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For all enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Cath Forbes-Thompson
(Tel: 01443 864279 Email: forbec1@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Date: 9th September 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Leadership Group** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Tuesday, 15th September, 2020 at 5.00 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.,

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at www.caerphilly.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHARRY'.

Christina HARRY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Pages

A greener place Man gwyrddach



Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution, and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

To approve and sign the following minutes:-

- | | | |
|---|---|--------|
| 3 | Minutes of the Scrutiny Leadership Group Meeting held on 2nd October 2019 | 1 - 4 |
| 4 | Scrutiny - Members Survey | 5 - 14 |
| 5 | Holding a joint meeting of Scrutiny Committees | |

Circulation:

Councillors C. Andrews, C. Bezzina, L.J. Binding, D. Cushing, D.T. Davies, Mrs C. Forehead, A. Hussey, G. Kirby, Mrs T. Parry, J. Pritchard, Mrs M.E. Sargent and A. Whitcombe

For Information:

Councillor C.Gordon

And Appropriate Officers

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SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON WEDNESDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2019 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor J. Pritchard – Chair
Councillor G. Kirby – Vice Chair

Councillors:

Mrs C. Andrews, D.T. Davies, C. Forehead, A. Hussey, T. Parry, J. Ridgewell and Mrs M.E. Sargent.

Together with:

C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager) and M. Jacques (Scrutiny Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bevan, L. Binding and Mrs D. Cushing.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES –

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Leadership Group meeting held on the 28th March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. SCRUTINY REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The Scrutiny Manager informed Members that the plan was developed in line with the recommendations to improve the scrutiny function as outlined in the Scrutiny Review Report, which was considered by Council on 16th April 2019. The recommendations were developed following the Wales Audit Office report, 'Scrutiny Fit for the Future', alongside the findings of the scrutiny self-evaluation questionnaire and scrutiny workshop sessions. The principal aim of the report was to update the SLG on the progress made to date.

Members were advised that two of the Scrutiny Committees had been renamed to better reflect the terms of reference for each committee. A new Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee had also been created. It was explained that significant effort was undertaken to realign the work programmes to reflect the new terms of reference for affected scrutiny committees and also identify additional dates for the year ahead.

The Scrutiny Officer told the group that progress has been made in the area of developing the profile of scrutiny through the use of social media platforms. The Scrutiny Officer had worked with the Council's Communications Team and started promoting the Scrutiny "Get Involved" webpage, though both Facebook and Twitter. Members were advised that the public were engaging with the posts, but at this stage the engagement was not leading to feasible suggestions for inclusion on the Forward Work Programmes. Unfortunately the general tone of comments tended to be negative and not related to the Scrutiny function. The Scrutiny Officer then showed the group examples of some of the posts and the engagement each one had generated. One post on Facebook achieved a reach of 7,490 and led to 491 engagements. Another post on a Notice of Motion to ban the giving of animals as prizes on Caerphilly County Borough land reached 5,200 people and an associated online video was viewed by 1,438 people. A version of this post for Twitter received 218 "Likes" and 64 "Retweets." The Scrutiny Officer pointed out that the Social Media Team had advised that on average Caerphilly County Borough Council tweets receive 10 "Likes" and 3 "Retweets," so this particular post had performed very well.

The Scrutiny Officer advised the Scrutiny Leadership Group that attempts to increase public engagement with the Scrutiny process would continue through suggested measures such as short online videos with Scrutiny Chairs, publicising specific items on committee Forward Work Programmes and a News Line article on the role of Scrutiny and how members of the public can engage with the process.

Members generally supported the plans to continue increasing public awareness via social media platforms. Questions were raised about the desire to be as interactive as possible, whilst managing abusive posts. Members queried how any suggestions for topics would be decided upon and the need to manage expectations. The Scrutiny Manager explained that all requests must fulfil the criteria and that the Scrutiny Committee would need to use the Prioritisation Flowchart to make their decision. The Scrutiny Committee have various demands that include pre-decision scrutiny, monitoring budgets and performance and need to ensure that any requests are set against other demands. However, should any requests not be added to the work programme efforts would be made to respond to the person in another way.

On the issue of recording short videos for social media, one Member suggested that external contributors should also be encouraged to share their views via Council platforms. For example, it was pointed out that recently RSPCA Cymru had spoken at a Scrutiny meeting in support of the Notice of Motion to ban the giving of animals as prizes on Caerphilly County Borough land. It was also suggested that members of the public who had successfully suggested a topic for consideration by a Scrutiny Committee, should also be asked to share their experience of the process via video clips for social media. One Member pointed out that Council achievements highlighted in reports for Scrutiny Committees should also be promoted positively via social media following discussion at Committee. One example given was the Council's Procurement Strategy which had recently been praised at a meeting of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. It was also suggested that social media activity should immediately follow Scrutiny Committee meetings, to ensure the immediacy and relevance of any posts.

The Scrutiny Manager then outlined to Members a series of proposals for scrutiny training. They included questioning and listening skills, developing E-Learning opportunities, scrutiny function training and further peer observations. The Scrutiny Leadership Group were advised that training arrangements have commenced and that all scrutiny committee members had been invited to express their interest in attending sessions on Questioning and Listening

Skills, with 17 Members expressing an interest. It is hoped that this can be arranged in the New Year. It was proposed that scrutiny function training should take place in the form of a series of short drop-in sessions immediately before scrutiny committee pre-meetings. The Scrutiny Manager also informed Members that an email to remind Members of the WLGA good practice guides for scrutiny, which are available on the Members Portal, was sent out during the summer. It was proposed that the short drop-in training sessions would take place over the next 12 months starting in the New Year. The Scrutiny Manager said that dates and topics would be circulated to Members in due course.

Members were advised that the Scrutiny Officer had been circulating webcasts from scrutiny committee meetings at other Local Authorities as part of an ongoing peer observation exercise since May. The Officer tried to match as closely as possible what was discussed at these meetings with forthcoming items on committee Forward Work Programmes. It was also pointed out that in the future, visits to other local authorities to observe meetings taking place would be organised.

It was recognised that Policy Development work on committee agendas needed further development, and the Scrutiny Manager has had some initial discussions with officers. Members were advised that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee had recently begun a Task and Finish inquiry into charging for non-residential social care. In addition the forward work programme workshops are due to be held in March 2020 when Members will have the opportunity to identify potential topics for the year ahead.

The meeting closed at 17.45 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the next appropriate meeting they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR

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SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP – 15TH SEPTEMBER 2020

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY - MEMBERS SURVEY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To review the Scrutiny Committee arrangements adopted by Council at its meeting on 9th April 2019 and to consider the outcome of the scrutiny committee Member survey on these arrangements prior to making a recommendation to Council.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 To consider the outcome of the scrutiny committee member survey and to make a recommendation to Council.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Scrutiny Leadership Group to note the findings of the Member survey attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 To make a recommendation to Council on the outcome of the survey to retain the current number of scrutiny committees.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To monitor and provide oversight of the scrutiny function.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Scrutiny Review report was considered by Council on 16th April 2019 and made a number of recommendations to improve the scrutiny function. The recommendations were developed following the Wales Audit Office report, 'Scrutiny Fit for the Future', the findings of the scrutiny self-evaluation questionnaire and the findings from the scrutiny workshop sessions.
- 5.2 Council endorsed option 3 which increased the number of scrutiny committees to 5, subject to a review of this arrangement after 12 months. As a result in February 2020 a short survey was developed and sent to all Members seeking their views on the present structure and providing an opportunity to put forward suggestions. There was a response rate of 79% for the survey with 80% agreeing that the option to increase the number of scrutiny committees to 5 was the right option. In terms of meeting frequency 83% consider that meetings should remain at 6 weekly and that the membership should continue with 16 councillors. There were a few comments suggesting the establishment of a Community Engagement and Consultation Scrutiny Committee, and that Members should be nominated based upon skills and knowledge. The outcome of the survey is attached at Appendix 1.

5.3 In terms of scrutiny activity during the past year (2019/20) compared to the previous year, the following tables provide Members with information on the number of meetings held, number of items considered, average attendance and also average length of meetings.

5.4 **Meetings held April 2019 – March 2020 Compared to same period 2018/19**
(Total inclusive of specials – these are shown in brackets)

| Scrutiny Committee | Number of Meetings 2018/19 | Number of Meetings 2019/20 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Education | 10 (3 special) | 9 (1 special) |
| Environment and Sustainability | N/a | 7 |
| Housing and Regeneration | N/a | 8 (1 special) |
| Regeneration and Environment | 9 (2 special) | N/a |
| Partnerships | 2 | 2 |
| Policy and Resources | 8 (1 special) | 7 (1 special) |
| Social Services | 8 (1 special) | 7 |
| Total | 37 (7 were specials) | 40 (3 were specials) |

The above table shows a reduction in the number of special meetings held in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19. It should be noted that there is a limit of two special meetings per scrutiny committee, during each municipal year. Education for Life Scrutiny Committee held three for the period April to March 2018/2019, however one of these was in the previous municipal year so did not exceed the total permitted.

Overall the additional meetings (when excluding specials) increased by seven during 2019/20, which reflects the establishment of Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. When considering the difference in the number of meetings including the number of specials over the two years, the difference in the total number of meetings is three. This may indicate that the additional scrutiny committee established in 2019/20 has provided more capacity and therefore reduced the need for specials. When compared to previous years the number of scrutiny committee meetings has increased overall from 33 (including 5 specials) in 2015/16, to 34 (including 6 specials) for 2016/17 and also 2017/18, indicating an overall upward trend.

5.5 **Comparison of Number of Agenda and Information Items per Scrutiny Committee**

| Scrutiny Committee | 2018/2019 | | 2019/2020 | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | Agenda Items | Info Items | Agenda Items | Info Items |
| Education for Life | 22 | 14 | 24 | 15 |
| Environment and Sustainability | N/a | N/a | 19 | 8 |
| Housing and Regeneration | N/a | N/a | 19 | 7 |
| Regeneration and Environment | 20 | 14 | N/a | N/a |
| Partnerships | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Policy and Resources | 26 | 24 | 18 | 10 |
| Social Services | 21 | 1 | 18 | 3 |
| Total | 94 | 56 | 104 | 36 |

In terms of the items discussed at scrutiny committees since April 2019, there has been an increase in items from 94 in 2018/19 to 104, a difference of 10. There has been a decrease in information items (which are not included in agenda packs, but are still published) from 56 in 2018/19 to 46 in 2019/20. However the number of agenda going forward may reduce with the end of the WHQS programme in 2020. There were 5 reports in 2018/19 and 4 reports in 2019/20 related to WHQS.

5.6 **Average Meeting Time** (hours:minutes)

| Scrutiny Committee | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Education for Life | 1:43 | 1:27 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Environment and Sustainability | N/a | 1:16 |
| Housing and Regeneration | N/a | 1:07 |
| Regeneration and Environment | 1:36 | N/A |
| Partnerships | 1:59 | 2:05 |
| Policy and Resources | 2:00 | 1:32 |
| Social Services | 1:35 | 1:28 |

Comparison across the scrutiny committees show that average meeting time has either remained the same or has reduced. Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee for example has considered 8 fewer items during 2019/20 which may account for the reduced average time. In addition the removal of Cabinet Member statements from the agendas, may explain the average time of meetings reducing slightly.

5.7 Members Attendance

| Scrutiny Committee | Average Cllr Attendance 18/19 | % 2018/19 | Average Cllr Attendance 19/20 | % 2019/20 | Variance |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Education | 12 | 75% | 11 | 69% | -1 |
| Environment and Sustainability | N/a | N/a | 13 | 81% | |
| Housing and Regeneration | N/a | N/a | 11 | 69% | |
| Regeneration and Environment | 12 | 75% | N/a | | N/a |
| Partnerships | 11 | 69% | 10 | 63% | -1 |
| Policy and Resources | 12 | 75% | 12 | 75% | nil |
| Social Services | 12 | 75% | 11 | 69% | -1 |

Comparison of attendance across scrutiny committees for the two years shows very little difference in the level of attendance. The difference between attendance at Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is of interest, the same councillors sit on both committees but the average has been slightly less for Partnerships, at 75% and 63% respectively.

There is no direct comparison for attendance at the new scrutiny committees (Environment and Sustainability & Housing and Regeneration) in 2019/20. However attendance can be compared to Policy and Resources and the former Regeneration and Environment (which were previously were responsible for these areas). The table above shows that attendance at Housing and Regeneration in 2019/20 has been 69% compared to 75% at both Policy and Resources and the former Regeneration and Environment in 2018/19, a difference of one Member.

5.8 Future of Scrutiny

As outlined in the report to Cabinet on 22nd July 2020 entitled 'Strengthening Team Caerphilly' there will be a review of Decision Making which will include the scrutiny function. Scrutiny Committee Members will therefore have an opportunity to engage over the coming months on the future direction of the scrutiny function.

5.9 Conclusion

The analysis of the number of meetings, items discussed and the length of meetings shows some changes since 2019, there have been a reduced number of special meetings and information items suggesting that the additional capacity has absorbed this workload. The

length of meetings has slightly reduced possibly due to the removal of the Cabinet Member statement. The average number of agenda items has remained very similar apart from Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee and this is probably due to losing housing related items.

The Member survey shows that the majority of Members are content with the changes to the number and structure of scrutiny committees agreed by Council in April 2019.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 That the majority of Members, based on a response rate of 79%, agree with the changes made to the number of scrutiny committees in April 2019.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

- 7.1 The operation of scrutiny is a statutory function that ensures that members have the opportunity to properly scrutinise council policies including the Corporate Plan.

7.2 Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Objective 2 - Enabling employment

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impacts on the environment

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 The scrutiny function contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016 by ensuring that it is effective in providing oversight for all Council services and that they are scrutinised against the following goals:-

- A prosperous Wales*
- A resilient Wales*
- A healthier Wales*
- A more equal Wales*
- A Wales of cohesive communities*
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language*
- A globally responsible Wales*

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no equalities implications.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no personnel implications.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

13.2 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

Author: Cath Forbes-Thompson, Scrutiny Manager
Consultees: Richard Edmunds Corporate Director Education and Corporate Services
Lisa Lane, Head of Democratic Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Cllr Colin Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cllr James Pritchard, Chair Scrutiny Leadership Group
Cllr Gez Kirby, Vice Chair Scrutiny Leadership Group

Background Papers:

Council 16th April 2019 Agenda Item 9

Cabinet 22nd July 2020 Agenda Item 6

Appendices:

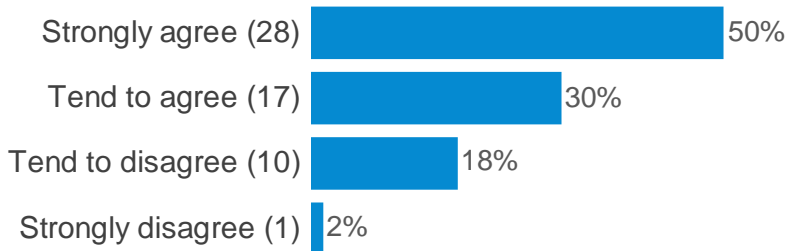
Appendix 1 Scrutiny Member Survey Results

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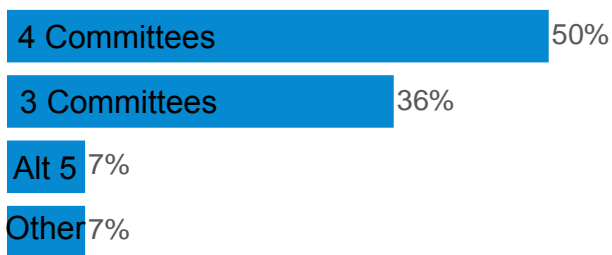
This report was generated on 13/03/20. Overall 58 respondents completed this questionnaire. The report has been filtered to show the responses for 'All Respondents'.

The following charts are restricted to the top 12 codes. Lists are restricted to the most recent 100 rows.

From the options considered by Council in April 2019, do you agree or disagree that "to increase the number of scrutiny committees to 5" was the right option?



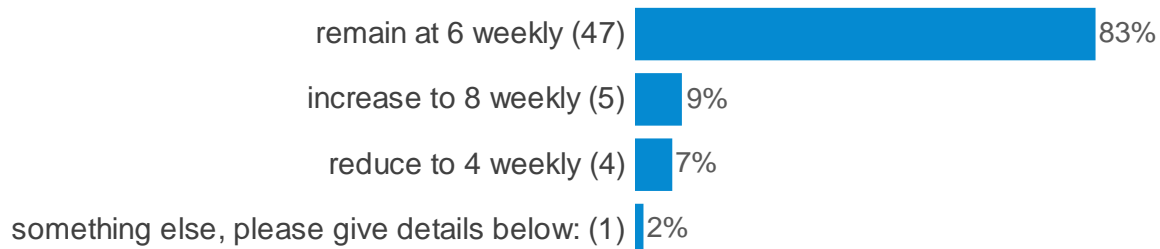
If you disagree, which of following options would you prefer?



If you do not agree with any of the previous options what alternative do you want to suggest?

I believe there should be a Community Engagement, Consultation Scrutiny Committee
4 committees not necessarily in the grouping as listed above

Moving forward, do you consider that the frequency of meetings should:



| | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| [REDACTED] | | |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |
| [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |

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