

Appointment to the Joint Scrutiny Panel – Local Government Organisation

1. Question from Margaret Cheung (independent co-optee) to Alison McKane

The Joint Scrutiny Panel is established to provide cross-council, non-executive and non-decision-making scrutiny of the process for LGR. In this context, could the administration clarify the specific role and remit of Cheltenham's two representatives? How will their responsibilities ensure that Cheltenham contributes effectively to the overall scrutiny function?

Response: The Joint Scrutiny Panel is made up of 14 members from across the 7 Gloucestershire Councils and as such all members will have an equal role in providing scrutiny of the LGR process.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Joint Scrutiny Panel set out the Panel's objectives as:-

1. To provide a forum for coordinated, cross-council scrutiny of the LGR process in Gloucestershire.
2. To provide a sounding board for working through issues and choices during the LGR process.
3. To review whether portfolio governance supports openness, accountability, timely decision-making and effective management of risk.
4. To make recommendations to the Portfolio Board to improve the LGR process.
5. To support public understanding by holding Joint Scrutiny Panel meetings in public, as far as reasonably possible.

2. Question from Margaret Cheung (independent co-optee) to Alison McKane

What mechanism will be in place for Cheltenham's representatives to report back to Council and to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee? Will there be structured reporting cycles, written updates, or standing agenda items to ensure transparency and continuity?

Response:-

- The Joint Scrutiny Panel may produce interim notes, interim recommendation reports or final recommendation reports as it deems appropriate

- Reports and recommendations will be submitted to the LGR Portfolio Board or Participating Councils' Scrutiny (or equivalent) committees
- Where recommendations are made, recipients will be asked to provide a written response within an agreed timescale (normally within 28 days) setting out acceptance, partial acceptance or reasons for non-acceptance.
- Outputs will be published by Cheltenham Borough Council, except where publication is restricted by law or by agreed confidentiality.

3. Question from Margaret Cheung (independent co-optee) to Alison McKane

Although the Joint Panel is non-political, has consideration been given to ensuring balanced representation across the participating councils? Will any principles or criteria guide how each authority's interests are fairly reflected within the Panel's work?

Response:-

The draft Terms of Reference provide that:-

- The Joint Scrutiny Panel will comprise 14 Members, two elected Members from each Participating Council, nominated in accordance with that Council's arrangements.
- Nominations should, where practicable, reflect each Council's approach to political proportionality and scrutiny expertise.
- Members are expected to act in a non-partisan manner consistent with the scrutiny role.