



DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE - 17TH SEPTEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE STANDARD SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek comments of Democratic Services Committee Members prior to the recommendation to Council, to amend the standard agenda format in order to reflect the recent changes to the process for the development of scrutiny forward work programmes and suggestions for change made by the Scrutiny Leadership Group.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report outlines proposals for scrutiny committee agendas to be amended and make them consistent with the new consultation arrangements for scrutiny committee forward work programmes. The report also suggests changes to the printing of scrutiny committee information reports in view of the low number of reports brought forward for discussion.

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 Scrutiny Improvement Action Plan was approved by full Council on 8th October 2013 and it contained a number of changes to the Council's established scrutiny committee arrangements.

Requests for Reports

- 4.2 The arrangements for development of scrutiny committee forward work programmes include formal consultation with the members of each scrutiny committee, officers, stakeholders and the general public. Following the consultation period, the work programme is agreed by the Scrutiny Leadership Group.
- 4.3 Since the introduction of the new forward work programme arrangements it has become apparent that the format of scrutiny committee agendas should be re-considered. At present the agenda includes a standing item whereby members of the committee can request reports for consideration on a future agenda. This agenda item is inconsistent with the new arrangements for developing forward work programmes as these are now produced on a rolling 12 week cycle.

- 4.4 In order to ensure that arrangements for requesting reports are clear and consistent with managing scrutiny committees forward work programmes, it is suggested that the standard item to request reports is removed from the scrutiny committee agendas.

Scrutiny Committee Information Reports

- 4.5 The Scrutiny Leadership Group recently considered how committee agendas could be improved.
- 4.6 At present reports for information are printed and included in the committee agenda pack. Information reports are not discussed at meetings unless a committee member specifically requests a report is brought forward for discussion. Scrutiny Leadership Group concluded that the reports are informative and help keep members up to date on issues but as they are only very occasionally brought forward for discussion the cost of printing information reports could not be justified.
- 4.7 The following table shows the number of 'for information reports' brought forward for discussion over the last 6 months:

Scrutiny Committee's Sept 2013 to April 2014	Number of Information Reports	Number of Reports Called Forward
Education for Life	17	0
Heath Social Care & Wellbeing	10	1
Policy and Resources	38	3
Regeneration and Environment	45	2

- 4.8 As an alternative to printing information reports, it is proposed to continue to list the information reports on the agenda but not to print them for inclusion in the agenda pack. Councillors and members of the public would be advised on the agenda (members would also receive advice by email) that the reports are available electronically on the council's website (and Members Portal). Should a report be called forward for discussion, Democratic Services would provide members of the committee with printed copies of the report at the meeting.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An EqIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and supplementary guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EqIA has not been carried out.
- 5.2 Paper copies and alternate languages/formats would still be made available on request if required, as is current practice for all documents, in line with Equalities and Welsh language duties.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There will be a small saving in the members printing budget if information items are only made available electronically.

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 To recommend to Council that:

9.1.1 To remove the 'requests for reports agenda item' from the standard scrutiny committee agenda.

9.1.2 To discontinue the printing of information reports and include advice on the agenda that copies of the reports are available electronically on the Council's website and Members Portal.

9.1.3 The Monitoring Officer be given delegated powers to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To make the arrangements in respect of report requests by scrutiny committee members consistent with the consultation on forward work programmes.

10.2 To reduce the cost of printing information reports.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

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