

Wrexham Public Service Board
Arrangements for Accountability and Scrutiny

Wrexham Public Service Board (PSB) is a statutory public body consisting of a number of statutory and invited public bodies that operate within the area of Wrexham County Borough.

The PSB must work in partnership to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wrexham to achieve its Well being goals. Initially this will mean the PSB will undertake a well being assessment of Wrexham assessing the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being and then by agreeing and setting priorities that will maximise the PSB's contribution to well-being goals.

In line with the requirements within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2014 a plan setting out the objectives and the steps that will be taken to meet them will be required to be published by the PSB. This is referred to as the "Local Well - being Plan".

The Local Well-being Plan referred to above will be completed and agreed in approximately March 2018.

During this interim period the PSB will continue to oversee its predecessor, Wrexham Local Service Board's plan, "Our Wrexham Plan.

Scrutiny of the PSB through the Council's existing Scrutiny Arrangements

General Information about Scrutiny Committees

In Wrexham, 52 Councillors are elected by the public to represent the 47 wards of the County Borough. They meet a minimum of four times a year as Full Council and form the ultimate decision making body for the Authority on the Council's major plans and strategies.

The Full Council annually elects an Executive Board, which consists of 10 Councillors. This meets, approximately, every month and makes the majority of the day to day management decisions for the Council.

Scrutiny Committees are each made up of 13 of the 42 Councillors who are eligible to sit on them, i.e. not on the Executive Board. Their purpose is to scrutinise the decisions made by the Executive Board, together with the operation of the Authority. They also consider issues that affect the local community and make recommendations for improvements to the Executive Board.

There are currently five scrutiny committees, each responsible for reviewing and improving different areas of the Council's work:

- Customers, Performance, Resources & Governance Scrutiny Committee
- Safeguarding, Communities and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
- Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee
- Homes & Environment Scrutiny Committee
- Employment, Business and Investment Scrutiny Committee

More detail on the specific terms of reference of the committees is available in the Council's constitution.

(<http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>)

Scrutiny committees meet each month and publish work programmes which list their work commitments for the coming months. Any organisation or member of the public can request that a scrutiny committee schedule an issue for consideration on its work programme. The decision as to whether to scrutinise an issue rests with the scrutiny committee and items will be scheduled according to relative priority.

These work programmes are available on the Council's website, at:-

http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/forward_work_programme/scrutiny.htm

All scrutiny committee meetings are open to the public. Members of the public may contribute to a Scrutiny Committee meeting, in line with the Council's constitution and at the Chair's discretion. On occasion the committee will consider issues of a confidential nature (listed as 'Part 2' on the work programmes and agendas) and on such occasions any members of the public present will be asked to leave whilst consideration of that item takes place.

Agendas and papers for meetings are available to the public 3 working days in advance of the meeting. These can be also be accessed via the Council's website

<http://moderngov.wrexham.gov.uk/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

Hard copies can be provided on request.

Contact details for the Council's scrutiny section, are as follows:

Suzanne Price, Scrutiny Facilitator Suzanne.price@wrexham.gov.uk 01978 292179

Tracy Davies, Scrutiny Facilitator Tracy.davies@wrexham.gov.uk 01978 292258

Craig Stevens, Scrutiny Facilitator Craig.stevens@wrexham.gov.uk 01978 292253

Arrangements for scrutinising the work of the PSB

PSB Partners have made a 'commitment to co-operate' with the Council's scrutiny committees. This 'commitment' requires:

- PSB Partners are provided with information on how to access the Scrutiny process, e.g. request that an issue is presented for scrutiny and have access to relevant information on the Scrutiny Committee timetables and work programmes
- PSB Partners may attend and contribute to a Scrutiny Committee meeting, in line with the Council's constitution
- A Scrutiny Committee may require the PSB or one or more of the members of the board as the committee may specify, to attend the scrutiny committee and provide it with explanations of such matters as it may specify.

To meet the requirements of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act it is expected that scrutiny of Wrexham PSB will take place at least once per year, after the PSB Annual Report has been published, and that this scrutiny will be carried out by the Customers, Performance, Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee.

Process to be followed

General enquiries about the work of the PSB or requests for information should be directed to Helen Odunaiya, Partnerships Lead, PIPS (Performance, Improvement, Partnerships and Scrutiny) team at Helen.odunaiya@wrexham.gov.uk or telephone: 01978 292273.

It has been agreed that Wrexham County Borough Council's Scrutiny Committees will be used to review and challenge the PSB:

Step1 – Contacting Scrutiny at the Council

- Any officer/member of the PSB partner organisations, Local Authority Councillor or member of the public may contact the Scrutiny Facilitator (by phone or in writing by letter or email) to raise a PSB-related issue which they believe should be scrutinised. The Scrutiny Facilitator will work with this party (the 'originator') and the PIPS Partnerships Lead, or the relevant PDB facilitator, to develop a topic selection form that briefly outlines the key issues and concerns. The purpose of the proposal is to help the scrutiny committee decide whether to schedule the issue in its work programme. (Enquiries of a more general nature will be signposted to the LSB Co-ordinator).
- The Scrutiny Facilitator will present the topic request form to the appropriate Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting. The Scrutiny Facilitator will contact the Partnerships Lead, or the relevant PDB facilitator, and the originator to advise them of the date of the meeting so they can attend, as required..

- The Scrutiny Facilitator will advise the Partnerships Lead, or the relevant PDB facilitator, and the originator of the Committee's decision, as to whether to scrutinise the issue or not.

Step 2 - The Scrutiny Committee meeting

- If a scrutiny committee has agreed to accept the topic request form, the Scrutiny Facilitator and the Partnerships Lead, or the relevant PDB facilitator will liaise to:
 - Commission the production and presentation of a report from the PSB Executive Group or the relevant Partnership Delivery Board. This report will need to be signed off by the PSB Executive Group Chair and the relevant PDB Chair as appropriate.
 - Agree a mutually suitable date for the issue to be scrutinised, taking into account the scrutiny committee's work programme and the PSB partner's commitments.

The scrutiny committee may also require the attendance of other PSB partners.

- The Scrutiny Facilitator will inform the originator of the date and time of the meeting when the issue is to be considered and will invite them to attend.

Step 3 - Follow –Up

- The Scrutiny Facilitator will prepare a short report on the views and recommendations of the scrutiny committee for the Partnerships Lead to present to the PSB at its' next meeting, or the PDB facilitator to present to the PDB at its next meeting. The Partnerships Lead or PDB facilitator will report back any subsequent actions or responses to the scrutiny committee via the Scrutiny Facilitator.
- The Scrutiny Facilitator will be responsible for advising the originator of the views and recommendations of the decision of the scrutiny committee and the response of the PSB or relevant PDB.
- The views and recommendations of the scrutiny committee and the response of the PSB will be reported in the PSB annual report together with any subsequent actions taken by the PSB.

Step 4 – External notification

- Following a meeting that has carried out scrutiny of the PSB/PDB the Scrutiny Facilitator must send a copy of any relevant report or recommendation made to the relevant Welsh Ministers, the Well being of Future Generations Commissioner and the Auditor General for Wales. This will not be required

until March 2018 onwards, or when the new Well Being Plan for Wrexham has been agreed.

Review

This protocol will be reviewed as required, to reflect any relevant changes with regard to the PSB or the Local Authority.