



SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, DYFFRYN HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 23RD MAY 2007 AT 5.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds – Chairman

Councillors:

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

Together with:

T. Peppin (Head of Policy and Democratic Services). J. Jones (Scrutiny Co-ordinator), Colin Jones (Head of Performance Management) and C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer).

APOLOGIES

Councillors J Bevan, E Aldworth

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2007 were approved as an accurate record.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

2. WALES AUDIT OFFICE – PHASE 3 TRAINING

Mr Jonathan Jones summarised the report and stated that on the whole the comments were useful, however some were over emphasised. The three main messages were:

- Discussion of reports by theme
- Officer to sit around Committee table when speaking
- Minutes from other organisations given too much time and emphasis during meeting

Mr Jones gave options available such as electronic availability or discussion at end of agenda. The main problem was that each group had to feed back three areas for improvement, regardless of whether they had three areas identified.

Members commented that they agreed with some of the comments but felt that officers and members would have behaved differently because the Wales Audit Office were involved. Members also discussed how the minutes are dealt with at scrutiny meetings and agreed that if the agenda stated that they were for accuracy and or matters arising it would make it clearer for the scrutiny committee members.

Mr Jonathan Jones stated that the Living Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd May 2007 worked well, there were good questions and officers were stretched.

Mr Colin Jones thought that the themed questioning worked well and follow up questions seemed to follow. Dr Peppin agreed that the benefits can be subtle but would improve scrutiny. Councillor Toomer stated that there is a problem with hearing speakers and Mr Jonathan Jones suggested that Chair could summarise what has been said. It was suggested that the chair could move to the middle of the room on the side table members agreed to try this out.

Action; Mr Jonathan Jones will clarify the query on the minutes. Scrutiny Support Unit will organise place names on the side table for the chair etc.

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Mr Colin Jones stated that the next phase is to bring more accountability to scrutiny committee meetings, to bring about change in the organisation. Colin suggested the performance management meetings could look at the targets and give members the opportunity to discuss what they are used for and if they are not used discontinue collection. There are 22 statutory Performance Indicators and the rest are non-statutory, we need only to collect those that are useful.

Mr Jones outlined the areas for discussion at the next round of performance management meetings:

- Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee; Legal Services including targets
- The Living Environment Scrutiny Committee: Environmental Health, struggling to find meaningful indicators.
- Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee: CSSIW presentation, the issues discussed and requested at the last meeting.
- Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee: Estyn Report on school attainment.
- Regeneration Scrutiny Committee; Colin has suggested NCS and is awaiting a response from Anthony O'Sullivan.

Mr Jones suggested that the autumn sessions could look at action plans and 6-month cycles.

4. AGENDA PLANNING MEETING

Councillor Keith Reynolds gave feedback on the agenda planning meetings held by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. The meetings have not been effective to date but he would like to continue, one of the problems is that members arrive at 5:15pm.

Mr J Jones stated that he has spoken to Mr Ian Medicott, Monitoring Officer regarding the timing of meetings, originally Mr Medicott didn't want the 5pm for agenda planning highlighted on the agenda but he has now agreed that the agenda can show the 5pm start for members and 5:15pm start for the main meeting.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on 5th July 2007 in Committee Room 2, Dyffryn House at 5.00 p.m.