

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 27 February 2020
Report Subject	Committee Review
Report Author	Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Governance)

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 and the recommendations arising from it.

The review was carried out by the statutory officers in consultation with Group Leaders and their deputies before a report was submitted to the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee. Prior to the initial meeting with Group Leaders, the officers had prepared a range of design principles for consideration. These were supported by research work which put the current Flintshire committee structure into an all Wales context. The statistics provided from across Wales included numbers of scrutiny committees, numbers on Members on those committees, size and composition of planning committees and licensing committees and details relating to political balance.

In carrying out the review of political balance, officers were requested to ensure that all of the political groups could be represented on each of the larger committees: a solution to this was devised and subsequently supported by Group Leaders.

From the initial meeting with Group Leaders, it became apparent that the review should concentrate on:

- A reduction in the number of Overview & Scrutiny Committees(O&SCs) ;
- A reduction in the number of Members on each of those committees;
- A reduction in the number of Members on the Planning Committee. And
- A new political balance solution which achieved an overall reduction in the number of committee places whilst still making provision for all political groups to be represented on our major committees.

It is now 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. This was originally set up to provide scrutiny of the move to the Community Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models programmes, which has been completed, so the Committee has successfully fulfilled its original objectives.

Assuming that Council accepts the recommendations made through Group Leaders and the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee, the changes will be implemented from the Annual Meeting, which is to be held on Tuesday 5th May.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	<p>That Council approves the following to take effect from the 2020 Annual Meeting :</p> <p>(a) that the number of Overview & Scrutiny Committees be reduced from six to five and,</p> <p>(b) that the new Overview & Scrutiny committee structure as detailed in the report be approved for implementation.</p>
2	<p>That Council agrees the reduction in Members, to take effect from the Annual Meeting, on the following committees:</p> <p>(a) the five Overview & Scrutiny Committees from 15 to 12,</p> <p>(b) the Planning Committee from 21 to 17 and</p> <p>(c) the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee from 21 to 16.</p>
3	<p>That Council notes the revised political balance calculation at Appendix B.</p>
4	<p>That Council formally thanks all of those Members and officers who have been involved in the successful completion of the work of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</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.</p>

	<p>It is recognised as good practice to review committee structures from time to time. Our 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 of committee size and remits from other Welsh Councils.</p>
1.03	<p>Group Leaders indicated that they were satisfied that the review should concentrate on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Accordingly, officers were asked to provide a range of options for reducing the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees and the number of 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. It was recognised that the committee had been established in 2015 to provide specialist and detailed scrutiny of the move to the Community Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models programmes. As that work has now been carried out, the committee had already successfully fulfilled its original objectives.</p>
1.05	<p>It was noted that compared with other Welsh Authorities, we had amongst the highest number of Members on our Overview & Scrutiny Committees, and had done so for over 10 years. It was also noted that some groups have experienced difficulties in filling all of their committee places, and thus a reduction in numbers of Members on the committees was explored. Group Leaders agreed to recommend that each of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees within the new structure would have 12 rather than the current 15 Members.</p>
1.06	<p>In agreeing to reduce the number of Overview & Scrutiny committees, Group Leaders agreed the four options for balancing workloads of a five O&S committee structure should be put to Member consultation. That consultation was not conclusive. Subsequently, after discussion at Constitution & Democratic Services Committee on 22nd January, a preferred option has been recommended to Council for adoption from the Annual Meeting.</p>
1.07	<p>Details of the preferred option are in appendix 1. The committees within the new structure will have the functions of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny disaggregated to them and there will also be some other structural changes which are identified.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Resources already has a significant monthly workload. To ease this, it will cease to be the statutory ‘crime & disorder’ scrutiny committee. Those responsibilities, together with liaison with the North Wales Police and the Fire & Rescue Service will be transferred to the renamed ‘Environment & Economy Overview Scrutiny Committee. Theatr Clwyd has previously been reported to both Corporate Resources and Organisational Change. It will now move to a renamed Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee. In determining a preferred option, the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee also recommended that the Emergency Planning and Civil Contingencies functions be moved from the remit of Corporate Resources to that of Environment & Economy. • Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny committee will assume responsibility for all leisure functions and for the theatre. • Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee will assume responsibilities for the economic development/enterprise functions which are currently with ‘Community & Enterprise’. Recognising the new committee’s workload, consideration is being given to it meeting monthly, rather than on a six weekly cycle. This committee will also be designated as the statutory ‘crime & disorder’ Overview & Scrutiny Committee. • Community, Housing & Assets will concentrate on the Council’s housing stock and service and our Asset Strategy, including the County hall campus. • Social & Healthcare will retain its existing responsibilities and also take on transferred functions from Organisational Change.
1.08	<p>In the appendix, functions transferred to a committee as a result of the disaggregation of Organisational Change O&SC are shown in red. Functions transferred from another committee are shown in green. The workload of committees within the new structure will monitored. If there is an imbalance, the allocation of functions can be again reviewed. For example, if Community Housing & Assets were to become the ‘crime & disorder’ scrutiny committee, and become responsible for community safety, liaison with police and fire and the Emergency Planning and Civil Contingencies functions, there would be a corresponding reduction in the remit of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny committee.</p>
1.09	<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. This</p>

	recommendation was also supported by the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee in January.
1.10	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. A copy of the revised political Balance is attached as Appendix 2. This calculation has only been made possible by separating out the 'employment' committees which are Grievance, Grievance Appeals and Investigation & Disciplinary. Otherwise, the smaller groups would be disadvantaged by having to use part of their seat allocation on committees which seldom if ever meet. This separation requires a specific agreement from all Members of Council. If one Member objects to it, it cannot be implemented.
1.11	<p>Members will already be aware that over the five years of its existence, the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee has successfully carried out the work for which it was set up. This was to provide scrutiny of the move to the Community Asset Transfers and Alternative Delivery Models programmes, which has been completed, so the Committee has successfully fulfilled its original objectives.</p> <p>Therefore, it is suggested that Council formally thanks all of those Members and officers who have been involved in the successful completion of the work of the Organisational Change Overview & Scrutiny Committee.</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 – Terms of reference of the five Overview & Scrutiny Committees following the review.

	Appendix 2 – Political Balance calculation for a committee structure of five Overview & Scrutiny committees of 12 members, a planning Committee of 17 Members and a Constitution & Democratic Services committee of 16 Members.
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Council, 7th May 2019 Report to the Meeting of the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee, 22nd January 2020 and resultant minute.</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.