



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE – 2ND MARCH 2016

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION PLAN UPDATE

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Democratic Services Committee with the progress made in respect of the Scrutiny Review Implementation Plan.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report outlines the progress with the Scrutiny Review Implementation Plan and the status of actions up to mid-February. The majority of the actions are either completed or ongoing, the aim is to ensure that all actions are completed by May 2016 when the main changes to scrutiny committee meetings will be implemented.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The operation of scrutiny is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent Assembly legislation.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The recommendations of the Scrutiny Review were agreed by Council on the 5th October 2015. The recommendations are summarised below:
- That a limit of no more than 4 items is placed scrutiny agendas.
 - That there is a limit placed on the number of special scrutiny meetings held per scrutiny committee, of two additional meetings per annum, with priority for MTFP.
 - Cabinet and scrutiny forward work programmes to include brief narrative on key issues to be covered in the Reports and Scrutiny committees will discuss their forward work programmes at each meeting.
 - Scrutiny Leadership Group will recommend whether referrals of individual Ombudsman reports from Standards Committee should be referred to scrutiny committee or Audit Committee.
 - A list of stakeholders and external witnesses be developed for each scrutiny committee and maintained and agreed by Scrutiny Leadership Group. An expert witness protocol be developed
 - Information items be removed from scrutiny committee agendas and instead be placed on the Members Portal.
 - A prioritisation matrix is developed for requests for reports from Members and the public.

- The quality of reports will be reviewed and monitored by Scrutiny Leadership Group for 6 months from the implementation of the new arrangements.
- A protocol be developed for task and finish groups and agreed by Democratic Services Committee, with a limit of two task and finish groups to run at a time
- The members training programme be further developed to incorporate relevant comments from the workshops.
- That guidance on the format and content of the Cabinet Members' written statement is developed.
- Good practice for pre-meetings be shared amongst Scrutiny Leadership Group including peer observations.
- The possibility of joint scrutiny committees be explored and the minutes of joint committees and other information about relevant outside bodies be published on the Members Portal.
- A dedicated performance management meeting be held for each scrutiny committee once per annum.
- The protocol for External Audit, Inspection and Regulatory Bodies interface with scrutiny be presented to Council for consideration and adoption once it is completed.
- The terms of reference and membership of the Scrutiny Leadership Group be Reviewed.
- A self-evaluation of scrutiny arrangements be carried out within 12 months of changes being agreed.

4.2 An implementation plan (Appendix 1) was developed to ensure that changes to scrutiny were introduced in a logical order and the transition is as smooth as possible. This was reported to Audit Committee on 9th December 2015 in respect of the area for improvement in the Annual Governance Statement for 2014/15 (Appendix 2). The following table outline the progress to date:

Month	Action	Progress
October 2015	Discussions of implementation plan at CMT and with Scrutiny Leadership Group	Completed, SLG 29 th October 2015, CMT 12 November 2015
	Initial meeting with IT to arrange Members focus group to work on information items	Completed, met on 27 October 2015. Focus Group met 1 December 2015
	Initial meeting with Performance Management to discuss timing of meetings and transition from current process	Completed, met on 29 October 2015, discussed holding dedicated PM meeting during May/June
November 2015	Discussions of implementation plan with Cabinet Member and Democratic Services Committee	Partly Completed – Democratic Services Committee (planned for 2/12/15 but meeting brought forward) therefore to be updated on 2/3/2016
	Minutes of joint committees and other relevant bodies to be placed on the website	Ongoing - this can be done through Modgov.
	Members of Scrutiny Committees to receive initial information about prioritisation and key decisions in their refresher training sessions	Completed during November/December 2015
	Scrutiny Manager to attend SMT for each directorate to discuss narratives in Cabinet FWP	Completed – First meeting held November 2015

	Initial meeting with Monitoring Officer and Corporate solicitor to discuss changes to constitution	Partly Complete
	Meeting with Communications and Engagement Team to discuss external witness & stakeholder list	Completed, met on 18 November 2015
December 2015	FWP template to be amended	Partly Complete – protocol drafted
	Prioritisation matrix to be developed	Partly Complete – protocol drafted
	Cabinet Members protocol for written reports to be developed	Partly Complete – protocol drafted to be discussed at CMT on 18 February 2016
January 2016	Training to be given on Cabinet Members protocol and detailed Cabinet FWP	Outstanding, awaiting final protocol
	Requests for reports procedure to be developed – linked to prioritisation matrix	Partly Complete – protocol drafted
	Co-opted Members appointments process to be developed	Outstanding
	Further update to Scrutiny Leadership Group on implementation plan.	Completed, 28 January 2016
	New processes for information items to be on Members' Portal	Ongoing – IT developing new pages on portal
February 2016	Task and Finish group protocol to be developed.	Outstanding
	Scrutiny Committees to begin discussing FWPs at each meeting	Planned workshops for February/March 2016
	Cabinet Members protocol to commence at Scrutiny Meetings	Outstanding – should commence once protocol & Training completed
	Amended terms of reference for Scrutiny Leadership Group to be developed	Outstanding

4.3 From May 2016 Scrutiny Committees will be implementing the changes to agendas, whereby there will be a maximum of four items to be discussed. The current arrangements where several items are listed for information and have to be called forward for discussion will cease. It is planned that these reports will instead be placed on the Members Portal and Members will be notified when reports are updated. Each Scrutiny Committee will have a specific area on the portal, within which there will be a section for each service area. If a Member subsequently wishes to add one of these reports to an agenda for discussion, they can raise this during the debate on forward work programmes and the committee will determine when it will be added.

4.4 Forward work programmes will be discussed at every Scrutiny Committee meeting, the committee will determine what items will be added to the work programme. In order to assist the committee this will be considered alongside the Cabinet work programme, with Officers and the Cabinet Member available to provide further details. The Scrutiny Committee will also consider report requests and will agree if it is appropriate to add the request to the work programme. Protocols have been drafted in order to facilitate this process.

4.5 In order to ensure that each Scrutiny Committee can consider its work programme for the first time and look at the year ahead, arrangements have been made to hold a workshop prior to each respective Scrutiny Committee meeting in February and March. This workshop will give Members the opportunity to plan their work programme from May onwards. Following this the work programme will be placed on the agenda for every standard meeting in order to update and review. This workshop can be held on an annual basis.

4.6 The implementation plan includes proposals to provide training on these new arrangements for each Scrutiny Committee, to be provided at the annual scheduled training, which is held following the Annual General Meeting of Council. It is proposed to include the following in the training:

- Forward work programmes
- Request for reports
- Members Portal.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's EqIA process does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications not contained in the report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no personnel implications not contained in the report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 There are no consultation responses not contained in the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Democratic Services Committee to note the progress to date and comment on the training proposals outlined in 4.6 of this report.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To inform Democratic Services Committee of progress following the Scrutiny Review.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

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Appendices:
Appendix 1 Scrutiny Review Implementation Plan
Appendix 2 Audit Committee Report