



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON THURSDAY, 30TH JULY 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan (Vice-Chair),

Councillors:

Mrs P. Cook, W. David, D. T. Davies, C. Mann, and D. Rees.

Together with:

A. Price (Interim Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer and C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Ackerman, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, H.W. David and J. Pritchard.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 26TH MARCH 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Leadership Group meeting held on the 26th March 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMMES

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. The draft work programme was noted and confirmed by Members.

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. Members agreed that the report on Members attendance would be added to the work programme for this quarter as an information item.

Health Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. Members were pleased to note that outstanding information requests were now on the work programme. Members agreed that the report on Members attendance would be added to the work programme for this quarter as an information item.

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. Councillor Rees asked for detail of the position in respect of a referral from Audit Committee to Scrutiny, Miss Price confirmed that this is not outlined in the Council Constitution, and each scrutiny committee and Scrutiny Leadership Group will determine the work programmes. Members agreed that the report on Members attendance would be added to the work programme for this quarter as an information item.

Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. Members noted that the reports on Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study would move to the 8th December. In addition the report Active Travel Act would move to 27th October. There were additional reports added to the work programme; Leisure Centre Usage Profiling on 15th September, CCB Community Infrastructure 123 List of Infrastructure on 27th October and Members attendance would be added to the work programme for this quarter as an information item.

5. SCRUTINY REVIEW 2015

Mrs Forbes-Thompson and Miss Price outlined the main findings of the review of the scrutiny arrangements, which set out to identify possible improvements to the operation of scrutiny. The main themes identified by the workshops attended by both Members and Officers were the size and content of agendas, forward work programmes and expert witnesses, information for Members, reports for scrutiny, task and finish groups and scrutiny support, Cabinet members role and Members role and skills, meeting organisation and scrutiny chairs and external scrutiny.

Members queried if external witnesses would receive payments for attending meetings, it was clarified that witnesses can have travel expenses as is the present arrangement for scrutiny and other committees, Members supported moving towards using expert witnesses.

Members outlined the importance of ensuring that reports outline the key issues for scrutiny members. In addition it was emphasised the importance of scrutiny ensuring that it is aware of what is important to the public. Miss Price stated that we encourage public and stakeholder participation through publication of work programmes. The Welsh Government has proposed, in the White Paper that work programmes for Scrutiny and Cabinet include the key issues.

Members suggested means to improve information to members, such as the production of a pamphlet which summarises all reports for all Members. Miss Price suggested that use of the Members Portal for information reports could help Members and also reduce the size of agendas. Members suggested that information reports could be available well in advance of meetings and then prevent printing with agenda packs.

Members supported the use of task and finish groups to target important issues which need more in depth discussion. It was suggested that reducing the size of agendas to 3 strategic items for discussion would ensure that meetings are more focussed on key issues.

Members sought clarification on scrutiny officer support at meetings, Miss Price explained that Solicitors are attending and have been trained to provide advice and support to the scrutiny committee and Chair.

The meeting closed at 17.53p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2015 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR