

Appendix L

Summary of the views shared by internal and external audit at the Governance Reference Group:

Internal Audit:

- Lack of a full scrutiny route if members do not receive adequate assurance on a matter.
- Too many reports are nodded through without proper scrutiny, there can be a lack of questions/appropriate questions.

External Audit:

- The onus is on elected members to be assured and, if they are not, they need a pathway to seek further assurances.
- There are also too many instances of behaviours and questions being overtly political.
- The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee, whilst not quasi-judicial, should not operate as political committee. Scrutiny should be done on a non-political basis, with all members pulling together to ensure they receive the required assurances for the benefit of their constituents. In policy-setting committees, division is accepted as part of the process because political groups are working from different political perspectives. However, once strategy and policy are approved, performance against these should be scrutinised to ensure that decisions are implemented, rather than looking back at why decisions were made.
- The use of special Council meetings to undertake scrutiny of previous decisions is not the most effective system of governance.
- Business should drive the scrutiny, not the other way round.
- External audit are not suggesting a new or substantially different committee with a programme of work, rather an adjustment of what we already have in place.
- Group leaders, Conveners and Vice-Conveners have a role to improve how business is conducted at meetings and also to bring their scrutiny into public meetings even if assurances have been provided in other spaces.
- Induction, training and development should be interactive and participative. This will achieve the desired outcome of improved scrutiny.
- The MORP and Code of Conduct already provide guidance to members on how questions should be asked at Committee.