

Conwy and Denbighshire PSB – Scrutiny Option Appraisal

The following table outlines various options for the future Scrutiny arrangements of the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board, as to ensure democratic accountability for partnership actions.

This proposal will need to be consulted on with appropriate elected members and be approved through the democratic process in each county area.

In 2013, Welsh Government undertook research into LSB scrutiny activity across Wales. The resulting report, '*Establishing a baseline for Local Service Board scrutiny*' is appended to this option appraisal, as a reference.

Option		Benefits	Dis-benefits	Resources Required
Option 1	<p>Keep Current Arrangements: Continue with current arrangements of utilising the separate Local Authority Partnership Scrutiny Committees to oversee each Councils' aspects of work for the Joint Board.</p> <p>(NB - Conwy CBC has co-optees from LSB partners on this panel when discussing LSB matters).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost avoidance of developing a new structure. • Increased local member engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in seeking views from two committees • Possible contradictory views from each committee. • Infrequency of reporting to scrutiny committee (usually half yearly) leading to items not having the due consideration they deserve. This could be remedied by holding dedicated meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise existing resources.
Option 2	<p>Continue with utilising separate local authority scrutiny arrangements, but introduce closer working relations between the Committees: Present the work and priorities of the PSB to both scrutiny committees, through an agreed forward work programme, allowing both scrutiny committees to oversee all aspects of the PSB work.</p> <p>(NB - This is the Conwy and Denbighshire Community Safety Partnership (CSP) model - The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost avoidance of developing a new structure. • Sharing of both scrutiny committee views and recommendations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential apprehension from local members in allowing designated local authority committees to scrutinise across boundaries. This may be avoided or mitigated by an understanding whereby both committees concentrate on PSB issues in their own areas where possible. • Delay in seeking views from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise existing resources.

	partnership operates across the 2 LAs and is required to report to each LA scrutiny committee. The CSP reports the same information to both panels.)		two committees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of differing opinions of separate scrutiny panels on the same topic. 	
Option 3	Joint Formal Arrangements: Develop a dedicated joint Conwy and Denbighshire PSB Scrutiny committee, with the potential of extending representation to PSB partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSB has a simpler and quicker Scrutiny process. • Greater sense of accountability to 1 joint committee. • Timeliness of reporting. • All members hear the same debate. • Wider perspective/views of co-optees which could strengthen scrutiny. • Better use of the LSB officers to support Members to understand & scrutinise reports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential cost incurred in establishing committee (e.g. - chair of a joint scrutiny committee would be eligible to a senior salary of £8,700 (if the authorities agreed it should be a remunerated post) or £4,350 if the chair is already receiving a senior salary. A chair of a sub-committee of the joint committee would also be eligible to a payment of £2,175). • Possible lower levels of member engagement because it is a joint committee (attendance has been poorer when joint CCBC and DCC meetings have been held previously). • Greater lead in to setting up joint committee, including governance arrangements (i.e. developing terms of reference (covering politically balanced membership details & number, relevance of co-optees), voting arrangements and its implications, formality of call-in arrangements etc. • Potential political concerns, i.e. balanced party representation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resource intensive - committee will need to be supported by a dedicated scrutiny officer, as the role here is different to the roles for supporting non-scrutiny committees and that of other officers in that they are focused on assisting the scrutiny committee in its work, which includes being constructively critical of the LSB/PSB where appropriate. A new joint committee may generate a significant body of new work for the scrutiny officer, above what would be seen using existing committee arrangements.
Option 4	Joint informal Arrangements: Informal joint meeting of both committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased local member engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resource intensive. • Unclear if an informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More resource intensive – although informal the

	Potential of extending membership to PSB partner representatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider perspective/views of co-optees which could strengthen scrutiny. 	<p>committee would be deemed open and transparent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issues in developing informal governance of the committee? 	committee will still need to be supported by a dedicated scrutiny officer.
Option 5	<p>Joint Sub-Committee: Develop a joint Conwy and Denbighshire PSB Scrutiny Sub-Committee which will report to the separate Local Authority Partnership Scrutiny and Overview panels. Potential of extending membership of Sub-Committee to PSB partner representatives.</p> <p>This would be set up similarly to the model considered for the voluntary merger.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for sub-committee to be involved in PSB work from the start rather than retrospectively which is the current process. Improved engagement / participation of partners Wider perspective/views of co-optees which could strengthen scrutiny. Improved knowledge and understanding of PSB role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of time and increased workload for some Councillors Sub-committee not taking place in public arena. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased resources and support required - committee will need to be supported by a dedicated scrutiny officer.
Option 6	<p>GwE Model: GwE (School Effectiveness and Improvement Service) operates across the 6 North Wales authorities. Scrutiny arrangements for each GwE theme is designated to a Local Authority Scrutiny committee who provides scrutiny on behalf of the 5 other LAs.</p> <p>In this case, Conwy CBC and Denbighshire CC would each lead on and scrutinise particular themes of the PSB.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost avoidance of developing a new structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each scrutiny committee would not see the entire work programme of the PSB. This could be remedied by option 2 if the work programmes of both individual scrutiny committees were shared with each other together with the PSB work programme and associated minutes and actions. Lack of understanding of the role of the PSB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise existing resources.