



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON THURSDAY, 29TH OCTOBER 2015 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David (Chair)
Councillor S. Morgan (Vice-Chair),

Councillors:

Miss L. Ackerman, Mrs P. Cook, C. Mann, J. Pritchard 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 Mrs E.M. Aldworth, W. David and D. T. Davies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES – 30TH JULY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Leadership Group meeting held on the 30th July 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

Education for Life Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. Members agreed with the work programme.

Health Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft

work programme. Members agreed with the work programme.

Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. However since publication of the report there have been four additional reports put forward, it was noted that a report on Council Tax NNDR increase in court fees, would be added to the special meeting on 7th December 2015. The Chair asked for further details on the content of the three pre-decision reports in respect of the WHQS programme and whether they need to be seen by Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that Mrs Forbes-Thompson would liaise with Officers and feed back to the Chair. The remainder of the work programme was agreed for publication.

Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Mrs Forbes-Thompson confirmed that there had been no consultation responses to the draft work programme. Members agreed with the work programme.

Cllr D Rees asked for a report to be put forward for consideration at the next meeting of Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee. He asked that a report comes forward on parking enforcement and anti-social behaviour. Mrs Forbes-Thompson stated that she would check with the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership to see if this is covered within the work of the partnership, so that it is within the terms of reference for the scrutiny committee.

5. SCRUTINY REVIEW 2015

Mrs Forbes-Thompson and Miss Price outlined the plan to implement the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review agreed by Council on 6th October 2015.

The initial work has involved meeting with IT, to discuss setting up the Member focus group, who will look at using alternative methods of accessing committee papers, and giving a member perspective on changes to the Members Portal. A meeting has been held with Performance Management Unit to discuss the best dates for the dedicated performance scrutiny meetings. Further meetings will be held with CMT and individual SMT's to discuss the plan including changes to cabinet work programmes, which will need to include key issues.

Miss Price stated that there will be changes to Cabinet Members statements, which will be available to scrutiny committee members in advance and there are plans to develop guidance on the content of statements. A prioritisation matrix will also be developed to help scrutiny committees prioritise items for agendas which will be decided by each committee and limited to four items.

Members queried how items will be prioritised, when issues of importance to the council may not necessarily be important to the public. Miss Price stated that the development of the expert witness lists for scrutiny will give committees additional perspective when discussing issues and the scrutiny leadership group will be responsible for managing the list of witnesses.

The Chair gave feedback on the recent successful meeting of Policy and resources Scrutiny Committee which considered bed and breakfast accommodation and invited representatives from the Argoed Residents for a Safer Community and previously the committee had heard from a pressure group regarding the 'bedroom tax'. It is also important to look at how other local authorities involve the public in their scrutiny process.

Members raised the issue of the new Social Services (Wales) Act which will have far reaching impact upon residents of the county borough and scrutiny will need to consider how it can involve and raise awareness of the impact. Members also commented on the need to balance local concerns against larger county wide issues when considering work programmes.

The Chair stated that the role of the chair is critical in terms of contacting and preparing groups who wish to attend scrutiny meetings, this helped with the recent Policy and Resources meeting. The residents group were pleased with their reception and the committee members were interested and took the opportunity to drill down to the main issues.

Miss Price thanked members for their comments and stated that it was helpful to understand the need to communicate to members the public and officers, the plans for developing the expert witness list.

Members stated that it was important to ensure that scrutiny is aware of the impact of budget cuts when considering financial plans and discuss what will be done to alleviate the effects of cuts. Miss Price stated that the special MTFP meetings will consider potential budget reductions and will include impact assessments.

The meeting closed at 16.50p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2016 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR