



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT TY PENALLTA ON 30 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors, L. Ackerman; E. Aldworth; W. David; D.T. Davies; B. Jones (Acting Chair);
C. Mann; D. Preece, D. Rees, J. Summers

Together with:

C. Jones (Head of Property and Performance), J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager),
C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), R. Roberts (Performance Manager), R. Hay
(Local Government Finance and Public Service Performance Division, Welsh Government)
J. Leek (Local Government Finance and Public Service Performance Division, Welsh
Government)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H. David (Chair) and D. Havard.

2. CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr B Jones was nominated and endorsed as acting Chair for the duration of the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17TH DECEMBER 2013

Members were informed that a report on delegated decisions is being drafted for Council. The report will outline training for Officers and include a fundamental review of how delegated decisions are captured and updated. Scrutiny Leadership Group will be consulted prior to the report going forward.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 17th December 2013 were agreed as a true record.

5. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. Councillor Connect - Local Authority Service Performance

The Chair introduced Mr Robert Hay and Ms Joanna Leek from the Local Government Finance and Public Service Performance Division at Welsh Government. Mr Hay thanked Members for the invitation and stated that Welsh Government produces the Local Authority Services Performance report on an annual basis with the intention to give an overview of the performance by local authorities in the previous year.

The report draws together performance data and can support Members in their scrutiny role and help to engage the public by opening up issues for debate. The indicators in the report are drawn from key indicators and allow local authorities to be ranked in a quick graphical representation. The information is not intended to be a full picture and is already in the public domain through the local government data unit.

WG officers expressed interest in the views of scrutiny chairs in particular if it is a useful tool in the development of scrutiny.

Members stated that it is a useful document and could be used by scrutiny committees going forward, however confirmation on the accuracy of the data was sought. WG officers stated that the data has been gathered by Welsh Government departments and has been audited by WAO.

Members sought clarification on the number of library visits data, how it is categorised, in particular if it reflects book borrowing or use of IT facilities. WG agreed to look at this and see if it could be broken down further, Officers stated that further detailed information on visits to Caerphilly libraries is already available to Members.

Opportunities to learn from good performing local authorities was debated, and it was stated that CCBC Education Officers have visited Neath Port Talbot Education Authority to look at good practice.

Officers stated that they felt the performance report data does not have context, it is a snapshot of certain data and asked if Scrutiny Committees should have a report with extracted information relevant to them or if an overall report should be reported to Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee. Members agreed that a report should be presented to each scrutiny committee.

Members sought clarification on the interpretation of some data in order to understand what is a good result. The 'poor' results should also be taken in context, for example DTOC high number can be attributed to personal choice, it was suggested that CCBC may be more challenging and provide a better quality service to service users. WG Officials reiterated that the report is intended to give an indication but it is not whole picture and should be used to facilitate discussion.

Members thanked the WG Officials for their attendance.

7. Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan Update

Officers gave a brief introduction and explained that the report gave an update on the progress made on the scrutiny improvement action plan. Scrutiny Training for Members was undertaken in November 2013 and reported to the previous SLG meeting held on 17 December 2013. Scrutiny Committee observation visits have been undertaken by Members at Cardiff, Torfaen and further visits have been planned at Bridgend, Monmouthshire and Newport councils. In addition a report on future training proposals for

Members has been drafted and will be presented to Democratic Services Committee on 13th February 2014.

In respect of Scrutiny Development and organisation Members were advised that the Scrutiny Leadership Group is now fully established and training on the effective use of pre-meetings has been undertaken in November with further training arranged for February 2014, the implementation of pre-meetings would commence in March 2014.

Members expressed concern on the take up of scrutiny training and asked that the list of attendance be forwarded to party whips.

Officers stated that a report outlining a protocol for the referral of relevant Ombudsman reports to scrutiny would be presented to Standards Committee shortly. In addition the new layout for scrutiny committees has been fully implemented.

The training provided during November also included advice on identifying performance management issues in reports and scrutiny committees will discuss the Improvement Objectives during January and February 2014.

Members were informed that the new procedure for scrutiny committee forward work programmes and public engagement is now in place and the first draft FWP for February to April has been published seeking views. Clarification was sought on the guidance that CCBC couldn't compel expert witnesses and public service providers to attend scrutiny committee's. Members queried if this could be written into procurement contracts as a requirement, Officers advised that although this option has been used in social care contracts, it is more difficult with commercial contracts, however advice would be sought from the Procurement Manager.

Members discussed the possibility of conducting an internal peer review alongside the external scrutiny committee observations, in order to learn form each other. Officers discussed the feedback of the Wales Audit Office peer review and the recent Governance Inspection report. Members sought further detail on the statement in the recent governance report that said that improvement in scrutiny was inconsistent. Officers agreed to contact WAO to seek further information and clarification.

It was moved and seconded that the recommendations in the report be approved, by show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

8. Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programmes

Officers outlined the draft forward work programmes and consultation feedback, as follows:

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Members agreed with the draft forward work programme subject to an invitation to the Youth Forum to speak on their views of the film 'The Good Drug Dealer' to the meeting on the 20th March 2014.

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee

Members agreed with the draft forward work programme, subject to the report on Survey of Asbestos are included for 8th April meeting and asked that it include up to date readings and latest Health and Safety advice. Members agreed that the report on EAS Welsh Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy is included in the 8th April meeting and noted that the update on excess school places would be reported in the autumn.

The Chair of Education for Life Scrutiny Committee advised that he had agreed that a report on the outcome of the consultation on secondary school rationalisation would also be reported.

Health Social care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Members agreed with the draft forward work programme subject to the Social Services (Wales) Bill being discussed at a special meeting for all Members. The request for consultation on the redesign of Stroke Services would be forwarded to Aneurin Bevan Health Board. It was noted that the winter pressures report requested in December 2013 would be reported during the next quarter.

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Members agreed with the draft forward work programme, subject to the Single Integrated Plan report being added to the agenda for the meeting on 15th April 2014. In addition reports on The Potential to Increase Investment Income and Council Tax and Business Rate: Changes to recovery procedures being added to the forward work programme for the 4 March 2014.

Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Members agreed with the draft forward work programme subject to an invitation being extended to the Member of the public who expressed an interest in road traffic speed in Pontllanfraith, to speak at the meeting on 1st April 2014 when the Councils Speed Management Strategy would be discussed. In addition Members agreed that the Risca Town Centre report would be added to the FWP for 1st April 2014.

The meeting closed at 18:56pm

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2014 they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN