



Audit Committee

13th April 2012

Scrutiny Committee Structure Review

Purpose of Report:

To inform Scrutiny Committee Members of the work undertaken by the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs of the four Scrutiny Committees and Audit Committee and to develop scrutiny and respond to the Local Government Measure 2011 (the Measure).

Scrutiny is facing a number of pressures which need to be addressed including:

- An increased desire by Regulators to see robust self regulation by Councils based on sound scrutiny
- An increased role and responsibility for scrutiny members as a result of the Local Government Measure to be introduced in May 2012.
- Criticism of scrutiny in Powys in the CSSIW Joint Inspection report and the WAO Annual Improvement Report
- Growing concern of scrutiny elsewhere in Wales by Regulators.

The Chief Executive has tasked the Joint Chairs and Scrutiny Services with improving scrutiny to address the above. In addition, the Measure makes provisions which requires a review of the Audit Committee.

The development of scrutiny started last summer with the identification of items for review, analysis and suggested questions being developed for committees and pre-meeting briefings. One Committee has decided to double the number of meetings and focus on one service area only at each meeting. Further work on the provision of information to Members and the analysis of that information is being developed.

The Joint Chairs has identified that the most effective scrutiny work occurs through Working Groups rather than in committees. There is also a need to release scrutiny officer resources to provide better support to Members. Consideration was therefore given to revising the scrutiny committee structure. This was extended at the last meeting to include the whole committee process to provide a holistic view in preparation for the new Council after May.

Initial recommendations have been drafted, but these are the subject of further discussions by the Joint Chairs with the intention that a paper outlining the proposals will be sent to Group Leaders for consultation in the near future.

Any proposals will require agreement at the County Council meeting in April 2012 prior to implementation after the Annual Council Meeting in May 2012.

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Sources/background papers: Notes from meetings of Joint Chairs