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Contact Officer:
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To: Cllr Rita Johnson (Chair)

Councillors: Glyn Banks, Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Clive Carver, Bob Connah, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ian Dunbar, David Healey, Joe Johnson, Ted Palmer, Mike Peers, Michelle Perfect, Neville Phillips, Paul Shotton, Ian Smith, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley

23 November 2018

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee which will be held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 29th November, 2018 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 10)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2018.

4 WEBCASTING PROVISION (Pages 11 - 16)

Purpose: To determine whether to continue with the provision of Webcasting meetings of County Council and Planning Committee.

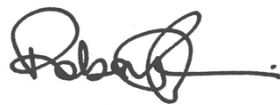
5 **AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CHARTER** (Pages 17 - 56)

Purpose: To seek Member's agreement to changes to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Charter, Article Seven of the Council's Constitution.

6 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18** (Pages 57 - 86)

Purpose: To consider and approve the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2017/18.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Robins', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
17 OCTOBER 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 17 October 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor Rita Johnson (Chair)

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Chris Bithell, Clive Carver, Bob Connah, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Ian Dunbar, David Healey, Joe Johnson, Mike Peers, Paul Shotton, David Williams, David Wisinger and Arnold Woolley.

SUBSTITUTES:

APOLOGIES: Councillor: Dave Wisinger

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors: Patrick Heesom (as an observer)
Alison Thomas and Kate Glover- Jones from the Youth Service

IN ATTENDANCE: Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Support Officer

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

10. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

The minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11. WALES AUDIT OFFICE STUDY – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY – FIT FOR THE FUTURE.

The Democratic Services Manager explained that the Wales audit office (WAO) had conducted their study by conducting interviews of both individuals and groups and by observing at a number of committee meetings between October and December last year. He identified a number of the councillors who had been involved. This had included a group of Members who were newly elected, as well as 'established' Members whose service went back to the previous council.

In addition, the Chief Executive, Chief Office (Governance), the Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer and the Democratic Services Manager had all been interviewed individually.

The Wales Audit Office had made four recommendations which were:-

- P1 The Council should undertake regular self-assessment of its overview and scrutiny function, to consider its impact, and identify areas for improvement.
- P2 Further develop scrutiny forward work programming to:
 - ensure that the method of scrutiny is best suited to the topic area and the outcome desired, and consider more innovative methods for undertaking scrutiny activity.
- P3 Overview and scrutiny committees should further improve their arrangements for promoting the engagement of the public and other stakeholders in scrutiny activity.
- P4 The Council should review the support arrangements for overview and scrutiny in light of current and future challenges.

The Democratic Services Manager invited Members of the Committee to consider and comment on these recommendations.

Councillor Dave Healey said that he was unable to agree with the recommendations, as he believed that they did not provide a true picture of how Overview & Scrutiny was now working. He referred to his role as Chair of the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee and commented this committee was not 'officer led' and referred to examples where Members had challenged officers on the following:-

- Impact of the internet on young people – what was Flintshire doing to highlight the dangers?
- Initiating a report on the Youth Service and how it operated – this issue was a Member request ;
- GwE – when they attended the committee, Members requested updates on diverse issues such as period poverty and school transport;

- Questions had also been asked about the impact of the cash flat budgets on schools. Head Teachers had attended and their representatives had spoken to Members and officers outlining their concerns.

Councillor Healey concluded by saying that these were just a few examples of how proactive scrutiny had been over the last year.

In response the Democratic Services Manager clarified the study had been carried out last autumn. He said that he, and other heads of democratic services had made the point to WAO that conducting such a study in local authorities which had recently undergone elections was not likely to provide an accurate reflection of scrutiny practice. As the new councils had 'bedded in' it was likely that there would have been a number of changes. In addition, observations from a small number of meetings should not be extrapolated to provide a picture of the whole.

Councillor Paul Shotton referred to the meetings held outside County Hall such as at Greenfield Valley, Wepre Park, and 21st Century Schools (Holywell, Connah's Quay High and the Hub). He said that these meetings in the community needed to be publicised more effectively to encourage public attendance.

Councillor Ian Dunbar agreed with the comments made by Councillor Healey. With regard to the Forward Work Programmes, that of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee, which he chaired was full, with topics put forward by members. He added Scrutiny was working very well but acknowledged that there was a need to engage more with the public.

Councillor Chris Bithell was concerned when he had met with the Wales Audit Office that they had already made up their minds prior to conducting the meetings and wondered to what extent the comments were general or specific to Flintshire. He reminded colleagues that the Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report highlighted what the Overview & Scrutiny Committees had discussed throughout the year. He added that as Cabinet Members, he and the others were constantly questioned by Members.

Councillor Bithell went on to refer to the Public Engagement Events which were held in previous years and which had been poorly attended by the public, which was regretful. He recognised that unless the meetings were discussing something perceived to be critical or that the public had a particular interest in they did not engage. He agreed if more members of the public attended the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings that would provide excellent public engagement.

The Democratic Services Manager commented he had seen some of the reports for other authorities and there was a commonality to them. However, he stressed that each council had its own specific recommendations. He also agreed with Councillor Bithell's comments on public engagement.

Councillor Mike Peers agreed with Councillor Healey's comments which should be noted as best practice and that the best practice from the other scrutiny committees should be put forward. He was disappointed that comments which had been made to the WAO on member experience, list of questions and topics reported back and the use of call in were not included in the final report.

Councillor Peers went on to refer to page 7 of the WAO “Overview and Scrutiny committee Members spoke highly of the support they received from the Democratic Services secretariat. However, they had mixed views about the information provided to committees. Several committee Members were concerned about the excessive length of some of the reports they received”; this would need addressing. On the basis of those comments, he felt that there should have been a fifth recommendation to say that “The Council should ensure Members have adequate information and that the reports were not too large”. With regard to paragraph 23, and the presentation to committees of reports “for information” Councillor Peers said this would require a response.

Councillor Clive Carver agreed with comments which had been made by colleagues. He referred to Corporate Resources minutes which were well written but which revealed contained a disappointing lack of questions scrutiny from Members of the administration group. He pointed out that a Member’s role on these committees was as a critical friend and that all Members regardless of party should be prepared to speak.

Councillor Marion Bateman commented the forward work programmes were an easy target for the Wales Audit Office and wondered if this report should be moved further up the agenda. The Democratic Services Manager responded to say this report was generally at the end to enable more reflective work which came up during the meeting to be included in the Forward Work Programme. However, the corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny committee had been considering their forward work programme at the start of the meeting for several meetings.

Councillor Chris Bithell countered Councillor Carver’s comments saying that Members of his group frequently asked challenging questions.

Councillor Glyn Banks agreed this seemed like a generic document and suggested that Members could each look at one authority’s report to ascertain what their responses were to this study.

Councillor Arnold Wooley agreed with Members on all sides. He suggested that introducing a system with independent members who would not shy away from controversial discussions.

The Democratic Services Manager responded that political balance was a requirement of the Local Authority and Housing Act 1989 and that only Welsh Government could change those rules

Councillor Dave Healey referred to Councillor Woolley’s comment on political balance saying the present system was the only way to obtain a balanced budget

The Democratic Services Manager referred to the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee which had 25% of its members as co-optees who were independent, representing parent governors and both diocesan authorities.

The democratic services manager sought agreement for circulation of the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) “effective scrutiny questionnaire” self-evaluation template to members. This was agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That four recommendations made by the Wales Audit Office in their *Overview & Scrutiny – Fit for the Future?* Study report be received.
- 2 That the officers be tasked with examining how the proposals could inform future Overview & Scrutiny work, including the circulation of the centre for Public scrutiny self-assessment template.

12. REQUEST FOR CO-OPTION TO THE EDUCATION & YOUTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report which was presented to gain agreement in principle for a member of the Flintshire Youth Council to attend and take part in the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Councillor Mike Peers asked when was the request being made and what expectations were envisaged for the representative attending Committee meetings.

The Democratic Services Manager responded to say the representative would have a non-statutory role with no right to vote, but would be able to speak. . The Committee would also benefit from hearing a young person's perspective. He envisaged a reciprocal arrangement with both the scrutiny committee and the Youth Council benefitting from the experience.

Councillor Chris Bithell welcomed the idea for the Education & Youth Committee and inquired whether the Youth Council nominee or deputy would be able to raise issues to go on the agenda.

The Democratic Services Manager said that they would be able so to do. He went on to explain the public engagement protocols which enabled any member of the public to attend, observe and speak at committees.

Councillor Dave Healey welcomed the suggestion, as did other Members.

The Democratic Services Manager suggested that Alison Thomas and Kate Glover- Jones from the Youth Service who were present could explain how the co-option arrangements would work. Ms Thomas said the representative would be probably be studying politics at school and would be given the time from school as part of the course. The Youth Council would be looking at the work covered by Local Authorities. Ms Thomas explained that the Youth Council was not yet ready to nominate a co-optee, but appreciated the support being given by the agreement in principle.

Councillor Marion Bateman made a suggestion that the Committee observe one of the Youth Council meetings.

The Democratic Services Manager confirmed the new co-optee would be given the same induction session as other co-opted members, to explain the processes of

committee and would be fully briefed. He went on suggest a caveat that if the Youth Council ceased to function, the co-option should also cease.

Councillor Jean Davies fully supported the co- option and suggested a mentor from the Committee be appointed to assist the Youth Council Representative

RESOLVED:

That the co-option of a Youth Council representative to the Education & Youth Overview & scrutiny committee be agreed in principle, with the caveat that if the Youth Council ceased to function, so would the co-option.

13. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report saying it was the practice for this committee to receive a progress reports on the Member Development and Engagement events which had been organised. This report provided details of events which had been held since the last report on this topic, on 21st June 2018

The Democratic Services Manager provided an overview of attendance at the recent committee specific budget workshops. Councillor Paul Shotton commented it was in the interests of all Members to attend meetings to gain an understanding of the overall picture. Group Leaders should speak to their Members who do not attend

Councillor Neville Phillips was concerned at the cancellation and changes of timings of meetings which happened frequently. The Democratic Services Manager responded that meetings were often arranged months in advance and sometimes may be cancelled because of information not being available or that reports were not ready. As a matter of courtesy, either the Chair or Vice Chair of a committee was consulted before a decision not to proceed with a meeting.

Members thanked the Democratic Services Manager and his team for providing the member development and engagement events.

The Democratic Services Manager referred to the Welsh Language Survey and reported he had received email responses from 54 Councillors with 16 yet to respond. This report would be brought back to this committee and to Corporate Resources. Members asked for details of the Welsh Conversation Group which had been refereed to.

RESOLVED:

1. The Member Development & Engagement progress report be received and noted.
2. That the details of the Welsh Conversation Group be circulated to Members.

14. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were members of the public and press present.

(The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.25 pm)

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Chair

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CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 29 th November 2018
Report Subject	Webcasting Provision
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager
Type of Report	Webcasting Provision

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 21st April 2015 Cabinet considered a report on the webcasting of Member meetings following a recommendation from the Constitution Committee. Cabinet resolved to introduce the webcasting of meeting which were of greatest public interest which were Planning Committee and County Council.

Following a procurement exercise a contract was entered into with Public-i. That contact is due to come to an end and it is recommended that a new contract should be entered into.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members support the continuation of Webcasting provision, with a contract length to be decided if approved.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO WEBCASTING
1.01	In February 2013 all Welsh Councils were awarded grant funding by Welsh Government (WG) to introduce the broadcasting of Council meetings. This initiative was linked to the provisions within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to strengthen local democracy, the intention being for local Councils to reach out to, and engage with, all sectors of the community they serve.
1.02	Following a number of reports submitted to Constitution Committee, and a recommendation to Cabinet, it was resolved in April 2015 that webcasting would be introduced at Flintshire for those meetings which were deemed to be of greatest public interest, which was Planning Committee and County Council.
1.03	A procurement exercise commenced and a contract was awarded to Public-i towards the end of 2015. That contract is coming to an end and if supported by Members a new procurement exercise will be undertaken.
1.04	In 2014 WG published the “Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper – Reforming Local Government” which stated an intention to make broadcasting mandatory: <i>“We have improved access to Council business and provided funding to help Authorities introduce live broadcasting of full meetings of principal Councils and Committees, and we intend to introduce a mandatory requirement on all Authorities to do so”.</i>
1.05	The intention in that Paper was to make broadcasting a mandatory requirement for the ‘new’ local authorities created as a result of the local government merger proposals in 2020. When those plans changed it became unclear whether WG intended to continue with the initiative to introduce the mandatory requirement on existing local authorities and if it did, whether future funding would be ring fenced by WG.
1.06	Flintshire’s arrangement with Public-i is that all webcasts are archived indefinitely. Because of this arrangement a report was submitted to Planning Strategy Group to seek views on changing the style of Planning Committee minutes. Historically Planning Committee minutes have been very lengthy and take up a lot of officer time to complete and coupled with the loss of a Committee Officer it was deemed a prudent approach to reduce the size of the minutes and have the webcast archive as the full record of the meeting. The minutes now reflect attendance, declarations of interest, details of public speakers and the decision of each item.
1.07	All six North Wales authorities use the same webcasting system as Flintshire. It is considered that if webcasting at Flintshire was to cease, this would be seen as a retrograde step for the authority.
1.08	Viewing figures vary depending on public interest in specific items. Full

	details of the number of viewers per meeting, from November 2016 to October 2018 (2 years) is shown in Appendix 1 with the total number of views across those meetings being 7,141. That is over 40 meetings and gives an average of 178 viewers per meeting.
1.09	Members are able to link to specific agenda and webcast points which is a helpful tool in engaging with the people in their wards.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS																																																												
2.01	<p>The quote for future provision is detailed below, with prices for 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. Table 1 details the prices for each of those years and the discounts for each option if paid on an annual basis.</p> <p>Table 2 details the prices for each of those years and the discounts for each option if paid in a single payment.</p> <p>Table 1 - Annual Payments</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Annual Price After Discount</th> <th>Contract Length</th> <th>Total Price</th> <th>Contract</th> <th>Comparative Annual Saving</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£15,873.00</td> <td>1 year</td> <td>£15,873</td> <td></td> <td>£0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£14,444.43</td> <td>2 years</td> <td>£28,888.86</td> <td></td> <td>£1,428.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£13,174.59</td> <td>3 years</td> <td>£39,523.77</td> <td></td> <td>£2,698.41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£12,857.13</td> <td>4 years</td> <td>£51,428.52</td> <td></td> <td>£3,015.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£12,698.40</td> <td>5 years</td> <td>£63,492.00</td> <td></td> <td>£3,174.60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 2 – Single Payment</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Annual Price After Discount</th> <th>Contract Length</th> <th>Total Price</th> <th>Contract</th> <th>Comparative Annual Saving</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£15,873.00</td> <td>1 year</td> <td>£15,873.00</td> <td></td> <td>£0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£14,285.70</td> <td>2 years</td> <td>£28,571.40</td> <td></td> <td>£1,587.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£12,698.40</td> <td>3 years</td> <td>£38,095.20</td> <td></td> <td>£3,174.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£11,904.75</td> <td>4 years</td> <td>£47,619.00</td> <td></td> <td>£3,968.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*£11,111.10</td> <td>5 years</td> <td>£55,555.50</td> <td></td> <td>£4,761.90</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The longer a contract is taken out over the annual savings increase. The most cost effective option is show in table 2, with an annual price of £11,111.10 which would be a contract for 5 years and an annual saving of £4,761.90.</p> <p>All costs include the continued lease of the equipment, 60 hours of hosted content and any ongoing maintenance.</p>	Annual Price After Discount	Contract Length	Total Price	Contract	Comparative Annual Saving	£15,873.00	1 year	£15,873		£0.00	£14,444.43	2 years	£28,888.86		£1,428.57	£13,174.59	3 years	£39,523.77		£2,698.41	£12,857.13	4 years	£51,428.52		£3,015.87	£12,698.40	5 years	£63,492.00		£3,174.60	Annual Price After Discount	Contract Length	Total Price	Contract	Comparative Annual Saving	£15,873.00	1 year	£15,873.00		£0.00	£14,285.70	2 years	£28,571.40		£1,587.30	£12,698.40	3 years	£38,095.20		£3,174.60	£11,904.75	4 years	£47,619.00		£3,968.25	*£11,111.10	5 years	£55,555.50		£4,761.90
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2.02	The most cost effective way to procure is to pay upfront for 5 years. If this was the preferred option the contract amount would be accounted for over the life of the contract with the costs split and 1/5 th allocated to each year.																																																												

2.03	From March 2017 the Council was required to publish agendas and minutes in Welsh in line with the Welsh Language Standards. The initial estimate of costs was higher than required. There is therefore an underspend of £18,000 in the budget.
2.04	If Members were in support of continuing webcasting this underspend from the translation budget could be utilised to fund the cost of the service. This would include the indefinite archive of our webcast meetings.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	With the Cabinet Member.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	If webcasting did not continue there would could be a requirement for Planning Committee minutes to revert back to the previous lengthy style. This would have an impact on staffing arrangements based on capacity issues.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Webcast viewing figures.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Cabinet report: 21.04.15. Constitution Committee reports: 15.04.15; 28.01.15; and 15.10.14. Contact Officer: Nicola Gittins – Team Leader, Committee Services Telephone: 01352 702345 E-mail: nicola.gittins@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Webcasting: live streaming of video and audio to many simultaneous viewers.

Webcasting viewing data over a 2 year period
15th November 2016 – 3rd October 2018 (most recent first)

Meeting	Date	All Views	Live Views	Archive Views
Planning Committee	03.10.18	115	40	75
County Council	12.09.18	128	45	83
Planning Committee	05.09.18	249	49	200
Planning Committee	18.07.18	233	63	170
Planning Committee	20.06.18	118	19	99
County Council	19.06.18	128	29	99
Planning Committee	23.05.18	139	12	127
County Council	01.05.18	94	18	76
Planning Committee	25.04.18	86	12	74
County Council	24.04.18	78	23	55
Planning Committee	28.03.18	211	21	190
Planning Committee	07.03.18	173	56	117
County Council	01.03.18	169	55	114
County Council	20.02.18	366	172	194
Planning Committee	07.02.18	255	39	216
County Council	30.01.18	108	0	108
Planning Committee	10.01.18	202	23	179
County Council	12.12.17	122	20	102
Planning Committee	06.12.17	85	16	69
County Council	14.11.17	165	29	136
Planning Committee	08.11.17	182	48	134
County Council	24.10.17	93	22	71
Planning Committee	04.10.17	260	64	196
County Council	27.09.17	223	97	126
Planning Committee	06.09.17	412	139	273
Planning Committee	26.07.17	182	39	143
Planning Committee	28.06.17	130	26	104
County Council	20.06.18	139	20	119
Planning Committee	07.06.18	299	104	195
County Council	18.05.17	215	42	173
Planning Committee	12.04.17	266	86	180
Planning Committee	22.03.17	193	77	116
County Council	01.03.17	227	49	178
Planning Committee	22.02.17	181	47	134
County Council	14.02.17	287	24	263
Planning Committee	18.01.17	185	40	145
Planning Committee	14.12.16	175	49	126
County Council	06.12.16	87	21	66
Planning Committee	16.11.16	112	21	91
County Council	15.11.16	69	17	52

Total views = 7141. This is over 40 meetings so on average, it is 178 views per meeting

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CONSTITUION AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 29 th November 2018
Report Subject	Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Charter
Cabinet Member	Not Applicable
Report Author	Internal Audit Manager
Type of Report	Assurance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2018 members of the Audit Committee attended a facilitation workshop to assess the effectiveness of the Committee. During the workshop the members took the opportunity to review their Terms of Reference (TOR) and compare to the new guidance 'Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police' issued by CIPFA in May 2018.

Since the last review in 2013, the areas of responsibility of the Committee have widened considerably. Overall, the changes outlined below reflect current practices of the Audit Committee; however, there is one new area of responsibility which is detailed in para D5 of the Terms of Reference.

To comply with best practice, a draft Audit Committee Charter has been developed to document the role the Audit Committee within the Council's Governance Framework. The Draft Audit Committee Charter is shown in Appendix C.

The Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Charter and the proposed changes were agreed at the Audit Committee meeting on 21 November 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee is requested to consider and approve the changes agreed by the Audit Committee for the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference.
2	The Committee is requested to consider and approve the changes agreed by the Audit Committee for the Audit Committee's Charter.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT
1.01	To aid clarity and transparency two copies of the Terms of Reference are included. Appendix A shows where the changes have occurred, using tracked changes, whilst Appendix B shows the revised Terms of Reference without tracked the changes, which is an easier read.
1.02	<p>Listed below are the main changes made to the Terms of Reference, split firstly between those required to bring the Terms of Reference up to date to meet current working practice of the Committee and secondly where there is a new requirement of the Audit Committee. Each point is referenced back to the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>TOR updated to cover existing areas of responsibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve significant interim changes to the IA risk-based plan (C7); • Receive regular reports on the results of the IA Quality Assurance Improvement Programmes (QAIP) (C9); • As part of the Internal Audit Manager’s annual report (C10): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – receive a statement on the Internal Audit’s level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS); – receive the opinion on the overall effectiveness of the Council’s framework of governance, risk management and internal control, which feeds into the Council’s Annual Governance Statement (AGS); • Consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested (C11); • Receive reports where the Internal Audit Manager feels the level of risk accepted by management is unacceptable to the Council (C12); • Contribute to the QAIP, including the external assessment of the Internal Audit Service (C13); • Consider external audit annual assessment of its independence (C17); • Consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor (C21); and • Details the protocol arrangements in place between the Council and External Regulators (C25-26). <p>TOR updated to reflect new area of responsibility: To report to full Council and publish an annual report on the Audit Committee’s performance in relation to the Terms of Reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose (D5).</p>
1.03	Having a Charter for the Audit Committee is considered best practice. The Charter provides an overview of the role of Audit Committee has and how the Committee fits into the Council’s governance framework. The Charter is split into two main areas, Organisational Principles and Oversight of Assurance Providers. The draft Audit Committee Charter is shown in Appendix C.
1.04	The Committee is asked to consider the proposed changes to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Charter, as agreed by the Audit

	Committee. Once the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee has agreed the revised version of this part of the Constitution, the Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Charter will be presented County Council for approval.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None from the report itself.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Consultation of the revised Terms of Reference and Audit Committee Charter has been undertaken with Audit Committee members, the Chief Executive, the Council's Monitoring Officer and Chief Officer, Governance, Democratic Services Manager and the Corporate Business and Communications Executive Officer.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None from the report itself.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix A – Draft Audit Committee Terms of Reference (with tracked changes) Appendix B – Draft Audit Committee Terms of Reference (without tracked changes) Appendix C – Draft Audit Committee Charter

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Officer: Lisa Brownbill, Internal Audit Manager Telephone: 01352 702231 E-mail: Lisa.brownbill@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Corporate Governance: the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. It is founded on the basis principles of openness and inclusivity, integrity and accountability together with the overarching concept of leadership. It is an inter-related system that brings together the underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

DRAFT v6 – November 2018 – Tracked Changes

Article 7 - The Audit Committee

7.00 Statement of Purpose:

The terms of reference sets out the Audit Committee's position in the governance structure of the Council.

The Audit Committee is a key component of Flintshire County Council's (the Council's) corporate governance. It provides an independent and high level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.

7.01 Role:

The Audit Committee's role and functions will be to:

- A.** Review the effectiveness of the Authority's systems of corporate governance, internal control and risk management systems, and to make reports and recommendations to the County Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements;
- B.** Oversee the reporting of the statutory financial statement's process to ensure the balance, transparency and integrity of published financial information, and to review the financial statements prepared by the authority and recommend them to County Council; and

Review and scrutinise the County Council's financial affairs, and to make reports and recommendations on them. The role of the Committee is to assure the budgetary control systems of the Council rather than the scrutiny of the use and value for money of expenditure which is the role of the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

- C.** Monitor the performance and effectiveness of the internal and external audit functions within the wider regulatory context.
- D.** Report to the Council annually, summarising the Committee's activities and recommendations.

A. Corporate Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control

1. Evaluate whether Senior Accountable Officers and service teams are setting the appropriate “control culture” by communicating the importance of internal control and risk management.
2. Consider and assure the annual update of the Code of Corporate Governance against the ‘Delivering Good Governance Framework (Wales)’.
3. Consider and assure the draft Annual Governance Statement and make appropriate recommendations/observations prior to its submission to the Council’s Regulators.
4. Evaluate the overall effective development and operation of the internal control and risk management frameworks and consider whether actions raised by the internal and external auditors have been implemented by Senior Accountable Officers.
5. Review and assure the Risk Management Strategy through regular reports on risk management and business continuity plans, processes and outcomes.
6. Monitor progress in addressing risk related issues reported to the Committee.
7. Consider the Council’s framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.
8. Keep under review the Council’s Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, Fraud Response Plan and Whistleblowing Policy and the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from Fraud and Corruption.
9. Consider the Council’s arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessment on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
10. Receive reports on all fraud identified and any other special investigations, and action taken.
11. Consider how Senior Accountable Officers are held to account for the security of computer systems and applications to protect against computer fraud or misuse.
12. Ensure the rigorous application of the agreed protocol for the reporting and decision making over business cases for collaborative projects, the management of the transition for approved collaborations, and the subsequent performance management arrangements for the new collaborative services.
13. Obtain regular updates from Senior Accountable Officers and legal advice regarding compliance matters, and be satisfied that all compliance matters have been considered in preparing the financial statements.

14. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee together with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the six Overview and Scrutiny Committees will attend the Chair and Vice Chair Liaison Group with the primary aim to reduce duplication of work, ensure there is a shared coverage of the Council's risk profile and escalate poor performance between respective Committees.

Appendix A of the Audit Charter provides a diagram of the co-ordination of work between the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee.

B. Financial:

Statutory Financial Statements

1. Receive the draft annual Statement of Accounts, together with the underlying accounting policies for information. Consider and comment on the final statement of accounts following the receipt of the proposed audit opinion from the Wales Audit Office prior to recommending their approval to the Council.
2. Understand the controls and processes implemented by Senior Accountable Officers to ensure the financial statements derive from the underlying financial systems, comply with relevant standards and requirements, and are subject to appropriate review.
3. Meet with management and external auditors to review the financial statements, the key accounting policies and judgements, significant accounting and reporting issues and their impact on financial reports, and the results of the audit.
4. Ensure that significant adjustments, unadjusted differences, disagreements with Senior Accountable Officers and critical accounting policies and practice are discussed with the external auditor.

Financial Affairs

5. Understand the internal control systems implemented by Senior Accountable Officers and service team for the approval of transactions and the recording and processing of financial data.
6. Gain an understanding of the current areas of greatest risk around financial controls and advise and assure on risk management.
7. Keep under review the Council's financial procedure rules and contract procedure rules and all other corporate directions concerning financial control.

8. Review and assure the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy and consider quarterly updates on Treasury Management and make appropriate recommendations / observations to the Cabinet.

C. Internal and External Audit

1. Keep under review the joint working arrangements of the Council's Internal and External Auditors.

Internal Audit

2. Promote the role of internal audit within the Council, as a key element of its control environment.
3. Review and approve the Internal Audit Charter, outlining the role, scope, independence, authority, responsibility and reporting of the department.
4. Keep under review the organisational structure and resource requirements of the Internal Audit Section and consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Internal Audit Manager. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
5. Make appropriate enquiries of both Senior Accountable Officers and the Internal Audit Manager to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resources limitations.
6. Review, approve (but not direct) and monitor the delivery of the risk-based internal audit plan, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources and ensure the plan considers changes arising from Government, Assembly or Council initiatives.
7. Approve significant interim changes to the risk based internal audit plan and resources requirements. *(New)*
8. Receive summaries of all internal audit reports issued, highlighting key actions with corporate control implications.
9. Consider reports from the Internal Audit Manager on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
 - Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern including monitoring the implementation of agreed actions contained within

internal audit reports, receive report on actions not implemented within good timescales and seek explanations from officers where required.

- Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance Improvement Programme (QAIP); *(New)*
- Reports on instances where the internal audit service does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and Local Governance Advice Note (LGAN), considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the AGS. *(New)*

10. Receive and consider the Internal Audit Managers annual report:

- The statement of the level of conformance with the PSIAS and LGAN and the results of the QAIP that support the statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit. *(New)*
- The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion – these will assist the Committee in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). *(New)*
- Keep performance indicators under review and evaluate, on an annual basis, the performance and effectiveness of internal audit and its compliance with best practice.

11. Consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested. *(New)*

12. Receive reports outlining the action taken where the Internal Audit Manager has concluded that Senior Accountable Officers and service teams have accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the Council or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions. *(New)*

13. Contribute to the Quality Assurance Improvement Programme (QAIP) and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years. *(New)*

14. Meet separately with the Internal Audit Manager to discuss any matters that the Committee or internal auditors believe should be discussed privately.

15. Should the needs arise, arbitrate in the event of any failure to agree between a Senior Accountable Officers and internal audit.

16. Discuss with the external auditor the standard of work of internal audit.

External Audit and External Regulatory Bodies

External Audit

17. Support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence. *(New)*
18. Review the external auditors' proposed audit scope and approach for the current year in the light of the Authority's present circumstances and changes in regulatory and other requirements arising from Government, Assembly or Council initiatives.
19. Ensure that the annual audit is undertaken in compliance with statutory requirements.
20. Receive all audit reports, and the annual audit letter, issued by the external auditor, and ensure that all agreed recommendations are implemented.
21. Consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor. *(New)*
22. Discuss with the external auditor any audit problems encountered in the normal course of audit work, including any restriction on audit scope or access to information.
23. Meet separately with the external auditors to discuss any matters that the Committee or auditors believe should be discussed privately. Ensure the auditors have access to the chair of the audit committee when required.
24. Review, annually, the performance of external audit and co-ordinate any feed back requested from the Wales Audit Office.

External Regulation: Performance *(New)*

25. External arrangements for regulation and assurance are provided by a number of statutorily appointed bodies such as the Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), plus a number of other external regulatory bodies. To examine how the organisation manages and spends public money including achieving value in delivery. This work is co-ordinated by the Chief Executive's Business and Communications team and a shared protocol for these working arrangements is in place.
26. To gain assurance and confidence of the Council's response to the external regulatory findings the Audit Committee will:

- a) Receive periodic reports from external regulators which will include the Council's response to the reports and ensure that effective processes are in place for setting and monitoring against proportionate and effective action plans.
- b) Receive an annual report collating external regulatory activity on improvement assessment work which is supplemented by local risk based audit work; and
- c) Receive the Annual Improvement Report from the Auditor General

D. Accountability Arrangements

1. Require the attendance at the Committee of any officer or member, or the submission of a report from any officer, to provide further explanation in connection with any of the above terms of reference.
2. Evaluate the Committee's own performance, both of individual members and collectively, on a regular basis.
3. The Committee must meet at least once a year and must also do so if the Council decides or if at least a third of the Committee's members require a meeting. Beyond those requirements the Committee can meet whenever it likes.
4. The Audit committee will keep the above terms of reference under annual review and propose any amendment to the County Council.
5. Report to full council and publish an annual report on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.

7.02 Composition

1. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee will be chosen by the Committee itself at its first meeting following each annual general meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee will be chosen from amongst the opposition group(s), non aligned Councillors or lay member on the Council (that is to say from amongst the group(s) none of whose members are included in the Cabinet).
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3. It is the express wish of the Council that there should be continuity of membership of the Audit Committee so as to build up a body of expertise and maintain a consistency of approach.
4. In recognising the express wish of the Council, but observing the requirements of the legislation for political balance, the Audit Committee will comprise seven Members with the seats allocated in accordance with the legislation to the appropriate political groups and one lay member. Any proposed substitution shall comply with Council Procedure Rule 22.4 and the proposed substitute shall have attended relevant training. Substitutes will only be permitted where the Audit Committee, at the commencement of its meeting, agrees that good reasons exist for substitution.
5. Members will receive induction training on appointment to the Committee. Ongoing training will be provided as necessary to meet the requirements of the Committee, based on the skills and experience of the members.
6. The business of the Committee shall be conducted apolitically.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

DRAFT v6 – November 2018 – Without Tracked Changes

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5. Members will receive induction training on appointment to the Committee. Ongoing training will be provided as necessary to meet the requirements of the Committee, based on the skills and experience of the members.
6. The business of the Committee shall be conducted apolitically.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

Charter

DRAFT – v6 – November 2018

Organisational Principles

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Audit Committee plays an important role in providing independent oversight of Flintshire County Council's (the Council's) governance, risk management, and internal control practices. This oversight mechanism also serves to provide confidence in the integrity of these practices.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current Audit Committee was established in May 2017. The charter for the Committee was established in November 2018 with the purpose to govern the work of the Committee. The charter will be reviewed and updated annually.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide a structured, systematic independent oversight of the Council's governance, risk management, and internal control practices. The Committee assists the Council and Senior Accountable Officers by providing advice and guidance on the adequacy of the Council's initiatives for:
- a) Governance structure;
 - b) Risk management;
 - c) Internal control framework;
 - d) Oversight of the internal audit activity, external auditors, and other external assurance providers; and
 - e) Financial statements and public accountability reporting.
- 3.2 In broad terms, the Audit Committee reviews each of the items noted above and provides the Council with independent advice and guidance regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of Council's practices and potential improvements to those practices.

4. Mandate

- 4.1 The mandate for the establishment of the Audit Committee was derived from the Council at the Annual Meeting in 2002.

5. Authority

- 5.1 The Audit Committee charter sets out the authority of the Committee to carry out the responsibilities established for it by the Council as articulated within the Audit Committee charter.
- 5.2 In discharging its responsibilities, the Audit Committee will have unrestricted access to Senior Accountable Officers, service teams, workforce, and relevant information it considers necessary to discharge its duties.
- 5.3 The Committee will also have unrestricted access to records, data, and reports. If access to requested documents is denied due to legal or confidentiality reasons, the Audit Committee and/or Internal Audit Manager will follow a prescribed, Council approved mechanism to resolve the matter.
- 5.4 The Audit Committee is entitled to receive any explanatory information that it deems necessary to discharge its responsibilities. The Council's Senior Accountable Officers and workforce should co-operate with Audit Committee requests.
- 5.5 The Audit Committee may engage independent counsel and/or other advisors it deems necessary to carry out its duties.
- 5.6 The Audit Committee is empowered to:
 - a) Resolve any disagreements between Senior Accountable Officers and the auditor regarding financial reporting and other matters; and
 - b) Pre-approve all auditing and non-audit services performed by auditors.

6. Composition of the Audit Committee

- 6.1 The Committee will consist of eight members; at least one lay member that is independent of the Council. The members should collectively possess sufficient knowledge of audit, finance, specific industry knowledge, IT, law, governance, risk and control. As the responsibilities of the Audit Committee evolve in response to regulatory, economic, and reporting developments, it is important to periodically re-evaluate members' competencies and the overall balance of skills on the Committee in response to emerging needs. This would be completed as part of the Audit Committee's annual self-assessment.

7. The Chair of the Audit Committee

- 7.1 The Audit Committee appoints its own chair; nominations for Audit Committee membership are made by the political groups on the Council. The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 states that the chair cannot be a member of a group represented on the Cabinet.

8. Terms of Office

- 8.1 The term of office for an Audit Committee member is four years.
- 8.2 Continuance of Audit Committee members will be reviewed annually. To ensure continuity within the Audit Committee, the appointment of members should be staggered (where appropriate).

9. Quorum

- 9.1 The quorum for the Audit Committee will be three members.

10. Audit Committee Values

- 10.1 The Audit Committee will conduct itself in accordance with the code of values and ethics of the Council. The Audit Committee expects that Senior Accountable Officers, service teams and the workforce of the Council will adhere to these requirements.

11. Communications

- 11.1 The Audit Committee expects that all communication with Senior Accountable Officers, service teams, workforce of the Council as well as with any external assurance providers will be direct, open and complete.

12. Work Programme

- 12.1 The Audit Committee chair will collaborate with Senior Accountable Officers and the Internal Audit Manager to establish a work plan to ensure that the responsibilities of the Audit Committee are scheduled and will be carried out.

13. Meeting Agenda

- 13.1 The Committee establishes the agendas for Audit Committee meetings through the forward work programme and in consultation with Senior Accountable Officers and the Internal Audit Manager.

14. Information Requirements

- 14.1 The Audit Committee will establish and communicate its requirements for information, which will include the nature, extent, and timing of information. Information will be provided to the Audit Committee at least one week prior to each Audit Committee meeting.

15. Executive Sessions

- 15.1 The Audit Committee will schedule and hold if necessary, a private session with the Chief Executive, the Corporate Finance Manager (the designated Chief Financial Officer (CFO)), the Internal Audit Manager, external assurance providers, and with any other officials that the Audit Committee may deem appropriate at each of its meetings.

16. Preparation and Attendance

- 16.1 Audit Committee members are obliged to prepare for and participate in committee meetings.

17. Conflict(s) of Interest

- 17.1 Audit Committee members should adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct and any values and ethics established by the Council. It is the responsibility of Audit Committee members to disclose any conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest to the Committee. If there is any question as to whether Audit Committee member(s) should recuse themselves from a vote, the Committee should vote to determine whether the member should recuse himself or herself.

18. Training

- 18.1 Audit Committee members will receive formal training on the purpose and mandate of the Committee and on the Council's objectives. Further training needs will be identified by the Audit Committee during committee meetings and as part of their annual self-assessment.

19. Meetings

- 19.1 The Audit Committee will meet at least five times annually or more frequently as the Committee deems necessary. The time frame between Audit Committee meetings should not exceed four months.

20. Minutes

- 20.1 Meeting minutes will be provided in draft format at least two weeks after the Audit Committee meeting.

21. Attendance

- 21.1 Where possible, the Internal Audit Manager, Chief Officer for Governance and Council Monitoring Officer, and Chief Executive will attend Audit Committee meetings.

22. Meeting Facilitation and Co-ordination

- 22.1 Committee Services will facilitate and co-ordinate meetings as well as provide ancillary support to the Committee, as time and resources permit.

23. Remuneration of Committee Members

- 23.1 Committee members may claim reimbursement for travel. Full details can be found in the Members' Allowances policy.
- 23.2 Payment rates and allowances for co-opted committee members' time and/or services are established formally in accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW).

24. Organisational Governance

- 24.1 To obtain reasonable assurance regarding the Council's governance process, the Audit Committee will review and provide advice on the governance process established and maintained within the Council and the procedures in place to ensure that they are operating as intended.

25. Risk Management

- 25.1 To obtain reasonable assurance and confidence of the Council's risk management practices, the Audit Committee will:
- a) Annually review the Council's risk profile;
 - b) Obtain from the Internal Audit Manager an annual report on the implementation and maintenance of a risk management process;
 - c) Provide oversight on significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks, governance issues, and other matters needed or requested by Senior Accountable Officers and the Council;
 - d) Provide oversight of the adequacy of the combined assurance being provided; and
 - e) Receive and assure the Risk Management Strategy through regular reports on risk management, processes, procedures and outcomes.

26. Fraud

- 26.1 Obtain reasonable assurance and confidence of the Council's procedures for the prevention and detection of fraud, the Audit Committee will:
- a) Oversee the Council's arrangements for the prevention and deterrence of fraud; and
 - b) Challenge Senior Accountable Officers and internal and external auditors to ensure that the Council has appropriate anti-fraud programmes and controls in place to identify potential fraud and ensure that investigations are undertaken if fraud is detected.

27. Control

- 27.1 Obtain reasonable assurance and confidence over the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's controls in responding to risks within the Council's governance, operations and information systems, the Audit Committee will:
- a) Consider the effectiveness of the Council's control framework, including information technology security and control;
 - b) Receive reports on all matters of significance arising from work performed by other assurance providers of financial and internal control assurance.

28. Compliance

28.1 The Audit Committee will:

- a) Review the effectiveness of the system for monitoring compliance with laws and regulations and the results of investigation and follow-up of any instances of non-compliance;
- b) Review the observations and conclusions of internal and external auditors and the findings of any regulatory agencies;
- c) Review the process for communicating the Code of Conduct to the Council's personnel and for monitoring compliance; and
- d) Obtain regular updates from Senior Accountable Officers and the Council's legal counsel regarding compliance matters.

Oversight of Assurance Providers

29. Internal Audit Activity

29.1 To obtain reasonable assurance regarding the work of internal audit, the Audit Committee will oversee the internal audit charter and resources. In particular:

- a) Review and approve the internal audit charter at least annually. The charter should be reviewed to ensure that it accurately reflects the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, and responsibility, consistent with the mandatory guidance of the IIA's International Professional Practices Framework, namely the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and the scope and nature of assurance and consulting services, as well as changes in the financial, risk management, and governance processes of the Council and reflects developments in the professional practice of internal auditing; and
- b) Advise the Council about increases and decreases to the requested resources to achieve the internal audit plan. Evaluate whether any additional resources are needed permanently or for an interim period.

29.2 Internal Audit Manager's Performance

- a) The Chair of the Audit Committee is involved in the recruitment and appointment of the Internal Audit Manager; and

- b) Provide input into the performance evaluation of the Internal Audit Manager.

29.3 Internal Audit Strategy and Plan

- a) Review and provide input, but not direct, on the internal audit activity's strategic risk-based plan, objectives, performance measures and outcomes; and
- b) Review the internal audit activity's performance relative to the audit plan.

29.4 Internal Audit Engagement and Follow Up

- a) Review internal audit reports and other communications to Senior Accountable Officers and service teams;
- b) Review and track Senior Accountable Officers action plans to address the results of internal audit engagements;
- c) Review and advise Senior Accountable Officers and service teams on the results of any special investigations;
- d) Confirm with the Internal Audit Manager whether any internal audit engagements or non-audit engagements have been completed but not reported to the Committee; if so, inquire whether any matters of significance arose from such work; and
- e) Confirm with the Internal Audit Manager whether any evidence of fraud has been identified during internal audit engagements and evaluate what additional actions, if any, should be taken.

29.5 Expectations of Responsibilities.

There is an expectation of the Senior Accountable Officers and service teams to work with speed and support in responding to Internal Audit reports, working on and following an annual shared work programme and responding to ad hoc work of the Committee.

29.6 Standards Conformance

- a) Inquire of the Internal Audit Manager about steps taken to ensure that the internal audit activity conforms with the IIA's International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards), namely the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS);
- b) Ensure that the internal audit has a quality assurance and improvement programme and that the results of these periodic assessments are presented to the Audit Committee;

- c) Ensure that the internal audit has an external quality assurance review every five years;
- d) Review the results of the independent and external quality assurance review and monitor the implementation of the internal audit action plans to address any recommendations; and
- e) Advise the Council about any recommendations for the continuous improvement of the internal audit service.

30. External Auditors and other Regulatory Bodies

External Audit – Financial Assurance:

- 30.1 Obtain reasonable assurance of the work of the external assurance providers, the Audit Committee will meet with the external assurance body, currently Wales Audit Office, during the planning phase, the presentation of the audited financial statements, and the discussion of the results of engagements and recommendations for Senior Accountable Officers and service teams.
- 30.2 The Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.
- 30.3 The Audit Committee will:
 - a) Review the external auditors' proposed audit scope and approach, including co-ordination of audit effort with the internal audit service;
 - b) Obtain statements from the external auditors about their relationships with the Council, including non-audit services performed in the past, and discuss the information with the external auditors to review and confirm their independence;
 - c) Where relevant, hold periodic private meetings with external auditors to discuss any sensitive matters;
 - d) Monitor Senior Accountable Officers and service teams progress on action plans; and
 - e) Obtain reasonable assurance that Senior Accountable Officers and service teams have acted on the results and recommendations of internal and external audit, the Audit Committee will regularly review reports on the progress of implementing approved action plans and audit recommendations resulting from completed audits.

External Regulation – Performance Assurance:

- 30.4 External arrangements for regulation and assurance are provided by a number of statutorily appointed bodies such as the Wales Audit Office (WAO), Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), plus a number of other external regulatory bodies. To examine how the organisation manages and spends public money including achieving value in delivery.
- 30.5 Auditor General and staff of the Wales Audit Office aim to provide public-focused and proportionate reporting on the stewardship of public resources and in the process provide insight and promote improvement.
- 30.6 This work is co-ordinated by the Chief Executive's Business and Communications team and a shared protocol for these working arrangements is in place.
- 30.7 To gain assurance and confidence of the Council's response to the external regulatory findings the Audit Committee will:
- a) Receive periodic reports from external regulators which will include the Council's response to the reports;
 - b) Receive an annual report collating external regulatory activity on improvement assessment work which is supplemented by local risk based audit work; and
 - c) Receive the Annual Improvement Report from the Auditor General.

31 Financial Statements and Public Accountability Reporting

- 31.1 The Audit Committee is responsible for oversight of the independent audit of the Council's financial statements, including but not limited to overseeing the resolution of audit findings in areas such as internal control, legal, and regulatory compliance.
- 31.2 The Audit Committee will:
- a) Review with Senior Accountable Officers and the external auditors the results of audit engagements, including any difficulties encountered;
 - b) Review significant accounting and reporting issues, including complex or unusual transactions and highly judgmental areas, and recent professional and regulatory pronouncements, and understand their impact on the financial statements;

- c) Review the annual financial statements, and consider whether they are complete, consistent with information known to committee members, and reflect appropriate accounting principles;
- d) Review other sections of the annual report and related regulatory filings and consider the accuracy and completeness of the information before it is released;
- e) Review with Senior Accountable Officers and the external auditors all matters required to be communicated to the Audit Committee under generally accepted external auditing standards;
- f) Understand the strategies, assumptions and estimates Senior Accountable Officers and service teams have made in preparing financial statements, budgets, and investment plans;
- g) Understand how Senior Accountable Officers and service teams develop interim financial information and the nature and extent of internal and external auditor involvement in the process;
- h) Review interim financial reports with Senior Accountable Officers and the external auditors before filing with regulators, and consider whether they are complete and consistent with the information known to committee members; and
- i) Review the Council's Treasury Management policy and receive regular updates on the Council's performance.

32 Other Responsibilities

32.1 In addition, the Audit Committee will:

- a) Perform other activities related to this charter as requested by the Council;
- b) Institute and oversee special investigations as needed; and
- c) Regularly evaluate its performance and that of its individual members through an annual self-assessment.

32.2 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee will be a member of the Chair and Vice Chair Liaison Group with the primary objective to:

- a) Review the work programme to ensure duplication is kept to a minimum
- b) Review the Council's risk profile to ensure shared covered.

- c) Escalate poor performance between committees for consideration and future monitoring.

Appendix A of the Charter provides a diagram of the co-ordination of work between the Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committees.

33 Reporting on Audit Committee Performance

33.1 The Audit Committee will report to the Council annually, summarising the Committee's activities and recommendations. The report may be delivered during an Audit Committee meeting attended by the Chair of the Council or during a regularly scheduled meeting of the Council.

33.2 The report should also include:

- a) A summary of the work the Audit Committee performed to fully discharge its responsibilities during the preceding year;
- b) A summary of Senior Accountable Officers and service teams progress in addressing the results of internal and external audit reports;
- c) An overall assessment of management's risk, control, and compliance processes, including details of any significant emerging risks or legislative changes impacting the governing organisation;
- d) Details of meetings including the number of meetings held during the relevant period and the number of meetings each member attended;
- e) Provide information required, if any, by new or emerging corporate governance developments; and
- f) The Committee may report to the Council at any time regarding any other matter it deems of sufficient importance.

Flintshire Audit Committee – Charter – DRAFT

34 Approval / Signatures:

Chairman of the Council: _____ Date: _____

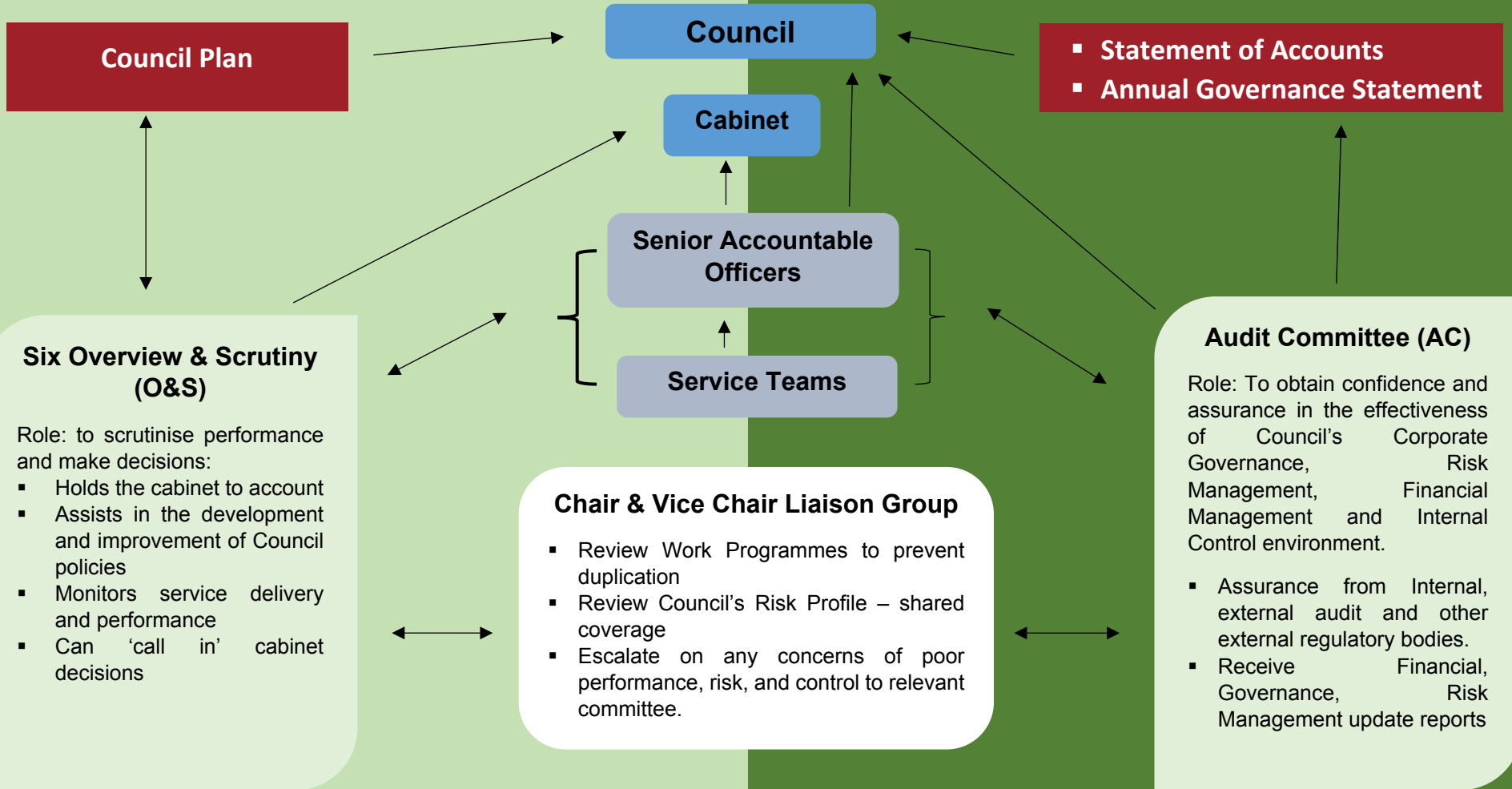
Chief Executive: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Audit Committee: _____ Date: _____

Co-ordination of Work : Audit Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Functions

Operational (Scrutiny)

Assurance (Regulatory)



Six Overview & Scrutiny (O&S)

Role: to scrutinise performance and make decisions:

- Holds the cabinet to account
- Assists in the development and improvement of Council policies
- Monitors service delivery and performance
- Can 'call in' cabinet decisions

Chair & Vice Chair Liaison Group

- Review Work Programmes to prevent duplication
- Review Council's Risk Profile – shared coverage
- Escalate on any concerns of poor performance, risk, and control to relevant committee.

Audit Committee (AC)

Role: To obtain confidence and assurance in the effectiveness of Council's Corporate Governance, Risk Management, Financial Management and Internal Control environment.

- Assurance from Internal, external audit and other external regulatory bodies.
- Receive Financial, Governance, Risk Management update reports

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CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 29 th November 2018
Report Subject	Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Overview & Scrutiny Annual report is drafted by the officer team in consultation with the relevant committee chairs. It is then submitted to the Committee for consideration and comment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the committee considers and comments on the draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2017/18: those comments will be used to provide the foreword to the Annual Report.
2	That if the committee is minded to approve the report that it be submitted to Council at the next meeting.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	THE DRAFT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT
1.01	Under section 7.4.5 of the Constitution, 'the Overview & Scrutiny Committees must report annually to the Full Council on their workings with recommendations for their future work programme and amended working methods if appropriate'.
1.02	Membership of the six Overview & Scrutiny committees is open to all 62 non- executive members of the council. In addition, the Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny committee has five statutory co-optees as voting Members. These are: (a) One representative of the Church in Wales (b) One representative of the Roman Catholic Church (c) Three representatives of parent governors.
1.03	The work programmes for Overview & Scrutiny committees are considered and amended where necessary at each ordinary meeting of each of the committees. Any updates are then included in the corporate forward work programme which is published with the agenda for the monthly meeting of the Cabinet
1.04	As has been our practice for the last few years, details on the use of call in have been included.
1.05	As last year, the foreword to the Annual Report has not been prepared: it is suggested that this be done to reflect the committee's consideration of the Annual Report and be inserted before submission to Council

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no resource implications arising specifically from this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The Overview & Scrutiny Chairs for the 2017/18 municipal year have been consulted on aspects of the report which relate to their respective committees.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	No risks were identified during the preparation of the report. Production of the report fulfils a constitutional requirement.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report for 2017/18.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robert Robins, Democratic Services Manager Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: robert.robins@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None of the terms used within this report are 'technical' in nature and no acronyms have been used.

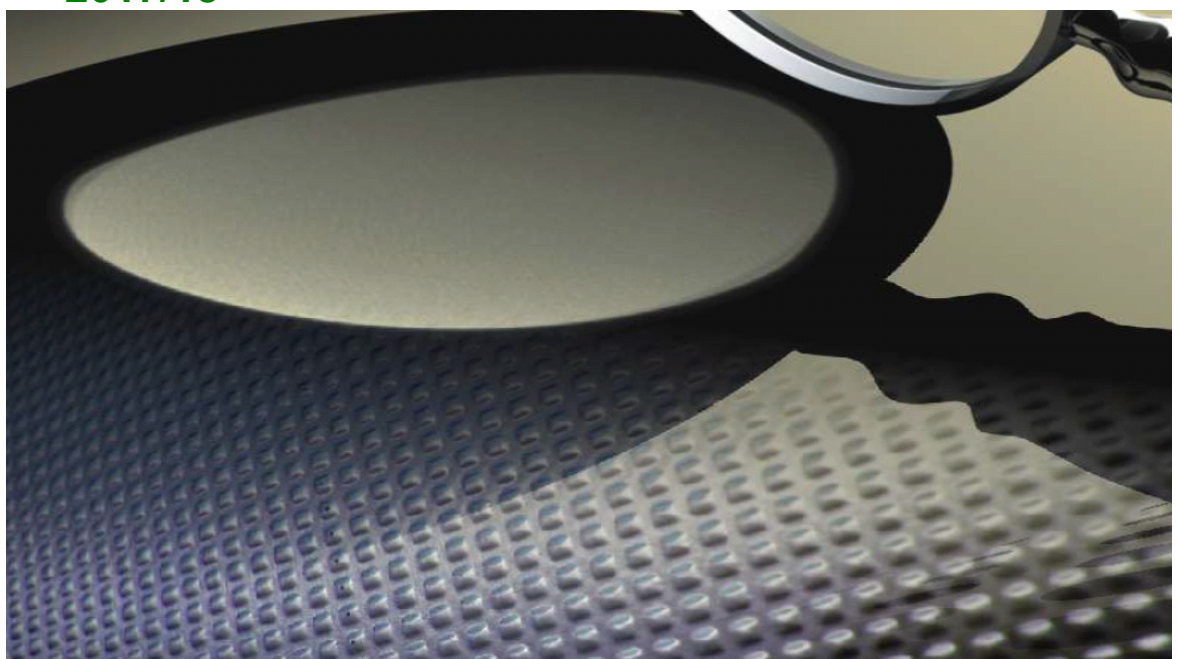
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Overview & Scrutiny

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 16th 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 on-going 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

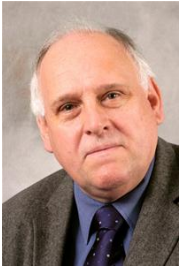
We considered a report in March 2018 which outlined recommended options for the future of street markets in Flintshire. The report was submitted following a review on the sustainability of smaller street markets in Flintshire and sought the Committee's view in order to inform the Cabinet decision.

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 18th 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

DRAFT

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

DRAFT

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 14th 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 14th 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 31st 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

DRAFT

Membership of Overview & Scrutiny Committees 2017/18

<u>Community & Enterprise</u>	<u>Corporate Resources</u>
<p>Councillor Ron Hampson (Chair)(passed away in August 17) Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chair) (16 October 17) 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>Councillor Clive Carver (Chair) 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 (Vice Chair) 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>
<u>Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee</u>	<u>Environment</u>
<p>Councillor David Healey (Chair) 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>Co-opted Members: Lynne Bartlett David Hytch (Vice Chair) Rebecca Stark Bernard Stuart</p>	<p>Councillor Raymond Hughes (Chair) Councillor Mike Allport Councillor Haydn Bateman Councillor Sean Bibby Councillor Chris Dolphin Councillor Andy Dunbobbin Councillor David Evans (Vice Chair) 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>

<u>Organisational Change</u>	<u>Social & Health Care</u>
<p>Councillor Dave Mackie (Chair) Councillor Janet Axworthy Councillor Marion Bateman Councillor Sean Bibby (Vice Chair) 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</p>	<p>Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair) Councillor Mike Allport Councillor Marion Bateman Councillor Andy Dunbobbin Councillor Gladys Healey (Vice-Chair) Councillor Cindy Hinds Councillor Andrew Holgate Councillor Kevin Hughes Councillor Rita Johnson Councillor Mike Lowe Councillor David Mackie Councillor Hilary McGill Councillor Martin White Councillor Ian Smith Councillor David Wisinger</p>

Key:		
C & E	=	Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee
CR	=	Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee
E & Y	=	Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee
E	=	Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
OC	=	Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee
S&HC	=	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