

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 and to fulfil statutory duties.

Option		Benefits	Disadvantages	Resources Required
Option 1	<p>Keep Current Arrangements: Continue with current arrangements of utilising the separate Local Authority Scrutiny Committees to oversee each Councils' aspects of work for the Joint Public Services Board (PSB).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost avoidance of developing a new structure. • Increased local member engagement within Denbighshire from utilising an existing DCC Scrutiny Committee • Sharing of recommendations and key issues between DCC and CCBC possible through existing links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in seeking views from two committees • Possible contradictory views from each committee. • Two separate set of recommendations being sent to the PSB, two separate reports to WG Ministers and the Auditor General as per the legislation's requirements (for a single Board) • Utilising this option is likely to make it more difficult to judge the overall effectiveness of the PSB which is a key aim 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise existing resources.
Option 2	<p>Joint Formal Arrangements: Develop a dedicated joint Conwy and Denbighshire PSB Scrutiny committee, with the potential of extending representation to PSB partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members hear the same debate. • A single scrutiny committee would make better and more effective use of the PSB officers' time to support Members to understand & scrutinise reports. • PSB has a simpler and quicker Scrutiny process. • Greater sense of accountability to 1 joint committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential cost incurred in establishing committee (e.g. - chair of a joint scrutiny committee would be eligible for a senior salary (if the authorities agreed it should be a remunerated post) • Possible lower levels of member engagement if the joint committee is seen as being remote, either 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing resources will need to be made available to the JOSC. The Committee will need to be supported by a professional 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

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of reporting. • A joint committee will offer a more integrated, strategic and cross border approach • This option is favoured by the PSB 	<p>strategically or geographically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater lead in time to setting up joint committee, including governance arrangements • Potential political concerns, i.e. balanced party representation. 	<p>constructively critical of the PSB where appropriate. A new joint committee may generate a significant body of new work for the scrutiny officer, above what would be if using existing committee arrangements.</p>
Option 3	Joint Informal Arrangements: Informal joint meeting of both committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could share the benefits listed for a formal joint committee • Avoids senior salary costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear if an informal committee would be deemed open and transparent or if it would have sufficient status. • Issues in developing informal governance of the committee? • A need to report to the designated PSB Scrutiny Committee at each authority to enable it to make formal recommendations to the PSB, report to WG Ministers and the Auditor General as per the legislation's requirements • Potentially this option has the greatest number of structures/steps attached to it i.e. the joint informal committee having to refer items to the LAs' individual committees for them to report to WG and the Auditor General; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly the most resource intensive option – although informal the committee will still need to be supported by a professional scrutiny officer and will need PSB officers to support the structure.

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