



## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT PANEL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, DYFFRYN HOUSE  
ON THURSDAY, 5TH JULY 2007 AT 5.00 PM**

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PRESENT:

Councillor K.V. Reynolds – Chairman

Councillors:

K James, C Forehead, R.T. Davies, T J Williams, E Aldworth, B Toomer.

Together with:

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

### **APOLOGIES**

Councillors E Forehead, J Bevan, D.M. Gray, N Dix and T Williams.

### **1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2007 were approved as an accurate record.

### **Matters Arising**

Members discussed whether matters arising from minutes at Scrutiny Committees could be discussed. It was felt that there should be consistency across all scrutiny committees. Mr Jonathan Jones will discuss with Dan Perkins and feedback.

Councillor K Reynolds raised the issue of where on the agenda minutes from outside bodies should be placed. The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee has agreed that they will be placed at the end of the agenda as an information item. Mr J Jones has included this in the Scrutiny Annual Report.

**ACTION: Mr J Jones to discuss matters arising with Dan Perkins**

## **2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Mr Colin Jones gave feedback from the performance management meetings and stated that overall they were excellent, the meetings went well with members showing a better understanding of their role and being more comfortable with challenging services.

The Health Social Care and Wellbeing and Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committees were different because they received reports from their respective regulatory bodies.

The administration of the performance management scrutiny committees could have been better in respect of the identification of the service to be looked at and receiving reports within a reasonable time.

Mr Colin Jones suggested that for the next round of performance management meetings members should have a role in choosing subjects for discussion.

Councillor K James agreed that the involvement of the regulatory bodies was useful and Councillor Toomer stated that the Estyn Inspector was surprised at the level of challenge from members.

Mr Jonathan Jones agreed that the quality of members questioning had improved, with examples of simple, searching questions and supplementary questions. The improved challenge offered by members had been recognised by officers who had given positive feedback and enjoyed the experience.

Councillor K Reynolds stated that there are still some instances of members making statements instead of asking questions. However, overall, he thought that targets were challenged and changes to targets had been suggested.

## **3. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

Mr J Jones stated that as SMP had completed the Centre for Public Scrutiny self-assessment questionnaire it was too soon to justify repeating the process again but suggested that this process should be completed biennially.

Mr J Jones summarised the content of the report and members commented as follows:

- Members enjoy the work of the task and finish groups and feel they are able to thoroughly understand the subject.
- Members asked if the content of training courses for members could be assessed in terms of quality and value for money for those who may benefit. Mr J Jones mentioned leadership development courses run by CFPS and IDEA, which can be programmed to meet needs.
- The conduct of meetings, care should be taken to ensure water is available at all meetings.
- Verbal presentation of reports at Scrutiny Committees should only draw attention to the main issues and not mean that the report is read through in detail.
- Requested reports were discussed and members agreed that a target of 2 cycles should be set.
- Members queried if the number of decision and information items posted onto the intranet should have increased from previous year. Mr J Jones suggested meeting with Directors and Chairs of Scrutiny to discuss this and other issues, members agreed.
- Members discussed the Local Service Board and the effect of co-opting non-councillors. Dr Peppin stated that the LSB's are in the early stages and had received many requests to sit on the board but they would like to bring people in as and when needed. The LSB intends to meet 6 times per year but are not looking at appointing permanent co-optees.

The members agreed the recommendations in the annual report.

**ACTION: Mr J Jones to amend Annual Report accordingly.**

**4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on in Committee Room 1, Dyffryn House at 5.00 p.m.