

CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 22 nd January 2020
Report Subject	Committee Review
Report Author	Head of Democratic Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the 2019 Annual Meeting, the Leader of the Council gave an undertaking that our committee structure would be reviewed during the current municipal year. This report provides details of how the review has been carried out, together with a number of options for implementing the proposed change within Overview & Scrutiny.

From the outset, it became apparent that the review should concentrate on the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees; the number of Members on each of those committees and also the number of Members on the Planning committee.

The review has been carried out so far through the Group Leaders and their deputies.

It has been recommended that the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees should be reduced from six to five, by disaggregating the remit of the current Organisational change Overview & Scrutiny committee. That committee was originally set up to provide scrutiny of the move to the Community Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models programmes. As most of that work has now been carried out, the committee has successfully fulfilled its original objectives.

In agreeing to reduce the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees, Group Leaders have agreed that four options for balancing the workloads of the five remaining O&S committee should be put to Member consultation: this was carried out within the last month. Details are included in the body of the report.

Following consideration by this Committee, a report will be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 27th February. This will enable changes to be implemented from the 2020 Annual Meeting, which is to be held on Tuesday 5th May.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	<p>That the Committee recommends to Council:</p> <p>(a) that the number of Overview & Scrutiny Committees be reduced from six to five from the Annual Meeting and,</p> <p>(b) a preferred option for the disaggregation of the current Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny committee's responsibilities to the five remaining Overview & Scrutiny committees, based on the four set out in the appendix.</p>
2	<p>That the Committee recommends to Council the reduction in Members on the five Overview & Scrutiny committees, the Planning Committee and the Constitution & Democratic Services committee, which will take effect from the Annual Meeting.</p>

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE 2019/20 COMMITTEE REVIEW
1.01	<p>At the 2019 Annual Meeting, the Leader of the Council gave an undertaking that our committee structure would be reviewed during the current municipal year. This report provides details of how the review has been carried out, together with a number of options for implementing the proposed change within Overview & Scrutiny. It is a good practice to review our committee structure from time to time. The last review was conducted in 2014/15 and implemented from the 2015 Annual Meeting.</p>
1.02	<p>Group leaders considered the initial review scoping document at their July meeting. This detailed the statutory and organisational requirements for particular committees. Following an initial briefing, the officers provided a number of details from other Welsh councils. These showed that we have amongst the largest number of Overview & Scrutiny committees, amongst the highest number of Members on those committees and on our Planning committee.</p>
1.03	<p>Group leaders indicated that they were satisfied that the review should concentrate on the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees, the number of Members on each of those committees and also on the number of Members on the Planning committee. Accordingly, officers were asked to provide a range of options for reducing the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees and the members on those committees. At the same time, officers also considered options for reducing the number of members on the Planning Committee and producing a new political balance calculation.</p>
1.04	<p>At the September meeting of Group Leaders, it was agreed that the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees should be reduced from six to five, by disaggregating the remit of the current Organisational change Overview & Scrutiny committee. That committee was originally set up to provide specialist and detailed scrutiny of the move to the Community</p>

	Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models programmes. As most of that work has now been carried out, the committee has successfully fulfilled its original objectives.								
1.05	Compared with other Welsh Authorities, we currently have amongst the highest number of Members on our Overview & Scrutiny Committees, and have done for over 10 years. . Some groups have experienced difficulties in filling all of their places, and so the reduction in numbers of Members on the committees has been discussed. Group leaders have agreed to recommend that each of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees within the new structure would have 12 rather than the current 15 Members.								
1.06	<p>In agreeing to reduce the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees, Group Leaders have agreed the following four options for balancing workloads of a five O&S committee structure should be put to Member consultation. The options are as follows. Full details are provided in appendix 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option one: disaggregates the Organisational Change O&SC remit to the other current O&SCs, without making any other material changes. • Option two: makes some further changes, such as scrutiny of all economic development functions being transferred from Community & Enterprise to Environment, and renames those two committees. Scrutiny of the theatre would move from Corporate Resources, to what would become Education, Youth and Culture. No changes for Social & Healthcare. • Option three: the theatre is moved from Corporate Resources O&SC to Education Youth & Culture, the statutory crime & disorder scrutiny role, currently with Corporate Resources together with Community Protection and liaison with the North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority and Service and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner is transferred Environment & Economy . • Option four: similar to option three, but the statutory crime & disorder scrutiny role, currently with Corporate Resources together with Community Protection and liaison with the North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority and Service and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to be transferred to Community, Housing & Assets. 								
1.07	<p>In December, the four options were put to all elected and co-opted members for consultation, asking them to express a preference for one of the options. The rate of response was low and so did not provide an adequate steer. The results are shown below. Some Members responded without identifying their preferred option, but made comments.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Option 1</th> <th>Option 2</th> <th>Option 3</th> <th>Option 4</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Additional comments:</p> <p><i>A) Option 1 acceptable, but with a further consideration to include Civil Contingencies & Emergency planning under Environment -sub heading</i></p>	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	6	5	1	2
Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4						
6	5	1	2						

	<p><i>Public Protection. (This is also shown in option 2 but under Community Housing and assets).</i></p> <p><i>B) Could Aura, Holywell Leisure Centre and Cambrian Aquatics be moved to Community and Enterprise instead of them being in Education and Youth? They are in essence Social Enterprises. Although Double Click could be also moved based on that rationale; I think it's best to stay within Social and Health due to the main nature of its business and the traditional links which are well established.</i></p> <p><i>C) It makes most sense to divide the work of Organisational Change into existing work Committee workloads, and minimise the movement of work between committees. I think it makes it easier to track the work of each committee over the years and maintains better Officer accountability. It means members on a committee who have shown interest in a particular policy or strategy would not be cut off mid-term. Changing the work of a committee should take place after the Council Elections rather than in mid-term. Consequently, I prefer option 1.</i></p> <p><i>D) if asked to put Options in order of preference, then: Four, Three, Two, and One.</i></p> <p><i>E), I am not completely certain as I have so many reservations, but for the sake of moving this forward I will support option three.</i></p> <p><i>F) I really do not mind.</i></p> <p>As consulting with Members has not produced a clear preference for one of the options, the committee is invited to consider the options and identify a preferred option for recommendation to Council.</p>
1.08	<p>We currently have the legal maximum of Members – 21- on the Planning Committee (the number of Members on this committee is governed by the <i>Size and composition of Local Planning Authority Committees (Wales) Regulations 2017</i>). The number which we have is amongst the highest in Wales. Group leaders have agreed that this number is too large. Following consideration, they have recommended that with effect from the Annual Meeting, that number should be reduced to 17 Members.</p>
1.09	<p>In order to make the political balance calculation work effectively with the reduction in places on committees and one fewer committee, it has also been necessary to reduce the number of Members on the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee from 21 to 18.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	A reduction in the number of committees may result in the reduction of senior salaries paid.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The report details the consultation which has already been carried out.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Not applicable.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Committee Review Options.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council, 7th May 2019.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robert Robins, Head of Democratic Services. Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: Robert.robins@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	No technical terms used.