

LGSS JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE 2016/17**Role**

The role of the Joint Working Group (JWG) will be as follows:

- Accountability – Holding the LGSS Joint Committee to account for the discharge of its functions.
- Improvement – Investigating issues associated with LGSS and making recommendations that seek to improve the quality of services delivered through LGSS.

Membership

The membership of the JWG will consist of 3 councillors from each participating authority (: Milton Keynes Council, Northamptonshire County Council, and Cambridgeshire County Council). Substitute members from each authority may be appointed to attend in their absence.

Chair

The chair of the JWG will be held jointly by a member from each participating authority. These 3 members will be elected annually by the JWG. Meetings of the JWG will normally be chaired by the co-chair from the participating authority that is hosting the meeting in question.

Parent Committees

The committees at the participating authorities with responsibility for scrutinising or overseeing corporate support functions will act the parent committees for the JWG. Currently these are:

Milton Keynes Council: Scrutiny Management Committee

Northamptonshire CC: Finance & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cambridgeshire CC: General Purposes Committee

The parent committee role will include the following functions:

- Agreeing the establishment of the JWG and nominating members from the respective authority to serve on the JWG.
- Overseeing the work programme of the JWG and incorporating the requirements of delivering this within its respective work programme.
- Receiving draft reports and recommendations from the JWG for agreement prior to submission to relevant decision-making bodies.
- Maintaining an overview of the operation of the JWG and proposing changes to the JWG's terms of reference as necessary.

The parent committees should carry out this role on the basis of co-operation and communication and generally seek to avoid acting in what could reasonably be seen as a unilateral way.

The parent (or other appropriate) committees will retain the role of considering LGSS decisions that are called-in at their respective authority, and will have the option, in exceptional circumstances, to consider any other item of business relating to LGSS that they would prefer to consider as an individual committee rather than through the JWG.

Method of Operation

The JWG should adopt a task-and-finish, outcome-focussed approach to carrying out its role.

The JWG should draw up a rolling work programme setting out proposed work to be carried out during the following year to deliver its role. This work programme will be overseen and monitored by the parent committees as set out above.

JWG members will be required to keep the parent committee of their respective participating authority informed of the JWG's work as requested.

Quorum

The quorum for JWG meetings will be 3 members, made up of one member from each of the participating authorities [TO BE CONFIRMED].

JWG Meetings

The JWG will normally meet every 4 months, on appropriate dates and times selected to support the delivery of the work programme agreed by the JWG. Additional JWG meetings may be convened if agreed by all of the JWG co-chairs.

The venue for JWG meetings will be determined by the JWG and will take account of business to be conducted. However, as a general principle, JWG meetings will normally rotate in sequence between the participating authorities.

The JWG will normally meet in public, with the provision to exclude the public for items of business where it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them.

Officer Support

Parent committees will work together to ensure that equitable officer support arrangements are in place to support the JWG in the delivery of its work programme.

Exit Arrangements

The JWG will continue to operate for as long as the parent committees consider that there is value in the arrangement. The parent committees may withdraw their participation from the JWG at any time should they resolve to do so.