



SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH 2015 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David (Chair),

Councillors:

D. T. Davies, D. Havard, C. Mann, S. Morgan, and D. Rees.

Together with:

A. Price (Interim Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer) J. Jones (Democratic Services Manager), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Ackerman Mrs E.M. Aldworth, Mrs P. Cook, W. 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 – 29TH JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Scrutiny Leadership Group meeting held on the 29th January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS

Mrs Forbes-Thompson outlined the report which outlined a work programme to identify improvements to the operation of scrutiny. This has been developed following the findings of the Wales Audit Office report 'Follow-up of the Special Inspection and Reports in the Public Interest', dated January 2015. The WAO report recognised the work carried out under the scrutiny improvement action plan and the structural arrangements put in place. However, the

WAO identified that the next stage is to develop the effectiveness of scrutiny and clarify its role.

Mrs Forbes-Thompson explained that responsibility for the oversight for the improvements to scrutiny lies with the Improving Governance Project Board (IGPB). It is proposed that a project group made up of the Cabinet Member for HR, Governance and Business, Interim Monitoring Officer, Interim Deputy Monitoring Officer, Chair of Democratic Services Committee and Chair of Scrutiny Leadership Group will manage the project.

In order to identify possible changes and ensure that all interested parties are involved it is proposed that we hold four workshops over a two-week period and invite Members and Officers to attend. The feedback from the workshops will be used by the project group to develop a report with recommendations which will be considered by IGPB, Democratic Services Committee, with invitation extended to Scrutiny Leadership Group, prior to Cabinet and Council in October 2015.

Members stated that holding only one evening workshop may be problematic for some working Councillors, and asked if there could be some flexibility. Assurance was given that if there were Members who could not attend on the planned evening workshop but still wanted to take part, that arrangements would be put in place.

Mr Jones stated that it was important that all Scrutiny Leadership Group took part in the workshops. Members expressed satisfaction with the approach outlined in the report.

Mrs Forbes-Thompson stated that one of the dates identified for the workshop was the 30th April 2015 at 5pm, clashed with the next meeting of Scrutiny Leadership Group, she asked if Members would agree to cancel the meeting, making them available for the workshop.

Having considered the content of the report the SLG fully endorsed the recommendations contained therein.

In view of the cancellation on the next meeting of SLG, it was agreed that the draft work programmes would be emailed to Members for comment prior to publication on the website.

Members highlighted two report requests for Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on WHQS and Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

The Bed and Breakfast report should focus on the broader issue of homelessness and ensure that any witnesses avoid reference to specific areas that are subject to a legal process. The reports need to be balanced and Members need advice on what can be discussed at the meeting. It was suggested that external witnesses are identified such as probation service and it would be possible to discuss the subject over a series of meetings.

Miss Price stated that the scrutiny committee need to be clear of their purpose and have manageable outcomes. Members stated that they are aware that some information cannot be shared in respect of individuals residing at places such as Hostels and Bed and Breakfast accommodation. However they would like to know the type of accommodation, what their purpose is, who the responsible organisations are and reassurance that systems to monitor are in place.

The meeting closed at 17.43p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2015 they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR