehensively review decisions referred to it without causing unnecessary delay to the decision-making process.

The Group also discussed the process followed when requests to defer the presentation of reports were received and concluded that the power to permit a request to defer or reschedule a report on a committee's forward work programme should continue to lie with

the Chair of the committee. Members requested that every effort be made to inform the individuals who proposed the topic for scrutiny of the report's deferment and the reasons for its rescheduling.

In response to concerns raised by members on how they could readily access information on the work and progress of all task and finish groups or working groups established by the Council, the Group agreed a Framework for Task and Finish Groups. They recommended that this Framework be used in future by all task and finish groups established by Scrutiny and suggested that the Corporate Executive Team consider its suitability for use by all working groups across the Council.

As reported in last year's Annual Report, now that all services have been scaled back as far as possible in order to reduce service delivery costs, the Council has, with a view to continuing to deliver key services to residents, begun a programme of devising new sustainable models for service delivery. This programme of work, known as the Transformation Programme, is wide-ranging and will, to a greater or lesser extent, impact all services delivered by the Council.

Three main workstreams have been identified within the Transformation Programme and as reported previously, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group has allocated responsibility for examining proposals aligned to each theme to the following committees:

- Influencing Demand & Digital – Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Commercialisation & Enterprise – Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Collaboration & Partnership – Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Each of the Scrutiny Committees will examine proposals for business transformation projects as they develop. To facilitate the timely allocation of transformation projects to the relevant scrutiny committees, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group has been receiving quarterly progress reports on their development. This approach aims to ensure that individual projects are scrutinised at the point where Scrutiny can most effectively influence and add value to their development. During the remainder of this administration's term of

office, the committees will examine each project's development into new ways of delivering services to ensure they are effective in meeting residents' needs.

It was reported in last year's Annual Report that the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group had been consulted on how best to undertake scrutiny of the recently established North Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC). This regional committee has duties in relation to economic development, transport, and planning. The Group formed the view that the strategic aspects of the CJC's work would be more effectively scrutinised by a joint scrutiny committee comprising all public bodies represented on the CJC, while decisions affecting specific localities should be scrutinised by the relevant local authority's scrutiny committees.

During 2025/26, the CJC approved the establishment of a joint scrutiny committee involving all North Wales local authorities to scrutinise its activities going forward. The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group was invited to discuss various options for providing administrative and scrutiny support to this joint committee. The Group considered that, for scrutiny of the CJC to be effective, it would be beneficial for support resources to be based within the CJC's administrative hub to enable easy access to the information required by the joint scrutiny committee. As a final decision on these arrangements is still awaited, each council has continued to scrutinise the CJC's work individually and will do so until the final arrangements are confirmed.

Scrutiny committees have now been in existence for nearly a quarter of a century. Despite this, Scrutiny continues to face significant challenges in engaging residents and encouraging active public involvement in its work. It is important to emphasise that this challenge is not unique to Denbighshire, many local authorities across the country experience similar difficulties in securing consistent public engagement.

With a view to exploring ways to increase residents' interaction with Scrutiny, the Group discussed potential opportunities for improving public engagement. Due to practical and legislative constraints, it was felt that holding scrutiny committee meetings in different community locations across the county would not support effective, focused scrutiny. All meetings are hybrid which removes geographical barriers and can accommodate diverse

schedules. This approach expands accessibility for all residents including those with caring responsibilities or disabilities. Given the increased use of social media in recent years, it was considered more beneficial for Scrutiny to take a proactive approach in communicating information via social media and other digital platforms, such as 'County Voice'. Scrutiny committee meetings are now "advertised" on the Council's Social media channels so that residents are aware of when they are held. Initial discussions have taken place with the Council's Communications Team on how this could be progressed.

Another important function of the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group is to oversee the production of the Annual Report of the Council's Scrutiny Committees. It determines the report's content and format and recommends its submission to County Council for approval.

Scrutiny's work during 2025/26

Scrutiny Committee meetings are all held as 'hybrid meetings'. This gives committee members, officers and external partners or organisations invited to attend a scrutiny committee meeting the option of attending in person at the designated venue, or remotely via video conferencing. This flexibility eases the pressure on people to travel from one location to the other, releases more time to undertake other work during the day and helps reduce the county's carbon emissions by cutting down on unnecessary journeys. As all Scrutiny Committee meetings are now webcast live on the Council's website, with a recording of the webcast available on the website following each meeting, residents are able to either follow committee discussions live or catch-up with items which interest them later, whichever is more convenient for them.

During 2025/26, Scrutiny began in earnest the work of examining the initial stages of changes to service delivery methods implemented to mitigate the impact of the budget cuts facing the Authority and other public service organisations. This work will gather momentum during the forthcoming year. Consequently, it is anticipated that Scrutiny will be heavily involved over the coming years in examining the transformation of Council service delivery.

Whilst Scrutiny's work evolves from year to year, it does not stop at the end of one municipal year and re-commence at the start of the next. This is why the same or similar areas of work feature regularly in the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committees. Scrutiny is an ongoing process, not a one-time exercise. It provides continual support to the Council with the objective of delivering quality services to residents whilst adapting to ever-changing demands and needs.

Scrutiny's Review into the planning and rollout of the new Waste and Recycling Service

The Task and Finish Group established to review the implementation of the new Waste & Recycling System held its first meeting on 4th June 2025. At that meeting the Group decided, due to the volume of work that was anticipated, to appoint Co-chairs for the Group. Councillors Karen Edwards and Andrea Tomlin were appointed as Co-Chairs with Councillor Peter Scott being appointed Vice-Chair. During the inaugural meeting the Group reviewed its Terms of Reference and agreed the evidence it wished to analyse and who at each subsequent meeting they would like to invite to attend to discuss their experiences of the planning and/or implementation of the roll-out of the new service.

Over the next 5 meetings officers from various internal services were interviewed - including the Corporate Director, Project Management, Fleet Management and ICT. External partners e.g. WRAP and Unions, together with former employees - including a Head of Service, Waste Manager and Operations Manager - were also invited to attend to give their perspective on the planning and implementation process.

Due to the complexities involved with the planning and implementation of such a large service-change, along with the length of time involved between the initial planning stages and the eventual rollout of the new service, the Task and Finish Group's inquiry has taken longer than originally anticipated. Nevertheless, it is expected that the Group's next evidence gathering session, in July 2026, will be its final one before. It will then commence its analysis of the information gathered and begin compiling its report on the lessons learned from this service transformation project. Its findings, conclusions and recommendations are expected to be presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee later during the 2026/27 municipal year. The lessons learnt during this inquiry, along with its associated recommendations, will be used to inform and strengthen any other service transformation projects which the Council may embark on in future.

Scrutiny and the Council's Corporate Priorities during 2025/26

The Council's Corporate Plan 'The Denbighshire We Want' and its priorities for 2022 – 2027 was agreed in October 2022, the Plan sets out what it is that the Council wants to achieve for the benefit of local residents and communities over the next five years. Faced with financial constraints and dwindling staffing resources, County Council approved a revised Corporate Plan for 2022 to 2027 in February 2024. The revised Plan now contains six rather than the nine original Corporate Themes, with the themes of a

- A better-connected Denbighshire
- A fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire
- A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

being subsumed into the remaining corporate priorities. This will ensure that the Council will continue to strive to deliver them by the end of its term in office, but as part of its day-to-day business rather than as stand-alone objectives. In January 2026 the Council agreed to extend the current Corporate Plan's delivery period until 2028. This is to enable the new administration that will be formed following the local authority elections in May 2027 to develop their own five-year Corporate Plan that will run from 2028 through until 2033. The Corporate Priorities listed in Corporate Plan for the 2022 to 2028 Council term are listed below. Beneath each heading are examples of the types of actions that will help deliver each priority:

1. **A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs**:
    - Ensuring that people can access quality housing that meet their needs.
    - Helping people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
    - Working to prevent homelessness.

2. **A prosperous Denbighshire**
    - Supporting economic growth.
    - Developing a plan to grow Denbighshire's businesses in the future.

- Providing advice and support for business growth and helping local communities to thrive.
- Maintaining a quality road network and enabling people to access education, employment, services, and activities.
- Supporting communities with improved digital networks and skills.

3. A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire

- Delivering high standards of social care.
- Supporting people of all ages to live well and be safe.
- Helping people to live independently, providing support when needed.
- Working to support personal and community well-being.
- Ensuring that everyone can access services in Welsh naturally at all stages in their lives.
- Supporting the broader use of Welsh and the celebration of Welsh culture.
- Working to address the inequality and poverty faced by our communities.

4. A learning and growing Denbighshire

- Supporting parents, and young children in the early stages of their development.
- Making sure everyone has fair opportunities to learn.
- Providing quality buildings and facilities that support learning and thriving communities.
- Supporting people to learn new skills, volunteer and find good jobs.

5. A greener Denbighshire

- To become a net carbon zero and ecologically positive organisation by 2030.
- Looking after and improving the natural environment.
- Working with communities to cope with and reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Improve recycling rates and reduce waste.
- Supporting our green infrastructure.

6. A well-run, high performing Council

- Embedding a positive culture of ambition, transparency, and improvement.
- Developing close and trusted relationships between our staff, elected members and our communities.
- Ensuring the Council is well-run and good value for money.
- Ensuring Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and an excellent place to work.

The Council is fortunate in that its thematic scrutiny committee structure provides sufficient flexibility to enable any of the committees to examine various aspects of the Authority's progress in delivering its corporate priorities. Performance Scrutiny Committee monitors the Council's overall progress in delivering the Corporate Plan.

The Council's progress in delivering individual themes, as well as specific initiatives or services that contribute in one way or another to the overall delivery of the Corporate Plan, are continually scrutinised and monitored throughout the Plan's life. The frequency of the scrutiny work is determined by the progress made with their delivery or concerns that come to light with respect of particular aspects of their deliverability.

Call-in of Cabinet decisions

The Council's Call-In Procedure was invoked twice during 2025/26. An overview of the decisions called in for review is set out below:

'The Public Conveniences Savings Proposal – Local Needs Assessment and Draft Local Toilet Strategy'

The local needs assessment identified the communities where there was a greater need for public conveniences. Cabinet therefore decided to invest in those areas where a future need had been identified, in order to modernise facilities to operate on an unstaffed, cashless payment basis before handing the assets over to the relevant city, town, or community council to operate and manage.

In communities where public conveniences currently existed but did not meet the future needs threshold, the relevant city, town, or community council—or, in some cases, other organisations—were approached to determine whether they would be willing to take ownership and responsibility for the asset without upfront investment from the Council. If these councils or organisations were unwilling to assume responsibility for managing the asset, the public conveniences would be closed and the buildings decommissioned.

Naturally, this caused concern among residents and members alike, resulting in the Council's Call-In Procedure Rules being invoked and the Cabinet decision being called in for review. Partnerships Scrutiny Committee undertook that review and, having heard evidence and arguments both in support of and against the decision, referred it back to Cabinet. Scrutiny recommended that Cabinet reconsider its decision to close existing Denbighshire County Council-operated public conveniences. It further recommended that these services be retained and funded by a 0.27% increase in the Council Tax base for 2026/27.

The Committee's rationale for making this recommendation was that such an increase in Council Tax would represent a fair and proportionate investment in protecting health, dignity, and accessibility for all residents and visitors across the county. Whilst Cabinet, upon

reconsideration, reaffirmed its original decision, it also agreed a number of amendments in light of Scrutiny's recommendations. These included continuing meaningful discussions with relevant public or third-sector organisations with a view to keeping the public conveniences open; considering the proposed increase in the Council Tax base as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process; and ensuring that none of the public conveniences would be closed or decommissioned until the outcomes of these discussions and processes had been concluded.

'Future of Cefndy'

This decision was called in for review under the Council's Call-In Procedure Rules on the basis that it had been taken without sufficient consideration being given to reasonable alternatives, such as social enterprises and business remodelling, as Scrutiny had recommended during its pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals.

Following consideration of the decision, on the basis upon which it was called in for further examination, Performance Scrutiny Committee resolved to refer it back to Cabinet for reconsideration. Scrutiny recommended that Cabinet review its original decision and, in doing so, have regard to Scrutiny's comments and undertake a detailed feasibility study involving elected members and others currently involved with the service.

Consequently, Cabinet agreed to pause the implementation of the decision to close Cefndy for a period of six months to allow all interested parties time to develop a viable financial business case to secure a sustainable future for the service. A working group comprising elected members, employee representatives, and officers has been established to take this work forward. This group is expected to report its findings and conclusions to Scrutiny during the forthcoming financial year.

Positive outcomes of the scrutiny process

One of the main objectives of the scrutiny process is to add value and to ensure that decisions taken by the Council have a positive impact on the lives of people who live, work, and visit Denbighshire. There is an expectation for Scrutiny to evidence the benefits it has added to the decision-making process and how those benefits manifest themselves in better outcomes for the residents and businesses of Denbighshire. Such benefits are, in the main, generally difficult to evidence; however, the overall objective of Scrutiny is to support better decision-making which, in turn, delivers better services. Therefore, the earlier Scrutiny is involved in the decision-making process, the better—this is usually referred to as 'pre-decision scrutiny'.

Pre-decision scrutiny of any proposals gives Scrutiny members more time to shape and influence decisions, which should lead to better, evidence-based decisions being taken and, in turn, deliver improved outcomes for all. During times of financial austerity, involving Scrutiny as early as possible in shaping how the Council will fulfil its role in delivering services is particularly important, as it can act as the residents' advocate and voice in shaping future service delivery models.

As mentioned above, it is generally difficult to pinpoint specific examples of how Scrutiny has directly influenced improvements in service delivery. Occasionally, the benefits of Scrutiny's work may not become evident for an extended period. Following a devastating moorland fire on Llantysilio Mountain in 2018, the Council's Communities Scrutiny Committee instigated a review into the circumstances that led to the fire, various partner organisations' response to the incident, and the fire's impact on the local community. That review concluded that the lack of robust land management on the mountain had contributed to the duration of the fire and its devastating effects on all concerned.

One of the recommendations that arose from the review was that a Moorland Management Officer post should be established to support the coordination of work between various agencies, landowners, farmers, graziers, and local communities on land management activities and plans. It was felt that having a designated officer for this purpose could help

support the effective management of upland habitats, ecosystems, and economies in order to reduce the risk of wildfires. As a result of the task and finish group's work, funding was eventually secured in partnership with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to employ a Moorland Management Officer. It was therefore extremely pleasing to learn, in October 2025, that the Council's Countryside Services' work in relation to the Moorland Management Project—established as a direct response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny review—had been recognised when the Service was awarded the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Community Safety Partner Award.

Communities Scrutiny Committee



Cllr. Karen Edwards **(Chair)**



Cllr Brian Jones **(Vice-Chair)**

The following link will take you to information about the Communities Scrutiny Committee, its agendas and reports on the Council's website

Communities Scrutiny Committee examines matters that directly affect local communities and residents' daily lives. These may be matters within the Council's direct control or aspects of day-to-day life which the Council may be able to influence.

The items scrutinised by the Committee in 2025/26 all related to at least one of the Corporate Priorities which contribute to the commitment to deliver the 'Denbighshire We Want' under the Corporate Plan.

Following the transformation of the Waste and Recycling Service, under the Corporate Priority of a Greener Denbighshire, the Committee were keen to review the **Waste & Recycling Service Revenue and End of Lane Policy.** The new waste service enabled better separation of recyclable materials at the kerbside, allowing the Council to sell materials and generate income, rather than paying for offloading waste for processing as before.

Predicted income for 2024/25 had been £1.2 million, actual annual income achieved was £800,000 (based on 10 months of service following the rollout in June 2024). The lower

income was attributed to early rollout issues and market price variability. However, future income was expected to improve as the service stabilised.

The Committee heard that 36 households had been notified of a change in service, that due to difficulties in accessing their properties they would need to present their waste at End of Lane for collection. The Waste Policy was under review following changes to the service. Members were assured that assisted collections remained available to all residents, including those on end-of-lane arrangements.

The Committee raised concerns at the potential inclusion of adopted roads for consideration of end of lane collections. Members requested stronger consultation with residents and ward members and suggested exploring alternative solutions (e.g., smaller vehicles) instead of end-of-lane collection where possible. The Committee requested a further report on the Waste Policy and impact of the proposed amendments before making any changes to it.

Subsequently the **Waste & Recycling End of Lane Policy Revision** was presented. The review was prompted by operational challenges and feedback from members, residents, and service operators, with the aim of clarifying and tightening policy wording, not reducing services. The Committee recommended that local ward members be consulted before implementing any changes arising from identified collection risks.

Continuing the Greener Denbighshire priority the Committee were presented with plans to introduce a pair or family of beavers into a 24-acre enclosed area within **Green Gates Nature Reserve** (70 acres total) in St Asaph. The project would be funded through a Nature Grant from Welsh Government.

The project supported the Council's duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and aligned with its goal to enhance biodiversity and become an ecologically positive council by 2030. Beavers were described as "ecosystem engineers" whose activities (dam building, burrowing, foraging) could increase biodiversity and create new habitats.

The project aimed to deliver educational opportunities, guided visits, and community engagement, with potential wellbeing benefits which were welcomed by the Committee.

The Corporate Priority that received the greatest focus from the Committee in 2025/26 was A Denbighshire of Quality Housing That Meets People's Needs, with a range of services supporting it and topics discussed.

The **Emergency Response to Heating Loss (Vulnerable Tenants) report** explained how Housing Services supported vulnerable tenants during heating loss, particularly during power outages at a localised level, and outlined broader emergency response arrangements for major outage events.

Housing staff regularly supported tenants during emergencies (e.g. flooding, fire, pandemic). With respect to vulnerable tenants and heating in particular, proactive contact was made ahead of severe weather warnings and as well as improvements to out of hours contact systems, information on vulnerable tenants was shared with energy providers for support.

If outages were localised and prolonged, the Council could open rest centres to provide warmth, food and drinks. The Committee suggested that Town, City and Community Councils could be more involved in recovery efforts.

Statutory duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 required the Authority to identify suitable permanent sites for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) (approved May 2024).

The conclusions of a Task and Finish Group's **Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment** was presented to the Committee advising that sites had been assessed using Welsh Government guidance and one site had been identified as the most suitable option.

The Committee raised concerns over the site selection process, particularly the evidence and analysis used. Local members queried restriction of the search to one town, the family's 'established link' and subsequently other potential sites being overlooked. Moreover, the preferred site had potential conflict with existing housing allocation plans.

A further report was presented to the Committee detailing the extensive site assessment work undertaken. Originally as part of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

(2017/18), 50–60 sites across the county were reviewed. For the site assessment exercise, around 40 sites in a specific local area - due to the long-standing local connection of the family involved - were reassessed. Only three sites identified were initially potentially suitable but after further evaluation only one site was suitable.

The Committee accepted the Task and Finish Group had carried out its role appropriately but were unable to accept that the site selected was the only suitable site at that time and requested officers undertake further research to investigate a particular alternative site. The Committee were reminded that ultimately it would be the decision of the Planning Committee whether the proposed site would be approved.

Each year the **Housing Rent Setting and HRA Budgets** were presented for pre-decision scrutiny, to consider the proposed rent increase for council housing tenants ahead of Cabinet approval.

Welsh Government policy allowed increases based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate (3.8%) + 0.5%, giving a maximum increase of 4.3% in 2026/27. The maximum 4.3% increase was recommended due to rising costs and financial pressures to maintain housing standards (Welsh Housing Quality Standards) and the Council's continuing ambition to develop new homes.

The Committee were assured that rent levels were tested using the Joseph Rowntree "Living Rent" model and confirmed to be affordable, with rents remaining below the benchmark of 28% of household income. The Committee supported the proposal and recommended its presentation to Cabinet for approval.

Increasing affordable housing availability by reducing second homes and empty properties was the aim of the **Review of Second Home / Long-Term Empty Council Tax Premium.**

Assessing the impact of previous premium increase it was found that second home numbers had remained stable and standard long-term empty properties were showing a reduction in numbers. Continued monitoring but no change of premium was being recommended.

Long Term Empty properties for over 5 years (LTE >5Y) however were identified as a significant issue within Denbighshire (amongst the highest levels in North Wales). The report recommended that a 25% premium be levied upon LTE>5Y each year from 2026 up to the 300% maximum.

Additional Policy Changes would include a new section 13A under the Discretionary Relief Policy with categories introduced for General Renovation and Major Renovation. The purpose of these was to support new owners renovating long-term empty properties, especially where relief had already been used by previous owners.

The Committee supported the review and recommendations for Full Council (July 2025) and highlighted the need to communicate the policy changes to property sector stakeholders.

It was hoped that bringing long term empty properties back into the housing market – particularly the rental sector could reduce the impact on the Homeless Service. The Authority's **Temporary Accommodation Assessment Process** explained how the Council assessed and managed Temporary Emergency Accommodation (TEA) and Temporary Accommodation (TA) for homeless households.

TEA was historically procured on a needs basis through hotels/B&Bs and were purchased per room, per night. Whereas TA were self-contained leased properties sourced from Community Housing, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the private rented sector.

The Authority was moving over to a new model of TEA based upon the requirements of the Suitability of Accommodation (Wales) Order 2015. Premises were generally limited to a maximum of 10 bedrooms, all with en-suite facilities and adequate shared cooking facilities. There were 5 properties of that type being leased through 'The Sanctuary Trust'. Significant savings were being made due to payments being made on an annual rate.

Overhauling the temporary accommodation system would ensure legal compliance, improve quality, reduce reliance on hotels/B&Bs, and achieve significant cost savings. A new assessment process would standardise expectations for all providers, with annual reviews and strict compliance requirements e.g. planning permission and licensing requirements.

The Planning Compliance Function although a discretionary service to the Council Planning Compliance was of strategic importance and essential to the planning system - ensuring sustainable development, biodiversity protection, contribution to climate and ecological goals etc.. The role included investigating breaches, issuing notices, and potentially legal action. Its work fulfils various aspects of the Corporate Plan, success contributes to a well-run, high performing Council.

The Service was recovering from severe staff shortages (zero in 2024) and had recruited 2 Planning Compliance Officers (PCO). The number of PCOs was still low compared to neighbouring authorities and it was proving a challenge to breakthrough the backlog of cases requiring investigation. Agreement to amendments to the adopted Planning Compliance Charter were sought in order to manage expectations of how cases could be investigated and resolved. Concerns were raised about resource pressures and workload demand. The Committee requested that an options appraisal for further expansion of the team be explored.

Resource pressures were an ongoing concern throughout the Authority. **Parking Enforcement** was scrutinised by the Committee early in the year. The Committee heard that the Authority's approach to parking enforcement aimed to strike a balance between road safety and traffic flow in addition to the impact on businesses and communities. Parking restrictions were necessary due to high demand and limited spaces. However, the topography of the county made it challenging to provide adequate cover for all areas with a small team of 5 enforcement officers.

The Service was self-funded, with generated income being re-invested back into the Service. During the year the Service had undergone a restructure increasing staffing capacity - enabling improved deployment of officers and reducing travel time, particularly in the south of the county - which contributed to greater on-street presence and more targeted enforcement activity.

The service continued to move towards a more intelligence led approach to evaluate the **Effectiveness of Parking Enforcement Activities**, with work progressing to improve data

collection and analysis to fully understand parking patterns and support future business cases.

Exploration of new technologies, including Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and data-driven tools, remained ongoing at the feasibility stage. Those tools had the potential to support better targeting of enforcement and improve overall efficiency, striving towards a more Prosperous Denbighshire.

The continued budgetary pressures had seen the need to make some very difficult decisions – particularly relating to non-statutory services. The Committee were asked to consider the **Public Conveniences Savings Proposal** prior to it being presented to Cabinet for a decision.

The County Council could no longer continue to subsidise the service and therefore proposed three options to City, Town and Community Councils - Community Asset Transfer (CTCCs took ownership), undertaking Service Level Agreements (where DCC retained ownership with CTCC contributing financially) or closure.

The Committee raised concerns relating to the impact on vulnerable users, the inequity of access and cost across communities, robustness of the usage data used for income projection and lack of exploration of alternative solutions. The Committee felt that closure of public conveniences would have a detrimental impact on tourism within the county and was contrary to Corporate Priorities, particularly A Prosperous Denbighshire and A Healthier & Happier, Caring Denbighshire.

Linked to those key priorities an important update on **The Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) Development** in Rhyl was presented to the Committee. It remained a key priority for Denbighshire, with progress continuing despite earlier funding constraints that required a reduced £60m scheme to be developed from the original 2021 proposal.

The proposed project was being delivered in two phases, with Phase 1 focusing on a new clinical building—including a Minor Injuries and Ailments Unit, reablement beds, expanded radiology and dental services, and community facilities—supported by a proposed £35.9m

investment, while Phase 2 would address refurbishment of the existing building and infrastructure improvements.

The development aimed to improve access to local, integrated health and care services, reduce pressure on Ysbyty Glan Clwyd, and support care closer to home. Key milestones indicated construction completion and full commissioning of Phase 1 by 2027/28, although members raised concerns about timelines, limited bed capacity, and parking pressures. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board were committed to keeping Scrutiny informed as the project progressed.

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee



Cllr. Joan Butterfield **(Chair)**



Cllr. Peter Scott **(Vice-Chair)**

This Committee is responsible for examining the effectiveness of services provided by the Council either in collaboration, or in partnership, with other public sector organisations, and for making sure that those services are meeting the needs of residents.

The following link will take you to information about the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, its agendas and reports on the Council's website

As partnership working arrangements continue to evolve to meet the growing demand for statutory services, the Committee has maintained its focus on examining the effectiveness of various partnership and collaborative arrangements in delivering these services to residents and communities. As part of this work, it scrutinised, through examination of its **Annual Report 2024/25**, the work of the **North Wales Regional Partnership Board** in facilitating public organisations such as health and social care services along with voluntary groups, charities and other organisations, to work together to provide support and prevention services to the most vulnerable members of our communities. The aim of this work is to improve citizens' health and wellbeing and reduce the need for more costly intervention services.

Likewise, the Committee had the opportunity to discuss with a representative from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) the Health Board's plans to establish a **Health and Wellbeing Hub for the Denbigh area** at the former County Council offices at Caledfryn in Denbigh. It also had the opportunity to provide observations on initial, innovative proposals centred on the development of the Dolwen and Cysgodfa complexes in the town, which are aimed at future-proofing the delivery of **Social Care Services in Denbigh**.

The delivery of health and wellbeing support to the county's communities is heavily reliant on volunteers and voluntary organisations. Being acutely aware of this dependency, and the growing demand for third-sector support, the Committee invited the Chief Officer of Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) to meet with members to discuss **Working with the Third Sector in Denbighshire**. This included DVSC's role in signposting and assisting voluntary and community organisations to apply for external funding streams to support their delivery of vital intervention and support services. The Council itself is not permitted to directly apply for these types of funding; however, organisations that can apply save the local authority substantial sums of money by delivering valuable support services

At the same time as the Council strives to meet the continuing growth in demand for both adult and children's statutory social care services by devising innovative approaches to support vulnerable individuals, it must also adapt service provision to comply with legislative changes. One such change is the **Removal or Elimination of Profit from the Care of Children Looked After**. Whilst the objectives underpinning this change are commendable, it poses significant risks to local authorities in terms of commissioning suitable placements for very vulnerable children and young people. On this basis, the Committee will continue to examine both local and regional developments aimed at delivering effective, safe and sustainable care solutions. Amongst the proposals on how to meet the growing demand in this area are the establishment of a small group home and improving the recruitment and retention of foster carers - both of which form part of the Council's Transformation agenda. The Committee was pleased, when examining the findings of **Care Inspectorate Wales' Inspection of the Council's Fostering Services** and its **Improvement Check of Children's Services,** to receive assurances that both services were working effectively, had

a clear vision for further development, and were supported corporately and politically in meeting their statutory responsibilities.

Following disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to regulators' ability to undertake regular inspection visits, particularly to care establishments, the Council's Social Care Services have, during the past year, been subject to several Care Inspectorate Wales inspections. In addition to those already mentioned, the Committee examined the inspection report on **Cysgod y Gaer** care home in Corwen. It was pleased with the regulator's conclusions that improvements had been made in staffing levels since the previous inspection, and that care and support, wellbeing, and the environment within the home were rated as good. Further Regulator's reports on other areas will be considered in the forthcoming year.

During the year the Committee continued with its role in examining the performance of the Council's Safeguarding Team in fulfilling its duties in **Safeguarding Adults in Denbighshire during 2024/25.** The Team was commended on their excellent services in undertaking an extremely challenging but critically important role in keeping vulnerable residents safe.

The **'Our Rhyl' Regeneration Project – Pride in Place Programme** is a UK Government initiative aimed at securing approximately £20 million of investment over a ten-year period (2026–2036). A key condition of funding was the establishment of a community-led Board to develop a 10-year vision and a four-year delivery plan. Although the Council is the "responsible body", the Board itself is not Council-led.

To enable funding to be drawn down, a Strategy and Delivery Plan were required by the end of November 2025. Following consideration of the draft Strategy, the Committee recommended that Cabinet request the Board to remove references to specific projects and instead create a 'Strategic Project Fund' to support large, long-term initiatives. It also recommended establishing a 'Community Regeneration Fund' for smaller projects deliverable in the early years. Additionally, it advised reviewing the Board's governance and

membership to ensure appropriate skills and representation. These recommendations were fully endorsed by Cabinet.

Scrutiny of economic development remains a key function of the Committee, particularly in relation to **Ambition North Wales** and the **North Wales Growth Deal**. The Committee continued to receive quarterly reports and conducted a formal scrutiny session following publication of the **2024/25 Annual Report**. Plans are in place to establish a regional Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) for this purpose, but until then, the Committee will continue this role.

In addition to being the Council's designated committee for scrutinising the North Wales Growth Deal, Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is also the designated committee for scrutinising crime and disorder in accordance with the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006. In fulfilling its statutory responsibilities in relation to crime and disorder the Committee reviewed the **Conwy and Denbighshire Community Safety Partnership Annual Report for 2024/25** and discussed progress, challenges and priorities with partners, including North Wales Police.

Community safety relates to reducing crime, and the fear of crime within communities. In some communities this is intrinsically linked to incidents of serious organised crime. One such area, which was selected by the Home Office to benefit from a targeted programme of work to try and reduce crime levels, improve living standards and life outcomes, was Rhyl West. The **Renew Rhyl – Clear, Hold, Build Initiative**, in place between April 2024 and March 2026 was aimed at reducing serious organised crime and strengthening community resilience. The programme, which was facilitated but not delivered by the Council, was divided into through three distinct phases: **Clear**, which removed immediate serious threats through targeted enforcement; **Hold**, which consolidated and stabilised the area; and **Build** which delivered a whole system approach to tackle the drivers of crime and prevent harm from returning. Committee members were keen to understand whether the Clear and Hold phases of the programme had enabled all partner organisations involved with this work to develop strong networks across services and organisations which would ensure that the gains made were sustainable in the long-term, through increased community resilience and

empowerment. Members were encouraged that partnership working had improved communication, trust and collaboration between organisations, and urged all involved to actively continue to work together beyond the programme's conclusion in order to realise sustainable long-term benefits for the local community.

Since April 2022 Bryson Recycling Limited has been contracted to manage the operation of the Council's **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)**. Cabinet, when awarding this particular contract asked Scrutiny to monitor the contract's effectiveness in achieving the anticipated service-delivery savings as well as in generating the projected income levels. As the contract had been in operation for three years the Committee felt it was timely for an evaluation of the contract's effectiveness to take place. Whilst acknowledging the progress made so far in delivering cost savings and improving recycling levels at these centres the Committee were keen for more marketing work to be undertaken with residents to promote the services available at the county's household waste recycling centres, along with their availability for use by residents from Conwy County Borough Council area if their geographic location was nearer to their homes than the ones located within Conwy county itself, and vice-versa for Denbighshire residents to use recycling centres in Conwy.

Members who had seen a television documentary on contaminated land in the UK were keen to understand how the Council carried out its statutory duties in relation to **Contaminated Land**. The Committee examined the Council's duties and its processes for undertaking this work. While it acknowledged the Council's efforts in undertaking its responsibilities within the limited resources available to it, and its work with partner organisations, in identifying, prioritising and remediating contaminated land within the county it also recommended that the current strategy be reviewed to make sure it met present day needs. Once the review has been completed the revised strategy will be presented to the Committee for pre-decision scrutiny prior to its approval.

Budget constraints continue to affect the delivery of Council services, particularly discretionary services. A new **Local Needs Assessment and Draft Local Toilet Strategy** was approved by Cabinet but subsequently called in for scrutiny. The Committee considered this decision early in the 2025/26 municipal year. The outcomes of Committee's review of

the decision are reported elsewhere in this report under the 'Call-In of Cabinet Decisions' section.

In addition to having a joint Community Safety Partnership service with Conwy, both counties operate a joint **Youth Justice Service (YJS)**. As was reported in last year's annual report following receipt of a critical report on this joint service back in May 2024 an action plan was drawn up to address the HM Inspectorate of Probation's (HMIP) recommendations. Having held a successful joint informal meeting of Conwy County Borough Council's Social Care & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Denbighshire's Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in early 2025 to jointly examine the progress made up until then in securing the required improvements identified by the Regulator, members of both authorities agreed that adopting a joint approach to monitoring the action plan's delivery should continue. The second joint meeting of the committees was held in March 2026. It was extremely pleasing for both authorities to be able to acknowledge the considerable progress made by the YJS and its partners in continuing its improvement journey and in building upon and sustaining the improvements made to date. Both committees have agreed to meet again in 2027 to review progress against the Improvement Plan and to ensure that all changes are fully embedded in day-to-day practice and remain sustainable in the long term.

Performance Scrutiny Committee



Cllr. Terry Mendies **(Chair)**



Cllr. Gareth Sandilands **(Vice-Chair)**

The following link will take you to information about the Performance Scrutiny Committee, its agendas and reports on the Council's website

Performance Scrutiny Committee has a key role to play in ensuring that the Council delivers quality services to residents and in supporting it to deliver its Corporate Plan. During 2025/26 it continued its work on focussing on the Council's performance in delivering its day-to-day services, its progress to date in bringing its Corporate Plan to fruition and realising its ambition of being a well-run high performing Council.

Securing and maintaining the delivery of high-quality services while demand and costs are increasing, and financial resources are reducing, has been a constant challenge throughout the term of this Council. As part of its duties, Performance Scrutiny Committee regularly examines the Council's ability to fulfil its statutory duties and realise its ambitions, while also managing all identified risks that may impact on the delivery of those services. In undertaking this role, the Committee reviews the **Corporate Risk Register** to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to effectively manage all known risks to service delivery.

In addition to examining the **Council's Annual Self-Assessment** of its performance in delivering services and ambitions, the Committee regularly monitors progress in delivering the **Corporate Plan**, identifying any slippage as early as possible in order to recommend

workable solutions to secure delivery of the Plan's objectives within the designated timeframe.

During the year, as part of its budget monitoring work, it examined the **Welsh Government's Provisional Funding Settlement for 2026/27** and the **Council's Budget Setting Proposals** arising from that settlement, along with their likely impact on the delivery of the **Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Plan**. In doing so, it once again acknowledged the pressures faced by the Council, similar to all local authorities, in attempting to set a balanced budget against a backdrop of growing demand for statutory services and rising costs. On this basis, it asked the Cabinet Member for Finance to write to the Welsh Government Secretary with responsibility for local government funding, emphasising the disparity which exists between funding levels awarded and the continuing growth in demand for services which the Council is legally required to provide, such as education and social care.

Attempting to balance rising demand for services, particularly intensive and specialist social care for both children and adults, is extremely challenging and requires innovative service delivery practices. While some services are delivered solely by the Council's Social Services staff, others are delivered in partnership with organisations or commissioned from external providers. Having examined the **Director of Social Services' Annual Report**, the Committee is acutely aware of the financial and resource pressures facing the Council as it strives to meet rising demand in this area. It commended the Service for the innovative solutions developed to meet these demands and for improving outcomes for individuals by meeting their needs, maintaining their independence, and keeping them safe in their own homes for as long as possible.

During the year, with the support of the co-opted lay members for education, the Committee continued to monitor educational performance and related matters. School staff representatives from both primary and secondary sectors attended a meeting to discuss **Promoting School Attendance and Engagement**. They briefed members on initiatives and practices introduced to support vulnerable pupils, re-engage them in their education, which will in turn hopefully improve their prospects and life outcomes.

Similarly, the Committee continued to monitor the progress made by the Education Service and the county's schools in meeting the statutory requirements relating to **Additional Learning Needs** provision in schools following the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. The provisions of which had to be fully implemented by August 2025. The Committee continued its monitoring of the progress made by **Christ the Word School** as it strives to move out of special measures, by discussing the improvements achieved to date along with the continuing challenges with school representatives, school improvement officers and Education Service staff. Members will continue to monitor progress in these areas during the forthcoming year. The Committee considers the attendance of school-based staff at meetings to be highly beneficial, as it provides members with valuable insight into daily challenges and a clearer understanding of the solutions being developed to improve outcomes for learners and staff.

Climate change affects everyone's lives and requires services to adapt to changing risks and needs. Following the 2024 review of the Council's Climate and Ecological Strategy**,** which resulted in it being re-named the **Climate and Nature Strategy**, the Committee undertook to monitor the progress with its delivery on an annual basis. The Committee acknowledged that the expanded scope of the Strategy, including a wider area-based approach to carbon reduction, sequestration and nature recovery, would not only address climate risks but also deliver broader long-term societal benefits.

As in previous years the Committee continued to monitor the Library Service's performance in delivering services against the Welsh Government's **Standards and Performance for Library Services**. The Committee was particularly keen to examine the impact the reduction in library opening hours during the 2024/25 had on the quality of the service provided by libraries to the communities they served. Although the reduction in hours did not come into force until June 2026, part-way through the reporting year, the Committee was extremely pleased to learn that the Service despite the added pressures had continued to perform extremely well meeting the majority of the main national targets. Despite these constraints the libraries seemed as busy as ever, and the Service was still able to deliver additional services and events which contributed to the wider Welsh Government priorities

and strategic goals. During the forthcoming year, the Committee will consider a full-year performance report under the reduced-hours model. The Committee also endorsed a request from the **Libraries Taskforce**, established to assess the impact of reduced hours, to continue its work for a further twelve months. This extension will allow sufficient time for the taskforce to explore alternative solutions that could generate income to reinstate original opening hours and potentially expand services.

In response to complaints by residents in relation to delays in processing planning applications following the implementation of a new computer system to register and process applications the Committee scrutinised the **Procurement and Effectiveness of the New Planning IT System**. As part of this work it examined the processes followed in procuring the new system along with the impact on staff and other stakeholders because of the problems encountered with its implementation. Weaknesses in project management were identified, contributing to delays and a backlog of applications. The Committee will continue to monitor the system's performance until it is satisfied that it is functioning as expected. As a result of the lessons learnt from the procurement of this ICT system the Committee recommended strengthening the Council's Corporate **Project Management Arrangements for the Procurement and Management of Critical IT Systems.**

Budget monitoring and business transformation work initiated in 2024/25 continued during 2025/26 and will continue for the foreseeable future. One of the measures implemented in a bid to generate more income to cover maintenance and running costs of the Council's car parks was to increase parking charges and to extend the hours for which a charge was payable for parking. However, as reported in last year's report the changes made did not generate the anticipated levels of income. In a bid to try and address the shortfall an alternative **Proposed Car Park Tariff Structure** was drawn up. The Committee was consulted on this new tariff structure, which aimed to set tariffs based on the actual demand for parking spaces at individual car parks rather than levy a universal charge across all car parks. Members were supportive of the proposed new car park tariff structure but did request that all county councillors be consulted on the proposals before they were

introduced to enable them to provide feedback on the potential impact of the tariffs on their local area.

As the Council seeks to reduce service delivery costs without compromising quality, it has initiated a programme of work to transform the way services are delivered. Scrutiny Committees have been tasked with reviewing major Transformation Programme proposals. Reference has been made earlier in this report that Performance Scrutiny Committee will focus on projects within the "Influencing Demand and Digital" sphere. With plans to upgrade the customer contact system, the Council aims to meet increasing demand for digital interaction while ensuring accessibility for those who prefer non-digital methods. The Committee examined proposals for a new digital platform, which will include an enhanced customer relationship management system and various communication tools, forming part of the **Customer Contact Project**, to ensure that it will meet the needs of all users.

For several years the Committee has monitored the performance of Cefndy, a unique service and enterprise which provides employment and career opportunities for some of the county's most vulnerable residents. In recent years there had been concerns about the Service's long-term viability. In the face of declining sales figures, ageing machinery and increased product manufacturing costs the Committee examined a report on the **Future of Cefndy**. Whilst acknowledging that the Service was facing severe cost pressures the Committee felt that further work should be undertaken before Cabinet took a decision on the Service's future. The Committee recommended to Cabinet that it commit to keeping Cefndy open for a sufficient period of time to enable all alternative options to be fully and independently explored and that a costs and benefits analysis was undertaken both from a financial and social perspective on the impact of closing the Service. Despite these recommendations, Cabinet decided that closure was the only viable option. This decision was called in for review on the grounds that reasonable alternatives had not been fully considered. More information on the conclusions of the call-in process can be found elsewhere in this report in the section on 'Call-in of Cabinet' decisions

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board

The Conwy and Denbighshire Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) was established by both authorities during the term of the previous Council for the purpose of fulfilling their statutory duties of scrutinising the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board (PSB). This Committee comprises of 16 members, 8 representing Conwy County Borough Council and 8 representing Denbighshire County Council. Each Council's representation on the JOSC reflects the political balance of their Council. The JOSC's terms of reference specifies that the Chair and Vice-Chair will alternate every two years between the elected membership of Denbighshire and Conwy councils. Dependent on which Council's turn it is to Chair the JOSC, the Vice-Chair will be appointed from amongst the other Council's representatives on the committee. During 2025/26 the responsibility for chairing the JOSC for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 municipal years returned to Denbighshire. Councillor Gareth Sandilands was appointed as the JOSC's Chair with Councillor Cheryl Carlisle from Conwy being elected as its Vice-Chair.

The JOSC met three times during 2025/26. During these meetings members had an opportunity to discuss with the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales, as well as with representatives from both Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) and Community Voluntary Support Conwy (CVSC) their **commitment and contribution to the work of the PSB, as well as the benefits to them as organisations of being invited participants on the Board**.

Members also met with a representative form Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) on the development of the **Healthy Travel Charter** and how the Charter's objectives align with those of the PSB and its partner organisations. The Charter promotes sustainable travel to improve community health and reduce environmental impact. It is designed to encourage collaboration across public service organisations, support meaningful changes in travel behaviour, and act as a catalyst for innovation and shared learning. Its goals also support national net-zero commitments. Because transport, public

health, and climate resilience are closely linked, the Charter is seen as an important driver for transforming regional service delivery.

It is important to note that the JOSC's scrutiny powers only extend to how partner organisations contribute to the PSB's work. The Joint Committee cannot scrutinise an organisation's wider policies or its performance outside its PSB role. However, the JOSC does have specific duties it must carry out in relation to the PSB. This year, it reviewed the PSB's progress in delivering its Well-being Plan 2023–2028 by examining the **PSB's Annual Report for 2024/25**. After considering the **PSB's Risk Register**, its risk-management arrangements, and a **Well-being Plan Progress Update (April–September 2025) Report**, the Committee was satisfied that the PSB was making good progress towards delivering its Well-being Plan 2023-28, in line with the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Towards the end of the year, the JOSC also provided feedback on the **Draft Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Annual Report for 2025/26** before it was approved for publication.

During the forthcoming year the JOSC will, amongst other matters, be consulted on the new draft Well-being Assessment. It is a legal requirement for the PSB to consult with the JOSC when preparing its Well-being Assessment.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board



Cllr. Gareth Sandilands **(Chair)**



Cllr. Cheryl Carlisle **(Vice-Chair)**

Membership

Conwy County Borough Council

- Cllr. Cheryl Carlisle (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr. David Gerard Carr
- Cllr. Gwennol Ellis
- Cllr. Bernice McLoughlin
- Cllr. Emily Owen
- Cllr Austin Roberts
- Cllr. John Roberts
- Cllr. Geoff Stewart

Denbighshire County Council

- Cllr. Joan Butterfield
- Cllr. Kelly Clewett
- Cllr. Pauline Edwards
- Cllr. Alan Hughes
- Cllr. Paul Keddie
- Cllr. Terry Mendies
- Cllr. Will Price
- Cllr. Cllr. Gareth Sandilands (Chair)

The following link will take you to information about the Joint Committee, its agendas and reports on the Council's website

Scrutiny requests from residents

For a number of years Denbighshire's scrutiny committees has operated an established mechanism which enables residents to draw matters of concern to Scrutiny's attention. This is facilitated through the completion of a Scrutiny request form, available on the Council's website, or from the Scrutiny Co-ordinators. Completed scrutiny request forms are presented to the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group, in the same way as requests received from councillors, officers or other organisations for consideration and determination on whether the subject merits examination by one of the Scrutiny Committees, or whether greater benefits could be achieved if the matter was examined by another forum.

How can residents participate in Scrutiny?

Would you like scrutiny to look at a particular matter?

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

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

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

If you wish to take part in a discussion on a particular matter, you will require the permission of the Chair of the Committee. This can be facilitated by contacting one of the Scrutiny Co-ordinators, whose contact details can be found overleaf.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The minutes of previous scrutiny meetings and a record of the recommendations made are also available on the Council's website, as are the recordings of recent scrutiny committee meetings.

Further advice or information is available by contacting the Scrutiny Co-ordinators, Karen Evans on karen.a.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk (01824 712575) or Rhian Evans on rhian.evans@denbighshire.gov.uk (01824 712554), or by sending an e-mail to the following general e-mail address: democratic@denbighshire.gov.uk .

Scrutiny request form

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

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

Would you like to attend a meeting of a Scrutiny Committee? YES / NO

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

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

Please return this form to:

Scrutiny Co-ordinators
Corporate Support Service: People
Democratic Services
PO Box 62
Ruthin
LL15 9AZ
or e-mail it to democratic@denbighshire.gov.uk