



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICERS, TREDOMEN ON THURSDAY, 8TH MAY 2006 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds – Chairman

Councillors:

C. Forehead, R.T. Davies, K. James, and T.J. Williams

Together with:

J. Jones (Scrutiny Co-ordinator), C. Jones (Head of Performance Management), R. Roberts (Performance Management Section Head) and C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Ms E.E. Forehead, D.M. Gray, Ms A. Morgan and A.S. Williams.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

J. Jones introduced Cath Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Research Officer and Ros Roberts, Performance Management Section Head.

2. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Mr Jones started on a positive note and referred to the achievements to date and the potential recognised by the WAO for improvement. Mr Jones reported that it was important that Scrutiny Committees understood the difficulties facing service areas and provided a positive challenge to managers. This would require a consistency of approach and a need to ensure not just the good news is reported, Scrutiny Committees need to be informed about areas for improvement and the challenges facing services. The right type of environment needs to be created.

Mr C Jones discussed the paper he prepared on the scrutiny of Performance Management. He stated that Committees would need to:

- Operate in a supportive and challenging way.
- Look at reports and examine action plans

- Be more than a receiver of reports, members will need to develop an understanding of key issues
- Examine only one or two service areas, to allow an in depth appraisal.

It is important that the right issues are chosen for discussion at the next round of performance meetings. Therefore Chairs and Vice Chairs would need to be involved in the selection of the topics.

ACTION: Mr J Jones will arrange meetings with the Chairs, Vice Chairs and the Directors.

3. Performance Improvement Measurement System (PIMS was CorVu)

Mr C Jones explained that this gives the committees the opportunity to drill down beneath the surface and ask questions on how the information is used and if the targets set are appropriate and neither too easy or unachievable.

Councillor Reynolds asked for an explanation of the term 'balanced scorecard'. Mr C Jones stated that a service must have a balance of indicators eg; staffing issues, finance and level of service as all of these issues affected the quality of service.

4. Service Improvement Plans (SIP)

Mr C Jones emphasised that this is made up of information from a number of sources e.g. C Driver, risk assessments and internal/external service reviews. He considered that as an Authority we are good at writing action plans, but not good at seeing them through. While it is important to develop the SIP, an action plan should be a living document. Scrutiny needs to understand the true picture of service performance. Mr Jones suggested that Scrutiny Committees may wish to question the prioritisation of action plans and ask for reviews 3 monthly. Mr J Jones thought that it is sensible to report back no more than 3 times per annum. Councillor Reynolds agreed that there is a need for continuous monitoring of improvement.

5. Service Delivery Issues

Mr C Jones stated it is important not to ignore non-priority service areas. These are the areas that may be most affected by budget issues.

6. General Presentation

Mr C Jones explained this is an opportunity to look at where we are in terms of improvement plans and invite regulators such as ESTYN, WAO and SSIW. Once regulators see what we are trying to achieve it will demonstrate our objective to improve and challenge ourselves. Mr J Jones stated that inviting regulators is an important point as they will be able to receive feedback from Members.

7. DISCUSSION

Mr C Jones stated that at the end of a meeting it would be useful to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting. Councillor K Reynolds asked if 20 minutes at the end of the meeting could be set aside for an evaluation to reflect how improvements could be made.

Members agreed that it would be helpful for Directors to invite service managers to come along to observe meetings.

Mr C Jones stated that feedback from induction meetings has indicated that a small

percentage of new starters have read the SIP.

Councillor Forehead stated that it is difficult to measure some parts of services for example customer satisfaction levels with housing applications. Mr C Jones said that Scrutiny Committees could ask why housing officers have customer satisfaction surveys. He stated that housing repairs could have a system where they carry out a repair and leave a feedback card to measure customer satisfaction.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Scrutiny Management Panel is to be arranged.