



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON TUESDAY 10TH MAY 2016 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor S. Morgan – Chair (Presiding)

Councillors:

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

Together with:

C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer) and E. Sullivan (Democratic Services Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. Ackerman, Mrs E.M. Aldworth, H. 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 – 28TH JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Leadership Group meeting held on 28th January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. SCRUTINY REVIEW DRAFT PROTOCOLS

The Interim Head of Democratic Services introduced the report which updated Members on the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review and presented for their consideration a draft process to be followed for forward work programmes and requests for reports which would apply from May 2016 onwards.

The Officer confirmed that Forward Work Programmes were now a standing agenda item and would be presented along with the Cabinet Forward Work Programme for consideration at each meeting. This would allow Members to prioritise the items coming forward for discussion and allow any potential witnesses to be identified. The Officer referred to Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report and the protocols contained therein were outlined. The procedure for developing scrutiny forward work programmes was explained and the protocol for report requests summarised.

The prioritisation form, its selection criteria and scoring matrix were detailed and Members were reminded that the Chair would still have the ability to bring forward urgent items for discussion but it would be at the cost of another agenda item.

The Chair thanked the Officer for her report and Members comments and questions on the draft protocols were welcomed.

Members expressed concern that by limiting the agenda to 4 items important issues could miss the scrutiny process and emphasised the role of scrutiny in holding the executive to account. The Officer confirmed that there was still the opportunity to bring urgent items forward and by prioritising against the Cabinet Forward Work Programme matters of strategic importance could be readily identified and brought forward for discussion. It was noted that the Cabinet Forward Work Programme now includes a narrative on the reports being presented to assist the committee in its decision making. The Officer advised that Members also had an option to call 2 'Special Meetings' per year if required.

A Member reiterated concerns previously expressed with regard to the quality of some of the reports presented and the order in which items are placed on the agenda. This was discussed and length and the Officer confirmed that the Committee Clerks would be able to send draft agenda's to Chair's prior to publication for order approval. Members agreed that this should be taken forward.

Reference was made to recommendations or referrals back from the Audit Committee and how these would be given priority. The Officer confirmed that a report of that nature would in terms of the selection protocol tick many of the essential criteria boxes and as such would evidence it as appropriate for addition, but it would not have an automatic referral. The protocols in place would assist Members to identify and evidence the reasons for inclusion in the Forward Work Programme the more strategic and overarching the subject matter the greater the matrix score.

In terms of the matrix scoring system Members queried the why there was both a numeric value and a Yes/No response, and suggested that it would be simpler to just use the number of yes responses awarded to identify the priority level. The Officer confirmed that the protocol could be easily amended to reflect the suggestion and it was agreed that this would be changed accordingly.

Members referred to the protected characteristics listed on page 16 of the report and noted that the Welsh language had not been included and sought clarification with regard to the 'Designated Person' requirement of the Local Government Measure. The Officer confirmed that they were still awaiting guidance from Welsh Government on the 'Designated Person' and would amend the protected characteristic list to include the Welsh language.

Having fully considered and commented on its content the Scrutiny Leadership Group noted the report.

The meeting closed at 6.09 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 28th July 2016 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR