

CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 21 June 2018
Report Subject	Audit and Overview & Scrutiny Liaison Group
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management & Assets
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager & Internal Audit Manager
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a meeting between officers from Internal Audit and Overview & Scrutiny, it was agreed that there is considerable merit in now resurrecting the liaison meeting approach, with the Chair and Vice-chair of Audit committee and each of the six Overview & Scrutiny committees being invited to attend, alongside officers from both teams. Meetings would be scheduled to take place on a quarterly basis and would ensure that issues of interest to both Audit and Overview & Scrutiny – such as the management of strategic risk - are properly dealt with.

The committee is asked to support this initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the committee supports regular meeting of the Audit and Overview & Scrutiny chairs and appropriate officers.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR A LIAISON GROUP.
1.01	The County Council has operated with six Overview & Scrutiny Committees and an Audit Committee for some considerable time. The respective roles of both functions are detailed in the Council's Constitution.
1.02	As Members will be aware, Overview and Scrutiny Committees are powerful

	committees that can contribute to the development of Council policies and also hold the Cabinet to account for its decisions. Another key part of the Overview and Scrutiny role is to review existing policies, consider proposals for new policies and suggest new policies.
1.03	Overview and Scrutiny should be carried out in a constructive way and should aim to contribute to the delivery of efficient and effective services that meet the needs and aspirations of local inhabitants. Overview and Scrutiny Committees should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism.
1.04	The Overview & Scrutiny committees are concerned with pre and post decision scrutiny of Cabinet decisions (including call in); contributing to policy development and review; and carrying out elements of external scrutiny. The six committees cover the entire range of the County Council's functions.
1.05	The Audit committee is concerned with reviewing the effectiveness of the Authority's systems of corporate governance, internal control and risk management systems making reports and recommendations to the County Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements. It oversees the reporting of the statutory financial statements process to ensure the balance, transparency and integrity of published financial information, and reviews the financial statements prepared by the authority and recommends them to County Council.
1.06	The Audit Committee also monitors the performance and effectiveness of the internal and external audit functions within the wider regulatory context; and reviews and scrutinises the County Council's financial affairs, making 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.
1.07	Until 2012, there was an Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee, with the Chair of the Audit Committee as a co-optee, thus providing useful linkages and reduction in duplication. Subsequently we have operated liaison between both functions with ad hoc meetings involving the Audit Chair and Overview & Scrutiny Chairs.
1.08	The 2018/19 Budget has involved some significant risk issues such as car park charges, introduction of garden waste charges and the costs of out of county placements. This has prompted Officers from the Internal Audit and Overview & Scrutiny teams to consider how best to ensure that strategic risks are properly considered by the Overview & Scrutiny committees and that the Audit Committee is assured that the process has sufficient controls therein.
1.09	There is considerable merit in our now resurrecting the liaison meeting approach, with the Chair and Vice-chair of Audit committee and each of the six Overview & Scrutiny committees being invited to attend, alongside officers from both teams. We envisage meetings being scheduled to take place on a quarterly basis if there is business to transact.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Minimal resources are required and more effective liaison is a business efficiency.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Chairs of Audit and Overview & Scrutiny committees.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The creation of the liaison group effective risk management

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

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

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 basic 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.