

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND THE STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEES HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON THURSDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2010

PRESENT: County Councillor J G Morris. (Chair)
County Councillors J. H. Brunt, G. Morgan, A W Davies, Mrs J.G. Shearer, Mrs S C Davies, Mrs K Roberts-Jones, Mrs D. G. Thomas and Independent Member P. Swanson.

Officers in Attendance: Geoff Petty (Strategic Director – Finance and Infrastructure), Clarence Meredith (Strategic Director Law and Governance), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Services Manager).

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Price and Independent Member R. Miller.

2. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes of the last meeting held on 3rd September 2010 were received

3. Treasury Management.

The Joint Chairs received a briefing note regarding the current reporting procedures for Treasury Management from the Strategic Director – Finance and Infrastructure. It was noted that currently reports relating to Treasury Management were submitted to the Board, the Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee.

It was suggested that the Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee should be the main recipient of reports relating to the performance of treasury management and the scrutiny of policies and practices in addition to the Board with the Audit Committee receiving the minute of the scrutiny committee, unless there were any matters which it needed to address specifically. The Wales Audit Office had been consulted who were content with the suggested revised arrangements.

In relation to the reporting framework for Treasury Management, concern was expressed that the Council diary currently did not allow for reports to be submitted to the Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee prior to consideration by the Board and the Council before the 1st April deadline. It was suggested that this needed to be addressed in future editions of the Council diary.

Action:
That Treasury Management Reports be submitted to the Corporate Governance Committee only unless there are specific matters which require the consideration of the Audit Committee.
That the Audit Committee receives the minutes of the Corporate

<p>Governance Committee relating to Treasury Management. That the Council diary reflect the need for a Corporate Governance Committee prior to the meeting of the Board and Full Council to consider the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices.</p>

4. Approving Member Attendances at Conferences / Training Events.

The Joint Chairs received an oral presentation by the Scrutiny Services Manager. It had come to light that arising from a request from a Member to attend a training event, there currently was no process for the approval of member attendances at conferences / training events held outside of the Council.

It was suggested that attendance at conferences was generally undertaken by Board Members rather than other Members of the Council as they related to individual portfolios, particularly if these were annual events. It was also the case that many of the training courses offered were either too expensive or not relevant to Wales due to the different legislative background in Wales. It was suggested that a list of conferences which Board members attend on a regular basis should be produced. It was also suggested that the costs of conferences were paid from service budgets.

Members suggested that there would need to be an assessment of the value of conferences, and that the budget for Member Development should be reported to the Member Development Working Group. It was further suggested that there should be a moratorium on attendances at courses and other training events until the financial position was known, and that any Member Development requirements should be identified by means of an individual Member's Review and Development Interview.

<p>Action:</p>
<p>That the issue of attendance by Members at courses be considered by the Member Development Working Group.</p>

5. Scrutiny Structures.

The Joint Chairs received the notes of the meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny Committees held on 17th September, 2010 together with details of committee structures from other Welsh authorities and staffing arrangements for scrutiny across Wales.

It was suggested that additional detail would be needed for the four improvement priorities under the strategic change programme, including which services fell within each priority area, and the revised portfolio areas when the Cabinet came into existence. The suggestion was noted that the Joint Chairs should have responsibility for those areas of work which did not fit anywhere else or were cross cutting.

With regard to numbers on scrutiny committees, Members considered that these should not be changed at present, although they would have to be

amended if the numbers of councillors were reduced. It was suggested that this be considered by the Principal Scrutiny Committee initially.

Action:

That the Principal Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider the issue of numbers on scrutiny committees.
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That information be gathered on the numbers of councillors on other Councils' scrutiny committees.

6. Allocation of Work/Work Programmes

(i) Board

Concern was expressed that not all portfolio areas were included in the work programme. The work programme for the Social Services Steering Group was requested for future meetings.

Action

That the forward work programme of the Social Services Steering Group be included with the Board work programme for future meetings.

(ii) Scrutiny Committees

Principal Scrutiny and Crime and Disorder Committee

Catering Review – the portfolio holders with responsibility for catering had been requested to attend the next meeting.

Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee

Contract Management was the only scrutiny review currently taking place.

People Scrutiny Committee

No issues.

Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Windfarm Review – issues over the date for a Council seminar.

Care and Repair – Final report prepared in draft.

Workshops – awaiting an external report so that the review could be completed.

Repairs and Refurbishment of properties in Conservation Area – ongoing.

It was noted that the paperless meetings process was working well.

Audit Committee

No issues raised.

(iii) Chairs and Vice Chairs

No issues raised.

(iv) Standards

No issues raised. The Chair advised the Joint Chairs that the Committee had written to chairs of committees relating to the dispensation granted in respect of the Council's modernisation of schools programme.

Action:
That the scrutiny committee work programmes be updated regularly to remove any repetitive items and to make it clear to the public what was due for consideration at future meetings.
That for completed reviews a table indicating outcomes be established and circulated with work programmes.

7. Powys Teaching Local Health Board Merger update

Arrangements for the Chief Executive of Powys Teaching Local Health Board (PTLHB) acting as statutory director, and member of the Council's Management Team were in place. The Welsh Assembly Government had indicated that it wanted the post of Chief Executive of the PTLHB being filled on a permanent basis. The impact of this on the pilot with the County Council was unknown. A pilot scheme in the south of Powys was being undertaken regarding the integration of services and draft skeleton operational arrangements had been established.

8. Items for the next meeting 6th December 2010 – 10.00am

Joint Working between Councils – information regarding Shared Services.
Principal Scrutiny and Crime and Disorder Committee – Constitution.
Member Development Working Group – Training and Development.