

Evidence of joint working with adjoining authorities on urban extensions

West of England Partnership

The West of England Partnership brings together the four unitary authorities – Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council – and a range of social, economic and environmental partners. The Partnership was formed to focus on things that are better planned at the West of England level (the sub-region), rather than at the level of the individual council areas. Particular attention is being given to transport, planning, waste, appropriate housing supply, economic competitiveness, inward investment and skills.

The Partnership consists of a Partnership Board, two Joint Committees with executive functions, two Boards and two thematic sub-groups. The Partnership Board oversees all of the Partnership's activities, and makes any strategic decisions except those available to the Joint Committees. The Joint Committees have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of their councils. The other boards and theme groups offer specialist advice to the Partnership Board, and help to implement its decisions. In addition, there is a Joint Scrutiny Committee which can scrutinise any of the Partnership's work. The Partnership bodies are:

- Partnership Board
- Joint Transport Executive Committee
- Joint Waste Management Committee
- Planning, Housing and Communities Board
- Skills and Competitiveness Board
- Joint Scrutiny Committee

The West of England Partnership Governance and Delivery Structure and the constitution are set out in Appendix 1.

The West of England Partnership Office coordinated urban extension capacity work between the authorities in 2005. This initial work included a review of the Areas of Search for urban extensions and potential capacity assumptions. The defined areas were then examined in more detail by the relevant authorities (working together) and the findings informed the West of England Joint Study Area First Detailed Proposals which were submitted to the SWRA in 2005.

North Somerset Council

Working Arrangements	Explanation	Date
<p>Bristol City Council (BCC) officer(s) and Exec Member attend bi-monthly South West Bristol Advisory Group Meeting with officers and members from North Somerset Council (NSC) and other stakeholders (Highways Agency, Environment Agency, Homes and Communities Agency, Natural England, landowners, parish council members and other interested parties)</p>	<p>The original purpose of the South West Bristol Advisory Group was to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote and advise on the development and delivery of South West Bristol Urban Extension. 2. Ensure wide engagement in decision-making. 3. Ensure high quality and sustainable urban design and architecture. 4. Champion social, economic and environmental sustainability in all developments. 5. Develop a brand and a marketing and communication programme. 6. Ensure the delivery of mixed-use development. 7. Provide advice on infrastructure priorities, funding and programmes. 8. Act as a non-statutory consultee for all developments concerning the urban extension area. <p>The advisory group is now used to share information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy developments: (Local Development Frameworks for NSC and BCC and RSS updates) • Development proposals in the local area (for example the 'Ashton Park' proposals to develop the south west Bristol urban extension, the new BCFC stadium and proposals to develop land to the south of Long Ashton) • Any other planning or related issues of relevance to the area 	<p>Ongoing – since inception in March 2008</p>

North Somerset Council Cont

Working Arrangements	Explanation	Date
<p>BCC officers attended NSC urban extension workshops, together with other interested stakeholders</p>	<p>Officer attendance and participation in 'Planning Together' workshops held by NSC. The aim of these workshops was to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed vision. • A series of hopes and fears for the urban extension. • A set of locally specific objectives and principles • A summary diagram • An understanding of delivery and phasing issues • Identification and testing of 3 options. • Raise awareness of the urban extension proposals. • Disseminate information on development proposals in the area (Ashton Park, BCFC Stadium, Barrow Hospital) 	<p>2 – 3 April 2008 29-30 April 2008 26 – 27 Nov 2008</p>
<p>BCC and NSC officers have met together to discuss common issues, and jointly with developers and their consultants promoting land within the SW Bristol urban extension Area of Search.</p>	<p>Outline planning applications were submitted in September 2009 to both BCC and NSC by Baker Associates on behalf of Land Trust Developments Limited for the development of a 9,500 dwelling South West Bristol Urban Extension. (Pre-application meetings were held from early 2009). The latest meeting with NSC and Baker Associates was held in late February 2010 to discuss employment land and retail issues.</p>	<p>Ongoing- since early 2009</p>

North Somerset Council Cont

Working Arrangements	Explanation	Date
<p>BCC officer(s) attended NSC 'North Somerset Urban Extensions Project Delivery Team' meetings and provided data and comments to NSC and Broadway Malyan on proposals for a draft masterplan for the SW Bristol urban extension.</p>	<p>In July 2008 NSC (with the involvement of BCC) appointed a consultant team led by Broadway Malyan to prepare a masterplan, a set of design codes and a delivery plan for a 10,500 dwelling urban extension to the south west of Bristol.</p> <p>The purpose was to inform NSC's emerging Core Strategy and any future Area Action Plan or Supplementary Planning Document relating to the urban extension. The work was concluded in August 2009.</p> <p>The South West Bristol Urban Extension is not proposed in the NSC Core Strategy. The Broadway Malyan work is referred to in the document for the purposes of debate.</p>	<p>2008 - 2009</p>

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Working Arrangements	Explanation	Date
BCC officer(s) attend B&NES monthly urban extension officer meeting.	Discussion of: ongoing work/studies to inform Core Strategies, relevant draft Core Strategy text, consultation processes & events and emerging developer proposals. Specific topic based officer discussions re potential urban extension to SE Bristol between BCC and B&NES have also taken place on issues such as: Green Infrastructure, Transport Infrastructure, Sports and Recreation – cross boundary use and provision.	Ongoing - monthly since 2008.
Senior officers and Executive Members from both authorities have met to discuss urban extension issues.	Discussion of emerging Core Strategy positions.	These meetings have occurred on several occasions since 2008.
BCC officers attended B&NES urban extension workshop	Officer attendance and participation in CABE facilitated workshops. B&NES aims of the workshop were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To access advice on allocating the urban extensions as strategic sites within the Core Strategy. • To help generate key design and development principles for the urban extensions. • To contribute to building skills and capacity within Bath & North East Somerset. • To elicit CABE's help in exploring ideas and opportunities around growth with key stakeholders. 	17–18 July 2008.
BCC and B&NES officers have met jointly with developers and their consultants promoting sites within the South East Bristol urban extension Area of Search.	Several meetings have been held with Barton Wilmore & Wimpey who are promoting land at Whitchurch and with RPS and Crest Nicholson who are promoting land at Hicks Gate.	Dates of last joint meetings: Barton Wilmore (Whitchurch) - 1

Bristol Core Strategy Examination
 Core Document CDE54

<p>Both authorities have also had separate meetings with developers and their consultants.</p>		<p>April 2009 Crest/Key Properties – 3 April 2009</p>
<p>BCC and B&NES officers have met jointly with officers from CABE and ATLAS to discuss potential urban extension work.</p>	<p>Discussion of potential engagement with CABE and ATLAS.</p>	<p>Joint presentation to ATLAS for review of work undertaken so far 20.07.2009.</p>
<p>Formal consultation</p>	<p>Submission of comments as part of Core Strategy consultations</p>	<p>At various stages of Core Strategy preparation.</p>

Bath and North East Somerset Council Cont

Working Arrangements	Explanation	Date
<p>BCC officers prepared information for inclusion within the B&NES held SE Bristol urban extension workshops. Note this event focused on Whitchurch as a possible location for development and did not look at Hicks Gate as this area was not contained within the B&NES Core Strategy options consultation.</p>	<p>Officer attendance and participation in CABE facilitated workshops. The aims of the workshop were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the previous workshops. • Share background to the objectives set out in the LDF Core Strategy Options. • Reinforce the principles of placemaking. • Introduce new areas of information. • Discuss opportunities and constraints. • Develop a high level concept plan(s). • Refine the proposed Spatial Vision for the area. • Facilitate ongoing engagement with the key stakeholders. 	<p>7-8 Dec 2009.</p>

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Core Document CDE54

Appendix 1

**West of England Partnership
Governance and Delivery**

A	Councils	Cabinets		
	BANES	Bristol	North Somerset	South Gloucestershire

B	Strategic Partnership Board
Leaders of Council plus 2 Councillors from each Council; Social, Economic and Environmental Partners, Strategic Organisations/Observers	

C	Council Leaders	Joint Executive Committees	Boards		SEEPs, Partners & Strategic Organisations
		Transport Waste Management	Planning, Homes & Communities Board	Employment & Skills Board	
		Cabinet Members	Cabinet Members	Employers, Economic Partners, & Agencies	
Work with Social, Economic and Environmental Partners and Strategic Partners					

D	Joint Scrutiny Committee
Transport; Waste; Planning, Housing & Communities; Economy & Skills	
Cross-Party Members, Strategic Partners and Agencies	

E	Delivery Vehicle (being developed)	Homes West
Commission delivery of transport, waste & housing infrastructure (accountable to Partnership Board)		RSL Consortium delivering affordable homes

F	Specialist Officer Groups	Partnership Office
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CONSTITUTION OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND PARTNERSHIP

A. Purpose of the Partnership

- 1 Realise the potential of the West of England and improvements in its economy, public infrastructure, environment and quality of life for all its residents.
- 2 Set clear long term direction to support the development and delivery of key strategies for the West of England.
- 3 Promote the interests of the West of England regionally, nationally and in Europe.
- 4 Add to the confidence that attracts and retains public and private investment.
- 5 Work holistically involving local authorities, public agencies and social, economic and environmental partners.
- 6 Provide the leadership and strategic capacity to secure the well-being of the West of England.

B. Membership of the Partnership

7 Three elected members from each of the four unitary authorities in the West of England, namely:

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Bristol City Council

North Somerset Council

South Gloucestershire Council

The elected members are nominated by each authority, annually in May (or after local elections, if held at a different time).

8 Seven social, economic and environmental partners selected using the following criteria:

- able to contribute to the key issues the Partnership will be addressing based on their skills and knowledge
- able to make a top-rate personal contribution
- drawn from across the West of England
- achieving a balance of representation of partners across the partnership and its specialist groups
- able to represent sector interests in the West of England.

These nominations may be reviewed annually by the Partnership to confirm or vary membership from May each year (or after local elections, if held at a different time).

9 Observers. One nominated annually in May by each of the following organisations:

Homes and Communities Agency

South West Regional Development Agency

South West Regional Assembly

Government Office for the South West

Gloucestershire County Council

Somerset County Council

Wiltshire County Council

C. Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups in support of the Partnership

10 These are as follows:

- Joint Transport Committee
- Joint Waste Management Committee
- Joint Scrutiny Committee (made up of Scrutiny Committees from each authority)
- Planning, Housing and Communities Board
- Employment and Skills Board
- Culture, Leisure & Tourism
- Rural Strategy Group

11 The purpose and core membership of each Joint Committee, Board and Specialist Group is set out in the Schedule attached. The criteria at B 8 above will be used in selecting and reviewing the membership of social, economic and environmental partners.

12 Each Joint Committee, Board or Specialist Group will work with appropriate Social, Economic and Environmental Board members and partners, strategic partner organisations and expert witnesses to assist in achieving their objectives.

13 The Partnership may vary the number and roles of its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups.

D. West of England Initiative

14 Whilst not formally part of the Partnership, the West of England Initiative is part of a variety of arrangements the Partnership makes to engage and consult people in the West of England. It supports the Partnership by:

- debating significant current and future issues
- facilitating information sharing and networking
- advocating for the sub-region.

15 Established by GWE Business West, the Initiative comprises a wide range of business, public, private and voluntary and community organisations including members of the Partnership.

E. Convening and conducting meetings of the Partnership, its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups

16 Annually in May (or after local elections, if held at a different time) the Clerk to the Partnership shall publish the:

- diary of meetings and events for the forthcoming year, including venues
- membership of the Partnership, its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups
- name and contact details for the Clerks to the Partnership, its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups.

17 At the first meeting of the Partnership, its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups the appropriate Clerk shall:

- arrange for the election of a chair and vice chair for the year
- publish the diary of meetings and membership.

Bristol Core Strategy Examination Core Document CDE54

18 All meetings of the Partnership, its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups shall (unless there exists a formal constitution and/or Joint Working Agreement(s) between the Authorities making alternative provisions, in which case the following are overridden):

- take place at least 4 times each year;
- consider any items submitted to the Clerk of the appropriate meeting by a member of that meeting or an adviser, as long as they are received at least three working days prior to despatch of the agenda;
- be convened by the appropriate Clerk five clear working days in advance by publishing an agenda, previous minutes and reports, unless the appropriate chair first approves the consideration of a paper(s) as urgent business. The agenda and reports shall be published on westofengland.org website;
- be public meetings governed and administered in accordance with local authority provisions, including considering confidential matters in exempt session if required;
- allow appropriate substitutes for members of the Partnership, Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups where their names are notified to the appropriate Clerk prior to the meeting;
- provide for the appropriate Clerk to take the minutes and publish and seek approval for them at the next meeting;
- have a quorum for any meeting of 40% of the voting membership (the elected members and social, economic and environmental partners) with at least one representative from each unitary authority;
- have a standing item on the agenda for the receipt of written or oral representations (each normally of no longer than 5 minutes) from the public; these may be taken at the outset or during of the meeting at the discretion of the Chair;
- be advised by the officers employed to support the Partnership or by officers of the local authorities, as appropriate;
- arrive at decisions and recommendations by a simple majority of the voting members present; the Chair shall have a casting vote.

19 All members of the Partnership, its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups shall:

- commit to working together with partners for the future well-being of the West of England;
- declare any personal or prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at a meeting; if a declaration is made they may be asked to withdraw from the meeting whilst the item is considered;
- maintain confidentiality of Partnership business where that is expressly required;
- ensure that appropriate communication, consultation and conventional decision making takes place at an appropriate time within their own organisations to seek to ensure the Partnership has the necessary support and any formal approval for the action it proposes;
- be asked to indicate if they wish to continue in membership should they be absent from 3 consecutive meetings.

F. Planning, supporting and financing the work of the Partnership

20 For each of the various activities one unitary authority takes the role of 'lead' authority and ensures legal, financial and other general specialist services to the Partnership.

Bristol Core Strategy Examination
Core Document CDE54

21 The Partnership, including its Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups, is advised and supported by its Chief Executive who leads a 'core' policy, support and research team. Officers of partner organisations complement this advice and support.

22 The 'core' team comprises officers employed by or seconded to the 'lead' unitary authority on behalf of the partnership.

23 The total costs of the 'core' team and the services provided by the 'lead' or other authority shall be recharged in equal parts to the four constituent unitary authorities by the Treasurer of the 'lead' authority.

24 Such charges are based on an annual service plan and budget considered and approved by the Partnership by 31 December each year, in advance of the forthcoming financial year.

25 Should the requirements of the Partnership for support change, reduce or be terminated the constituent unitary authorities will use their best endeavours to ensure that employment is found for all the staff affected.

G. Other provisions

26 This arrangement shall not constitute a partnership in law. Neither the West of England Partnership nor any of the Boards or Specialist Groups shall have the power to take decisions that bind the member authorities or any other participants; however, this is not the case where decisions are made by the Joint Committees. Decisions that require to be legally ratified by the member authorities or participants shall be referred back to them to be taken.

26 The four unitary authorities have concluded a formal legal agreement to ensure clarity about the role, responsibilities and rights of the 'lead' authority and arrangements to protect the interests of each unitary authority. The agreement deals with:

- budgeting, incurring and meeting expenditure and audit arrangements;
- the employment of staff;
- property, including the current rights to use the premises at Wilder House, Bristol;
- procurement and entering into contracts;
- liabilities and insurance;
- arrangements in the event of an authority wishing to withdraw from the Partnership or all authorities agreeing to terminate the Partnership;
- Arbitration;
- Force Majeure.

SCHEDULE

West of England Partnership

PURPOSE AND CORE MEMBERSHIP OF JOINT COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND SPECIALIST GROUPS

1. NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO JOINT COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND SPECIALIST GROUPS

- Elected members are nominated to Joint Committees, Boards and Specialist Groups by each authority, annually in May (or after local elections, if held at a different time).
- Each Joint Committee, Board or Specialist Group will work with appropriate Social, Economic and Environmental Board members and partners, strategic organizations and expert witnesses to assist in achieving their objectives.
- Nominations of social, economic and environmental partners may be reviewed annually by each Group, using the criteria at paragraph B8 above, to confirm or vary membership from May each year.
- Observers are nominated by the relevant organisations, annually in May each year.
- Nomination of members and partners who are also members of the South West Regional Assembly is welcomed.
- A Board or Specialist Group may add to its membership during the year, using the criteria at B8 above, where this assists with its responsibilities.

2. JOINT COMMITTEES

Joint Transport Committee

The purpose, membership and operation of the Joint Transport Committee are governed by the Constitution of the Joint Committee and the Joint Working Agreement between the four authorities. The constitution outlines the powers as follows:

“(1) To receive recommendations from each of the Authorities for local transport projects to be included within the Local Transport Improvement Programme, and to develop and determine the Local Transport Improvement Programme on the basis of such recommendations, and to revise that Local Transport Improvement Programme from time to time. For clarification it is stated that the Joint Transportation Executive Committee may not include a local transport project within the Local Transport Improvement Programme except on the recommendation of the Authority or the Authorities within whose area(s) the project lies.

(2) To recommend to the Executives of each of the Authorities any changes to the Joint Local Transport Plan which are necessary to accommodate and support the Local Transport Improvement Programme, for recommendation by the Executive of each Authority to its Council for approval

(3) To prepare draft joint bids for funding for recommendation to the Executives of each of the Authorities for approval and to accept any funding offers and conditions received as a consequence of such bids

(4) To manage any funds and to allocate them from time to time to each of the Authorities to enable each Authority to implement specific local transport projects in accordance with the Local Transport Improvement Programme

(5) To monitor the implementation of the Local Transport Improvement Programme and report regularly to the Authorities thereon

(6) To make such returns and provide such information as may be required by the Department for Transport.”

Membership comprises the four Executive Members, one nominated by each authority.

Joint Waste Management Committee

The purpose, membership and operation of the Joint Waste Management Committee are governed by the Constitution of the Joint Committee and Joint Working Agreements between the authorities. The Joint Working Agreements outline the objectives as follows:

(1) Develop a sustained and co-ordinated programme to reduce the amount of waste generated and to increase the opportunities to re-use and re-cycle. (Phase 1 of the Joint Waste Management Strategy)

(2) Procure short to medium term residual waste treatment capacity to reduce the amount of waste which each of the Authorities is consigning to landfill and thereby to reduce the cost to each of the Authorities of Landfill Tax and to avoid or to minimise the cost of Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme ("**LATS**") fines to each of the Authorities and/or of needing to acquire LATS permits between 2011 and 2015. (Phase 2)

(3) Procure a Contractor who will construct, provide and operate facilities for the treatment (and, should the Authorities agree, the disposal) of residual waste for the Authorities. Bath and North East Somerset is not participating in this part of the Joint Waste Management Strategy. (Phase 3)

(3) Agree that decisions on additional future long-term waste treatments (that is, beyond 2020) should be developed in due course when there is greater clarity on long-term waste tonnage predictions and to allow new and evolving technologies to be fully assessed. (Phase 4)

The Executive of each Authority delegates to the Joint Waste Management Committee the following powers:

The executive functions and powers of that Authority as may be necessary, calculated to facilitate, incidental or conducive to the discharge of the functions of the Joint Waste Management Committee in respect of the Phase Two and Phase 3 (PFI Project) as detailed in, and subject to such limitations and conditions set out in, the Joint Waste Management Committee Constitution.

Membership comprises the four Executive Members, one nominated by each authority.

3. BOARDS

Planning, Housing and Communities Board

Terms of reference are as follows:

- (1) Advise and make recommendations to the Partnership Board and to Council Cabinets, working with the Joint Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) Oversee and collaborate on sub-regional planning issues and relations with the existing and future Regional Planning Body.
- 7
- (3) Collaborate in delivering the levels of growth proposed by the Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 in ways that secure mixed and sustainable communities in both existing and new developments across the sub-region, and oversee relationships with the RDA, Homes & Communities Agency and HomesWest in dealing with these issues.
- (4) Support the delivery of the housing land allocations being set out by the local development frameworks and appropriate improvements to local employment, social and physical infrastructure that links development with infrastructure provision and sources of funding.
- (5) Sharing and implementing best practice in managing a balanced housing market, specifically by making recommendations on best use of stock and tackling homelessness.

Membership comprises Executive Members with responsibility for Planning and Executive Members with responsibility for Housing Management, one from each function from each authority, and observers from each of the following organisations:

- Homes and Communities Agency
- South West Regional Development Agency
- South West Regional Assembly
- Government Office for the South West.

Employment and Skills Board

The Board supports the development of the local economy by creating more effective infrastructure to address the two labour market challenges of worklessness and a competitive skills base. The Board:

- (1) Oversees and provides direction on the employment and skills agenda in the subregion
- (2) Develops and maintains systems for joining-up employment and skills priorities, services and resources to help more local people into sustainable employment, to support the success of local businesses and to build thriving communities.

Specifically the Board:

- (1) Provides strategic direction for the multi-agency project West at Work, which is focused on the employment and skills issues relating to major economic development sites in the area;

Bristol Core Strategy Examination
Core Document CDE54

(2) Provides the strategic direction and challenge needed to ensure effective collaboration;

(3) Secures employer engagement on employment and skills priorities, services and resources to ensure that the Board's work is demand-led.

Membership comprises:

- Employers
- Learning and Skills Council
- South West Regional Development Agency
- GWE Business West
- City of Bristol College
- Connexions
- Job Centre Plus
- 4 Unitary Authorities in the West of England
- West of England Partnership Office
- A Director of Children and Young People's Services.

4. SPECIALIST GROUPS

Culture, Leisure & Tourism Rural Strategy

Purpose

(At * insert the name of the appropriate group)

(1) Advise and act in support of the West of England Partnership and the local authorities on sub-regional (*) matters

(2) Recommend joint action on these issues to the Partnership and secure the outcomes approved

(3) Advocate responses on sub-regional (*) to influence regional and national policy and resource allocation

(4) Work with the other specialist groups of the Partnership on issues of common interest

(5) Initiate areas of co-operative working to further the interests of the West of England

Culture, Leisure & Tourism Group membership

- Up to 2 Cabinet Members, including one with responsibility for culture and/or leisure and/or tourism, from each of the four unitary authorities.
- Social, economic and environmental partners, currently one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Arts Council of England – South West
 - Culture South West
 - Museum, Libraries and Archives Council
 - Sport England
 - Screen West
 - South West Tourism
 - WESPORT
- 2 observers, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Government Office for the South West
 - South West Regional Development Agency

Rural Strategy Group membership

- 1 elected member from each of the three authorities which include rural areas.
- Social, economic and environmental partners, currently one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Avon Local Councils Association
 - Avon Wildlife Trust
 - GWE Business West
 - Community Action
 - Forest of Avon
 - National Union of Farmers
- 2 observers, one drawn from each of the following organisations:
 - Government Office for the South West
 - South West Regional Development Agency

5. JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The terms of reference for the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee are to:

- (1) scrutinise any relevant proposals from the West of England Partnership in relation to its activities (namely transport, planning, housing, waste management, skills & employment, economic development, culture and rural affairs);
- (2) scrutinise actions taken and decisions made by the Executive Committees and other Executive bodies of the Partnership;
- (3) make reports or recommendations to the Partnership's Executive Committees and other Executive bodies as appropriate and/or the component authorities' respective executives or overview and scrutiny committees.

Bristol Core Strategy Examination
Core Document CDE54

The Joint Scrutiny Committee consists of 4 scrutiny committees, comprising 3 nonexecutive members, one from each authority, with responsibility for the overview and scrutiny for the functions and actions of the West of England Partnership. (Currently there is no provision for a statutory joint committee with these responsibilities.)

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