

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>1 DECEMBER, 2015</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS</b>
<b>AUTHOR (S)</b>	<b>Arwel E Jones, Senior Manager, Democracy and Delivery</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>To establish a sub-group to prepare an Action Plan</b>

1. Recently, the Wales Audit Office (WAO) completed a review of the effectiveness of scrutiny in Gwynedd. As part of that work, they have suggested three main areas that need to be addressed in order to improve scrutiny in Gwynedd:-

- Dealing with the perceived disengagement between the Cabinet and the scrutiny committees. by looking, amongst other things, at more “pre-decision scrutiny” of Cabinet business
- Improving the clarity of scrutiny recommendations so that what happens as a result of scrutiny work can be more clearly identified
- Improving the quality of questioning at scrutiny committees to provide greater focus and quality for the scrutiny

(Although the final version of the report has not yet been received from the Wales Audit Office, the likely recommendations are noted in Appendix 1 to this report)

2. At the same time, a 360 degree review of the views of members and senior officers was undertaken within the Council. Some similar messages were received from that review, including the need to look at nurturing and developing skills and also the need to look at the scrutiny model to see whether it should be adapted to address some of the issues raised in the WAO report and the 360 degree Review.
3. Since it is the Audit Committee that has the responsibility for the Council's governance arrangements and, specifically, the Council's Constitution, the conclusion was drawn that it would be appropriate for this Committee to discuss the matter.
4. It is proposed that, if members are in agreement, a sub-group of the Committee is established as a matter of urgency, to invite witnesses, to come to conclusions on the way ahead and, specifically, to ensure that a firm Action Plan is in place to address the Wales Audit Office recommendations.