

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 14TH APRIL 2011

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

Officers in Attendance: Clarence Meredith (Strategic Director – Law and Governance), Richard Hughes (Corporate Policy Manager), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Services Manager), Lisa Richards (Senior Committee Clerk), Liz Patterson (Committee Clerk).

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. W. Davies and Mrs J.G. Shearer and Independent Member R. Miller.

2. Notes of last meeting

The notes of the meeting held on 28th January 2011 were received.

3. LSB Scrutiny.

It was explained that the Powys Local Service Board had been in existence for approximately 2 years now. The first year was largely spent setting up the Board which consists of the Chief Executives or equivalent of 9 bodies across Powys. These include the Council, the Powys teaching Health Board, Dyfed-Powys Police, the Brecon Beacons National Park, Coleg Powys, the Countryside Council for Wales, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, PAVO, Public Health Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. The Council have two representatives on the Board one of which is the Chair of the Council's Board.

The Council is required to demonstrate that it is working in partnership with other statutory bodies in Powys. The LSB is the means whereby this is demonstrated. The LSB is currently working on the One Powys Plan which should bring together all the Plans of the representative bodies from across Powys and ensure that they are all working towards the same aims and objectives.

The LSB does not have any executive powers in itself but is able through its Members to aim to remove any blocks within the system which are affecting any of the partners' performance.

A project on Collaborative Governance has started which will define the decision-making processes under which the LSB operates and will outline the opportunities for scrutiny. This includes how the partnerships which come under the LSB will be scrutinised and look at the opportunities for including co-optees in partnership scrutiny. This could be undertaken by inviting co-optees onto single project working groups or including them as non-voting Members.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure which will soon be introduced will steer Councils towards partnership scrutiny and the inclusion of co-optees in the scrutiny process. It is expected that over time co-optees will bring added value to the scrutiny process.

Concern was expressed that partners were unaware of the Council's governance processes and the requirement for decisions to be made by Councillors.

Concern was also expressed regarding the increase in responsibilities as a result of the Local Government (Wales) Measure on the scrutiny team including partnership scrutiny which would impact upon other services provided by the team.

It was suggested that the Joint Chairs meeting receive the minutes from the LSB to monitor the types of issues which were under discussion.

4. Performance Management.

It was agreed that the Joint Chairs should invite Cliff Shields and Peter Jones to the next meeting to discuss what performance information the scrutiny committees would wish to receive.

5. Allocation of Work/Work Programmes

(i) Board

It was confirmed that the Cabinet would be producing a Forward Work Programme after May.

(ii) Scrutiny Committees

The clerks confirmed that the scrutiny committee work programmes had been amended to reflect the new areas covered. The programmed work from the existing committees had been transferred over and it would be the responsibility of the new Chairs and committees to determine their own work programmes after May 2011.

Audit Committee

No comments.

(ii) Chairs and Vice Chairs

To include Performance Information on the next agenda.

6. The Constitution

The proposed amendments would be considered at the next meeting of Council on 28th April 2011 and if agreed would be implemented on 12th May 2011. The

Local Government (Wales) Measure was expected to come into force late April or May and that would result in the necessity for more changes to the Constitution including:

- To set up a Democratic Services Committee
- To appoint a Democratic Services Manager
- To appoint a Lay Member to the Audit Committee
- To have politically balanced appointments to Scrutiny Chairs
- To further engage with other bodies regarding scrutiny
- Town and Community Councils to have well-being powers
- Direct grant funding from WAG to Town and Community Councils
- For WAG to be able to amalgamate up to three unitary authorities
- For Members to be subject to maternity and paternity provisions
- For the Independent Remuneration Panel to direct Councils as to the amount of Members Allowances to be paid

7. Treasury Management

This had been the subject of a scrutiny review by Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee which had found that Treasury Management should be scrutinised at the Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee. Audit Committee have responsibility for monitoring Treasury Management and to avoid duplication it was agreed that on the dissolution of the Corporate Governance Scrutiny Committee the monitoring of Treasury Management be returned to Audit Committee.

8. Joint Working Update

There is a Joint Cabinet/Board with Ceredigion looking at matters such as Waste. It will be necessary to set up a Joint Scrutiny Committee to examine the work of this Cabinet/Board after the Local Government (Wales) Measure is introduced which will permit the creation of a Joint Scrutiny Committee.

9. Date of next meeting

It was agreed to hold an earlier meeting of the Joint Chairs on the afternoon of 27th May 2011 to fit in with the timetable for consulting on the One Powys Plan. It was agreed therefore to cancel the meeting on 10th June 2011. The new Chairs and Vice-Chairs to be advised of the date as soon as they have been appointed.

10. Items for the next meeting 10th June 2011 – 10.00am

Performance Information.