

Request

The independence of scrutiny committees and audit committees has been identified in a number of Public Interest Reports as being an important factor in facilitating meaningful scrutiny and challenge within local authorities.

If your local authority doesn't not have an overview and scrutiny system please answer the following in relation to the committee within your councils which has audit responsibilities. If your local authority has an overview and scrutiny system please note that as audit committees are not formally treated as part of scrutiny it may be that they are treated differently in the council's constitution and policies.

Please confirm whether you are responding to this request in relation to scrutiny committees and/or audit committees.

If your local authority has an overview and scrutiny committee system, please confirm how many committees (excluding audit) are part of that system?

Policy on Selection & Appointment of Committee Chairs: Please provide the council's current policy on selection and appointment of scrutiny committee chairs and audit committee chairs. Please either copy and paste the section of council policy relating to the selection of scrutiny and audit committee chairs or provide a link and details of the section/sub-section within the document where we can locate this information.

Current Political Configuration of Committee Chairs/Conveners: Please provide a figure showing what percentage of current scrutiny and audit committee chairs (or conveners) are members of an opposition party to the main controlling party or controlling coalition.

Response

This response is in relation to Wigan Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Wigan Council currently has four Overview and Scrutiny Committees; Confident Council, Confident Place and Environment, Health and Social Care and Children and Young People.

The excerpt below is from Wigan Council's Constitution in relation to the selection and appointment of Scrutiny Committee Chairmen:

"Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

7. Who Chairs Scrutiny Committee Meetings?

Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees will be drawn from among the Councillors sitting on the Scrutiny Committee, and subject to this requirement the Council may appoint such a person as it considers appropriate as Chair."

These appointments take place annually at the AGM of the Council, when the membership and Chairmen of all Committees of the Council are agreed by the full Council.

Currently, the Chairmen of all four Scrutiny Committees are Labour Councillors (with Labour being the main controlling party).