



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT TY DYFFRYN, DYFFRYN BUSINESS PARK,
YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY, 17TH JANUARY 2007 AT 5.00 PM**

PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds – Chairman

Councillors:

K James, N Dix, R.T. Davies, T J Williams, D.M. Gray, J Bevan and G Price

Together with:

T. Peppin (Head of Policy and Central Services). Non Jenkins (Wales Audit Office), Mark Jones (Wales Audit Office) and C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer)

APOLOGIES

Councillors Ms E.E. Forehead, C Forehead and Ms A. Morgan. Mr J Jones (Scrutiny Co-ordinator).

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2006 were approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising:

There were no matters arising.

2. WALES AUDIT OFFICE – PHASE 3 TRAINING

Councillor Reynolds introduced this item and asked Mrs C Forbes-Thompson to speak. Mrs Forbes-Thompson explained that this follows on from the discussion at the last meeting, the training is to improve skills in questioning and listening and the purpose today was to discuss the arrangements with the Wales Audit Office. Mrs Forbes-Thompson introduced Non Jenkins and Mark Jones and invited M/s Jenkins to speak.

M/s Jenkins referred to previous WAO training sessions and explained this is an opportunity to put into practice what has been learned. In other local authorities members have sat and observed committees as members of the public. They are then taken away by the WAO and asked to analyse the strengths and weaknesses before returning to the committee to give feedback. M/s Jenkins stated that this is done in a constructive way and has worked well in other authorities. The committees are then asked to agree areas for improvement and what

action will be taken, common themes can be pulled together.

Mr Peppin asked about the practical arrangements, M/s Jenkins and Mrs Forbes-Thompson stated that observers would be asked to arrive at 4pm in order to meet with the WAO who will explain the process. The observation groups will be given prompt sheets, as supplied with the agenda, in order to assist them. The observers will be split to look at different aspects of the meeting.

The Scrutiny Committee will meet at 4:30pm and the observers will leave before the end of the meeting in order to carry out the analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement. The committee meeting will carry on and the observers will return to give feedback after half an hour.

The members discussed the current arrangements for scrutiny committees, such as pre meetings in Policy and Resources and putting information only reports onto agendas. They agreed that these arrangements have improved the scrutiny process.

M/s Jenkins stated that observation sheets will only be issued on the day, as it is important that there is no prejudging before the meeting. The groups of observers will be made up of all party groups, co-opted members and officers.

Action; The Scrutiny Support Unit will make the arrangements for the questioning and listening skills training.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 15th March 2007 in Committee Room 2, Dyffryn House at 5.00 pm.