

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF THE  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEES, AUDIT COMMITTEE AND STANDARDS  
COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS ON  
FRIDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor J. G. Morris (Chair)  
County Councillors R. G. Brown, J. H. Brunt, Mrs L. V. Corfield, Miss M. Davies, Mrs  
S. C. Davies, Mrs M. Mackenzie and Independent Member P. Swanson.

Officers in Attendance: Clarence Meredith (Strategic Director – Law and Governance),  
Geoff Petty (Strategic Director Finance and Infrastructure), Janet Kealey (Head of  
Legal, Scrutiny and Democratic Services), Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Services  
Manager), Lisa Richards (Senior Committee Clerk), Liz Patterson (Committee Clerk).

The meeting noted that a Chair had not been appointed at the last meeting. County  
Councillor J. G. Morris indicated that he was willing to continue to Chair the meetings  
unless there were other Members interested in undertaking the role.

**RESOLVED that Councillor John Morris be appointed as Chair.**

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors L. R. E. Davies,  
T. J. Van-Rees and Independent Member R. Miller.

**2. Notes of Meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> June and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011.**

The notes from the meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2011 and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011 were  
agreed.

**3. Annual Performance Assessment 2011(Stage 2 of the Powys Change  
Plan) – Peter Jones and Rhian Jones**

The Powys Change Plan for 2011-14 was approved at Council in June 2011.

The Annual Performance Assessment for 2010-11 is due to be considered by  
Cabinet and then Council on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 to fulfil the statutory duty of  
publication before 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011. The late publication date for the  
document was to enable comparative data from other authorities to be  
included.

Member Comments:

- The statistical value of the Residents Survey along with the value of the  
survey set against the cost of collecting the information was queried.

It was confirmed that whilst there was no statutory duty to undertake a  
residents survey the Welsh Government expected Local Authorities to  
report on customer feedback and the authority would be criticised if no  
information on customer satisfaction was provided.

- Report format
  - Carry forward table headings onto new pages
  - Use percentages or absolute figures rather than smiley faces
  - Use arrows and RAG (Red, Amber Green) indicators to show trends
  - Clarify wording of indicators where unclear (eg The percentage of clients, aged 18-64, who are supported in the community during the year)
- Distribution of the document?  
It was confirmed that the document would be published on the Powys website. Details of the document would be published in the Red Kite which goes to all Powys residents and hard copies would be made available at all Council premises. The document would be made available in alternative formats on request.
- Comparative data as to the Council's performance against other authorities was of interest and should be included where available.

**It was recommended that Cabinet consider the document in the light of the comments made by Joint Chairs.**

#### **4 Performance Management Reporting**

There are a plethora of indicators which are collected by Local Authorities including the following:

- NSIs (National Strategic Indicators)  
Set by the Welsh Government which have to be collected
- PAMs (Public Accountability Measures)  
Introduced as part of the new accountability framework by the Welsh Government – there is some duplication between NSIs and PAMs.
- Outcome Agreements  
10 themes agreed between the Welsh Government and Powys where each theme can score a maximum of 3 points. If Powys scores 25 points or more out of a maximum of 30 points the Council will access an extra £1.4million funding. At present the Council is on target to score 25/30.
- Core Indicators  
An additional 144 Core Indicators which are set out by portfolio and are reported on a RAG basis. Where they are off target Cabinet are given a detailed explanation of the actions being taken to get back on target.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 these Core Indicators are no longer statutory and are now known as Service Improvement Data Sets. They are non statutory but the Welsh Government will expect authorities to report on them.

- Finally there are local performance indicators which service areas set themselves. It is the intention to identify the important ones (i.e. the ones which are used by services regularly or are those reported to the Welsh Government and collect data on these more frequently.

Some service areas have fully embedded performance reporting and input data on a daily basis whereas other service areas struggle to input data at the end of each quarter. It will be necessary for all service areas to embed performance reporting fully so that reports can be prepared on a more regular basis.

**Members requested a list of service areas that input data daily and those who do not.**

Members need to determine what information (performance and financial) they require to undertake their role and with what regularity this should be provided. There is some concern regarding the ability of Ffynnon to produce quality reports. Ffynnon was a performance management system sponsored by the Welsh Government. This support would be withdrawn probably after 2013 and it was intended to request that better reporting facilities were developed for Ffynnon before the support by the Welsh Government was withdrawn.

**The Chair to write to the Cabinet Leader and the WLGA requesting that improved reporting facilities is developed for Ffynnon urgently.**

It is intended to produce performance information on a Portfolio basis. Finance information should also be provided on this basis and it may be necessary to look again at the structure of scrutiny committees to determine if alignment by portfolio may work better.

It was confirmed that the performance reports were compiled by a team set apart from the service area which ensured objectivity. There needed to be more challenge from the performance team as to the information provided but this challenge needed to be constructive not confrontational. Areas of concern needed to be highlighted but success should be celebrated. Members expressed the view that scrutiny should focus on the areas of concern rather than the areas which were proving successful.

Members also expressed the view that officers should be available to support scrutiny as well as providing support to the Cabinet. Performance Management staff would be able to assist by identifying areas of concern to Members as the team is removed from service areas.

Concern was expressed regarding the frequency of scrutiny meetings (quarterly) compared to the frequency of Cabinet meetings. It may be necessary to look at the timetable of meetings.

## 5. Work Programmes

### i) Cabinet

Members noted the more detailed Cabinet Work Programme which was an improvement on previous programmes. However, it was noted that some of the items gave little indication of the matter to be considered. It was explained that in some cases it was not appropriate to give a detailed explanation of the item for consideration due to the confidential nature of some items. The Cabinet Work Programme was of assistance for each Scrutiny Committee when compiling their individual work programmes.

**The Cabinet Manager be requested to provide a fuller explanation of work programme items where appropriate.**

### ii) Scrutiny Committees

#### **Modernisation and Improvement**

Were looking in particular at Sickness Absence and the Powys Change Plan.

#### **Children, Social Care and Health**

Were appointing their first review group to look at the Financial Support and Management of Adult Services. The Scrutiny Services Manager was identifying external expertise to assist Members in this review.

The Committee were also looking at Community Equipment and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

The Committee has introduced monthly meetings which are targeted at each of one of the three service areas the committee covers. This was with the intention of having shorter meetings but to date meetings were still lasting quite some time. Committee had trialled a new way of working with a 1 hour briefing of Members for discussion and allocation of questions before the meeting commenced. This did not preclude Members from asking their own questions. This had been successful and the committee were looking to develop this.

It would be necessary to look at agenda management to ensure that agendas were not overlong. However, care would need to be taken to ensure that the correct items were included on the agenda for consideration.

#### **Learning and Leisure**

Were looking at Schools with deficit budgets.

## **Environment, Crime and Disorder**

Have 4 reviews ongoing:

- Winter Maintenance/ISP
- Wind Farm Development
- Business Services
- Welshpool Gyrotory System

## **Audit**

The Committee is inviting service areas to meetings when Adverse Internal Audit opinions are reported for the first time to committee. It is hoped that this will improve the response to the Audit Report.

## Treasury Management Reports

The Strategic Director for Finance advised that Treasury Management reports were being considered at Cabinet, Audit Committee and the Modernisation and Improvement Scrutiny Committee. The Portfolio Holder would be taking a report to Council that recommended that Treasury Management should be considered by Audit Committee and Cabinet on a regular basis but that Modernisation and Improvement would be able to scrutinise Treasury Management if they considered it necessary.

## **Members supported the proposal by the Portfolio Holder that Treasury Management be considered by Audit Committee and Cabinet.**

Members agreed that work programming across the Scrutiny Committees needed further work and that a meeting between the Joint Chairs, Management Team and the Chief Executive would assist in identifying priorities for the work programme.

## **6. Allocation of Work**

### **Modernisation and Improvement**

Global Finance Scrutiny (including schools – conflict between Treasury Management and Fairer Funding)

This item to be discussed at the meeting between the Joint Chairs, Management Team and Chief Executive.

### **Audit**

Leisure Centre Vending

Audit Committee had received an adverse Internal Audit Report on Leisure Centre Vending. Audit Committee were satisfied that the action plan drawn up by the service to address the concerns of Internal Audit was satisfactory and would monitor the position. However, there appeared to be a lack of consistent approach to Leisure Centre Vending which the Committee suggested should be

examined by scrutiny. The Strategic Director for Finance undertook to provide a copy of the Internal Audit report to the Chair of Learning and Leisure.

**Learning and Leisure Scrutiny offered to undertake a review of Leisure Centre Vending.**

**7. Local Government Measure 2011**

The Scrutiny Services Manager advised that Guidance on the Local Government Measure was due out around October/November but that the timetable appeared to be slipping.

**8. Scrutiny Network Meeting 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011 - MRC Llandrindod Wells.**

Cllr M Davies was appointed to attend the Scrutiny Network Meeting.

**9. LSB minutes 27<sup>th</sup> May 2011 and 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011**

Members queried the number of Powys County Council officers attending the May meeting. It was confirmed that the LSB was administered by Powys and the Council was the lead authority of the group. A number of the agenda items on the May meeting were led by Powys which had necessitated the attendance as detailed. Collaboration with other LSB partners is an essential role in providing public services. It was confirmed that Cllr Michael Jones the Leader of Powys was now the Chair of the LSB.

Concern was expressed that the LSB were looking to investigate publishing a Public Services newsletter.

**That the LSB be a subject for discussion when meeting with the Management Team and Chief Executive.**

**That Cllr Fitzpatrick be asked for his comments regarding the proposals relating to the publishing of a public services newsletter.**

**10. Joint working update**

Nothing to report.

**11. Items for next scheduled meeting 27<sup>th</sup> October 2011 – 10.00am**

Performance / Finance reporting proposals.

**County Councillor J. G. Morris  
CHAIR**

Meeting closed 1.05pm