



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP – 27TH OCTOBER 2016

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY REVIEW: SCRUTINY SELF EVALUATION AND PEER REVIEW

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For Scrutiny Leadership Group to be informed of the proposals to carry out a self-evaluation and peer review, which will aim to determine the impact of the changes implemented as a result of the scrutiny review.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report sets out the proposals to carry out a self-evaluation and peer review as agreed by Council in October 2015 under the Scrutiny Review. Scrutiny Leadership Group is asked to comment on the proposals.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The operation of scrutiny is required by the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent Assembly legislation.
- 3.2 The self-evaluation proposals contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016 by ensuring that scrutiny function evaluates its effectiveness and identifies areas for improvement. An effective scrutiny function can ensure that council policies 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

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Review agreed by full Council on the 5th October 2015 included a recommendation to carry out a self-evaluation 12 months after the changes had been agreed.
- 4.2 In order to carry out a self-evaluation of the scrutiny function consideration should be given to ensuring that the methodology and robustness of the evaluation is sound. Therefore it is suggested that the effectiveness of scrutiny is measured against an established set of characteristics for good scrutiny.

- 4.3 It was determined by full Council in October 2013 to adopt the Outcomes and Characteristics of Effective Scrutiny in Local Government as its strategic vision for a scrutiny function. These Characteristics were developed by the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Welsh Scrutiny Officers and subsequently endorsed by Wales Audit Office (WAO) in its report 'Good Scrutiny? Good Question!'
- 4.4 It is suggested therefore that these characteristics are used as a basis for a questionnaire (appendix 1) to be sent to all Councillors. In addition that we invite a peer group of Councillors from neighbouring local authorities and a representative from both Wales Audit Office and WLGA to observe a minimum of two scrutiny committee meetings during November/December 2016. They would be asked to consider the scrutiny committees against the characteristics and provide an outside perspective of our scrutiny arrangements.

5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 This report contributes to the well-being goals as set out in links to strategy above. It is consistent with the five ways of working as defined within the sustainable development principle in that by carrying out a self-evaluation and taking part in a peer observation the scrutiny function will be better able to identify areas for improvement. This should ensure that the scrutiny function is more effective when reviewing services and policies and ensure it considers the wellbeing goals.

6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This scrutiny self-evaluation includes questions on involving a wide range of evidence and perspectives, building trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders. This sits alongside protocol and guidance on expert witnesses and task and finish group guidance. The aim is to evaluate the scrutiny function and any further areas for improvement.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications that are not contained in the report.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications that are not contained in the report.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 There are no consultation responses not contained in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Scrutiny Leadership to consider and comment on the proposals for self-evaluation and peer review.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To ensure that the changes as a result of the scrutiny review are evaluated.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

12.2 Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

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Background:

Scrutiny Review Council 5th October 2015

Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan Council 8th October 2013

Good Scrutiny? Good Question! - Auditor General for Wales improvement study: Scrutiny in Local Government – 29th May 2014

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Self-evaluation questionnaire

Scrutiny Self-Evaluation 2016

Please consider the following questions in respect of scrutiny at Caerphilly County Borough Council and select one response:

Scrutiny Environment			
1. Scrutiny has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement arrangements.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Scrutiny have the dedicated officer support it needs from officers.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. Scrutiny members have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
4. The scrutiny process receives effective support from the Council's Corporate Management team who ensures that information provided to scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Scrutiny is recognised by the Executive and Corporate Management team as an important council mechanism for community engagement.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Comments:			

Scrutiny Practice			
6. Scrutiny inquiries (Task & Finish Group) are non-political, methodologically sound and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Scrutiny is member-led and has `ownership` of its work programme taking into account the views of the public, partners and regulators, whilst balancing between prioritising community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Stakeholders have the ability to contribute to the development and delivery of scrutiny forward work programmes.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Overview and scrutiny meetings and activities are well-planned, chaired effectively and make best use of the resources available to it.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

10. Scrutiny is characterised by effective communication to raise awareness of, and encourage participation in democratic accountability.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Scrutiny operates non-politically and deals effectively with sensitive political issues, tension and conflict.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. Scrutiny builds trust and good relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Comments:			

Impact of Scrutiny			
13. Scrutiny regularly engages in evidence based challenge of decision makers and service providers.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. Scrutiny provides viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Non-executive members provide an evidence based check and balance to Executive decision making.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. Decision makers give public account for themselves at scrutiny committees for their portfolio responsibilities.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. Overview and scrutiny enables the 'voice' of local people and communities across the area to be heard as part of decision and policy-making processes.			
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Comments:			

Thank you for your participation, please return form to Democratic Services Team, Penallta House