



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT TY PENALLTA ON THURSDAY, 27TH MARCH 2014

PRESENT:

Councillors:

Councillors, L. Ackerman, H. David (Chair), W. David, D. Havard, C. Mann and D. Rees

Together with:

C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E. Aldworth, D.T. Davies, B. Jones, D. Preece and J. Summers

2. CHAIR

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr W David was nominated and endorsed as acting Chair for the start 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 30TH JANUARY 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30th January 2014 were agreed as a true record.

5. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

6. Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan Update

Officers gave a brief introduction and verbal update on the progress made on the scrutiny improvement action plan. Members noted that further training was provided during February and March 2014. As a result 100% of Chairs have attended the Chairing Skills training, 64%

of Members have attended the Questioning and Listening Skills training and 75% of Members attended the Effective Pre-meetings training. It was requested that an updated list of attendees be circulated to groups for information. Councillor H David arrived at the meeting at this point.

Members asked what arrangements had been made for training in respect of web casting of Council meetings. Officers stated that the intention was to record the first few meetings in order to use as a reflective tool for Members prior to broadcasting.

The Chair of Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee gave a brief outline of the recent pilot pre-meeting, held by the Scrutiny Committee. He stated that the key benefits were, that it enabled the pre-meeting to focus on questions to be asked rather than trying to anticipate responses. The questions were organised, which meant that points were not repeated by several members. Members were able to identify points for clarification. Some members felt that some reports were not clear, which led to a request for refocusing of reports and a more co-ordinated consideration of the forward work programme.

The Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee Chair stated that half an hour did not seem long enough and this showed there was a need to reduce the time spent discussing questions. Members discussed the options for timing of pre-meetings, favouring a 5.00 p.m. start, although acknowledged this would mean scrutiny committees starting at 5.30 p.m. The focus of the pre-meeting was affected as some Members wanted to raise wider issues such as the design of reports and lack of information.

Scrutiny Leadership Group discussed the quality, size and layout of committee reports, it was commented that there is variability across scrutiny committees. The recent scrutiny training emphasised the need for scrutiny to be a strong voice respected by the executive and corporate management team. Members stated that they should be proactive in developing scrutiny and consider bringing in external witnesses and manage the forward work programmes to consider the size of the agendas.

Members discussed the need to maintain a balance and also consider the use of task and finish groups, and stated that the recent member working group for 21 Century Schools is a good example of Members working together effectively.

Councillor H David took over the Chair.

6. Workshop

Members carried out a workshop on pre-meetings to consider the following questions:-

‘How can we prepare in advance of the meeting?’ and ‘What are the key elements of a successful pre-meeting?’ The feedback from the workshop will be compiled and circulated for comments.

The meeting closed at 18.30 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 24th April 2014 they were signed by the Chairman.

CHAIRMAN