

# NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE JOINT CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS STEERING GROUP – SCRUTINY, AUDIT AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEES

13 MARCH 2015 – COMMITTEE ROOM A, COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS

**PRESENT:** County Councillor S.C. Davies (Chair).

County Councillors E.Michael Jones, R.G. Thomas, D.R. Jones, A.W. Davies.

## **Officers:**

Wyn Richards (Scrutiny Manager), Lisa Richards (Scrutiny Officer), Liz Patterson (Scrutiny Officer), Nick Philpott (Director – Change and Governance), Clive Pinney (Solicitor to the Council), Peter Jones (Programme Office Manager), Garry Hudson (Senior Management Performance Officer).

## **1. Apologies**

County Councillors - County Councillor L.V. Corfield.

Officers – Jeremy Patterson (Chief Executive), Paul Griffiths (Strategic Director – Place), David Powell (Strategic Director – Resources).

## **2. Discussion with Chief Executive, Strategic Directors / Director Regarding Potential Scrutiny Items.**

### **Documents Considered:**

- None.

### **Issues Discussed:**

- Scrutiny of Schools – request from Estyn.
  - Requirement from Estyn for scrutiny to have a more proactive role in holding schools to account on finance and performance issues. There is a need for the Education Service to advise scrutiny of schools falling into these categories, then scrutiny should call in Heads and Chairs of Governors, and Chairs of Finance Committees in accordance with a work programme.
  - It was likely that Builth Wells Primary School and Llandrindod High School would be considered before the summer followed by Brecon High School. An update was provided of a meeting between the Chief Executive, the Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee, the Head of Schools and the scrutiny team where the process was discussed as well as the need for the Council to seek external expertise to assist the Council with this process.
  - Scrutiny should be discussing financial and performance issues not only with those schools where there were severe issues but also with those whose financial and performance standards were falling. Scrutiny would also need to be holding the Portfolio Holder and the Education Service to account for improving performance and financial standards.
  - What Estyn will be considering when they next inspect the authority is the degree of challenge undertaken. Scrutiny will also need to be asking what governors have done to challenge the Head. Estyn are placing as much emphasis on the budget as on academic achievement.
  - Part of what scrutiny should be considering is the level of support and training provided to governors.
  - It was made clear that this process was not about moving the responsibility for schools to scrutiny, but is about scrutiny being part of the role in improving schools. School improvement is a regional issue undertaken by

ERW which scrutiny will scrutinising in another regional project. The role of governors is not just to accept what the Head and other officers tell them, but to understand and analyse data and how they react to poor Estyn reviews.

**Outcomes:**

- **Noted.**

**3. Scrutiny of Service Improvement Plans.**

**Documents Considered:**

- Organisational Development and Partnership Support Service Improvement Plan.
- Strategic Programmes and Governance Service Improvement Plan.
- Guidance document – scrutiny of service improvement plans.

**Issues Discussed:**

- Powys likely to be the subject of a corporate assessment in 2016 which will focus on improvement and governance arrangements. Business intelligence will assist in the collection of useful information for management purposes. As the Council's resources reduce this will drive the evaluation of what the Council does and needs to stop doing.

**Outcomes:**

Action	Completion Date	Action By
<b>3/1 Draft Notes of the Local Service Board to be circulated to future meeting of the Joint Chairs Steering Group</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> May, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>
<b>3/2 Detailed comments on the Service Improvement Plans as set out in the appendices to be forwarded to the Performance Unit</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>

**4. Scrutiny Committees – Areas of Responsibility.**

**Documents Considered:**

- Scrutiny Committees – Areas of Responsibility.

**Issues Discussed:**

- The Steering Group considered the reallocation of some of the areas of responsibilities between the scrutiny committees in order to provide a better balance. It was acknowledged that the People Scrutiny Committee undertook the scrutiny of the larger service areas within the Council. The changes of the responsibilities are shown in the appendix to these notes in red.
- The Steering Group also considered that the name of the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee should be simplified and suggested that it be called the Place Scrutiny Committee. However it would be necessary to make clear that it would be this scrutiny committee which would deal with crime and disorder matters.

**Outcomes:**

Action	Completion Date	Action By
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<b>4/1 That the scrutiny committees be advised of the changes to their respective terms of reference.</b>	<b>April, 2015</b>	<b>LR and LP</b>
<b>4/2 That the Council be asked to approve the change to the name of the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee to the Place Scrutiny Committee.</b>	<b>April, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>

**5. Scrutiny Annual Report to the Council.**

**Documents Considered:**

- None.

**Issues Discussed:**

- The Steering Group noted that there was a requirement for scrutiny to present an annual report on its activities to the County Council. However, officers had sought clarification as to where the legislative requirements for this had come from, and following discussions with Welsh Government officers, no such reference in legislation could be found.
- It was therefore suggested that this was probably a recommendation by the Wales Audit Office as good practise, although it was noted that in the current White Paper “Reforming Local Government” the requirement was likely to be written into legislation at a future date.
- The process for producing the annual report was discussed and it was noted that due to the time it took currently to produce the report, one had not been prepared for some time. It was considered whether therefore the reference to the annual report in the Constitution should be removed.
- It was suggested that the scrutiny element of the Annual Improvement Report was in fact the annual scrutiny report to Council on its activities, and if a separate report was required then this should be used for this purpose as well. Therefore the reference to the annual report in the Constitution should remain.

**Outcomes:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Action By</b>
<b>5/1 That future annual scrutiny reports be based on the information used to prepare the Council’s Annual Improvement Report.</b>	<b>November, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>

**6. Recommendations from the Adult Social Care Working Group – 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2015.**

**Documents Considered:**

- None.

**Issues Discussed:**

- The Steering Group considered the following recommendation by the Adult Social Care Working Group on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2015 - “that Joint Chairs ensure that a review of Procurement and Commissioning processes in the Council is progressed.”

**Outcomes:**

Action	Completion Date	Action By
6/1 Scrutiny Manager to recirculate the terms of reference for the review to the Working Group in order to restart the process.	April, 2015	WR

**7. Request from County Councillor Wynne Jones, Deputy Leader.**

**Documents Considered:**

- None.

**Issues Discussed:**

- The Steering Group considered a request by County Councillor Wynne Jones, Deputy Leader, who has been appointed by the Leader to liaise between the Cabinet and Scrutiny, to attend meetings of the Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group.
- It was suggested that the Deputy Leader could be invited to the next meeting to provide information to scrutiny regarding the forward work programme of the Cabinet. The Steering Group were of the view that invitations to attend the Steering Group should be on an issue by issue basis which would need to be placed on the agenda for the meeting. It was also suggested that any request by Councillor Jones to attend should be agreed by the 4 Chairs prior to the invitation being made.
- The Steering Group also confirmed that it could invite any member of the Cabinet to attend its meetings should it so wish.

**Outcomes:**

Action	Completion Date	Action By
7/1 That the Deputy Leader be invited to the next meeting of the Steering Group to discuss the Cabinet's forward work programme.	May 2015	WR

**8. Work Programme.**

**Documents Considered:**

- Work Programme 2014-15
- Work Programme 2015-16

**Issues Discussed:**

- Need to add any items identified during the meeting to the work programme.

**Outcomes:**

- Noted.

**9. Local Service Board.**

**Documents Considered:**

- None.

**Issues Discussed:**

- Concern was expressed that due to a number of absences from the meeting, it was not quorate and that there was much discussion at the meeting as to how

to return the LSB meetings to being quorate. There was also concern that those in attendance, who had not attended the joint workshop between the LSB, the Transformation Board and Scrutiny Chairs, did not know about the proposed scrutiny of the LSB. It was suggested that the Leader and Cabinet Liaison Member be invited to discuss this with the Steering Group.

- Looked After Children – Care Planning. Concern was expressed that the Cabinet was receiving action plans from services following which scrutiny were included and made comments about omissions in the action plans approved by the Cabinet. It was considered that the process be amended so scrutiny could make comments first prior to the action plans being agreed by the Cabinet. It was suggested that the Leader and Cabinet Liaison Member be invited to discuss this with the Steering Group.

**Outcomes:**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Action By</b>
<b>9/1 That the Leader be advised of the Steering Group’s concern regarding attendance at the LSB and the lack of knowledge regarding the scrutiny of the LSB, and that the Leader be asked to comment as to how he would address those concerns.</b>	<b>May 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>
<b>9/2 That the Leader and Cabinet Liaison Member be invited to the next meeting to discuss the issues regarding the LSB and the service action plans.</b>	<b>May 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>

**11. Dates of future meetings**

- 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2015
- 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2015
- 18<sup>th</sup> September, 2015
- 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2015

**12. LSB Meeting Dates**

- 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2015
- 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2015
- 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2015

**County Councillor S.C. Davies  
Chair**

**List of Actions Arising from the Joint Chairs and Vice-Chairs Steering Group meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Action By</b>	<b>Completed / Notes</b>
<b>3/1 Draft Notes of the Local Service Board to be circulated to future meeting of the Joint Chairs Steering Group</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> May, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	Yes - Added to Work Programme
<b>3/2 Detailed comments on the Service Improvement Plans as set out in the appendices to be forwarded to the Performance Unit</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> March, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	Yes – Emailed to Performance Unit.
<b>4/1 That the scrutiny committees be advised of the changes to their respective terms of reference.</b>	<b>April, 2015</b>	<b>LR and LP</b>	
<b>4/2 That the Council be asked to approve the change to the name of the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee to the Place Scrutiny Committee.</b>	<b>April, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	Report to Council April
<b>5/1 That future annual scrutiny reports be based on the information used to prepare the Council's Annual Improvement Report.</b>	<b>November, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	
<b>6/1 Scrutiny Manager to recirculate the terms of reference for the review to the Working Group in order to restart the process.</b>	<b>April, 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	
<b>7/1 That the Deputy Leader be invited to the next meeting of the Steering Group to discuss the Cabinet's forward work programme.</b>	<b>May 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	Yes – emailed to invite to next meeting.
<b>9/1 That the Leader be advised of the Steering Group's concern regarding attendance at the LSB and the lack of knowledge regarding the scrutiny of the LSB, and that the Leader be asked to comment as to how he would address those concerns.</b>	<b>May 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	Yes – see below
<b>9/2 That the Leader and Cabinet Liaison Member be invited to the next meeting to discuss the issues regarding the LSB and the service action plans.</b>	<b>May 2015</b>	<b>WR</b>	Yes – email sent invite to next meeting.

Committee and Membership	Terms of Reference / Areas of Responsibility
<p>Audit</p> <p>21 Councillors – Politically Balanced</p> <p>At least 1 Co-opted Lay Member with voting rights (See Rule 7.5.2 below)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve statement of accounts, income and expenditure and balance sheet;</li> <li>• Commissioning and Procurement Working Group (Joint Working Group with the People Scrutiny Committee)</li> <li>• External Audit Reports;</li> <li>• Finance Monitoring – Council wide;</li> <li>• Internal Audit Reports;</li> <li>• Oversee the authority's internal and external audit arrangements;</li> <li>• Performance Monitoring – Council wide, including workforce;</li> <li>• Review and assess risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements and make reports and recommendations on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements;</li> <li>• Review and scrutinise the authority's financial affairs and make reports and recommendations on the authority's financial affairs;</li> <li>• Review the financial statements prepared by the authority.</li> </ul>
<p>Place Scrutiny Committee (including crime and disorder matters) <del>Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee</del></p> <p>21 Councillors – Politically Balanced</p> <p>1 Non-Voting Co-optee for crime and disorder functions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building and Engineering;</li> <li>• <b>Built Heritage grants</b></li> <li>• Car parks</li> <li>• <b>Catering;</b></li> <li>• Cleaning;</li> <li>• Climate Change;</li> <li>• <b>Community Grants.</b></li> <li>• Council buildings and Property including Maintenance;</li> <li>• Council fleet;</li> <li>• County Farms;</li> <li>• Crime and Disorder – delivering safer communities, road safety;</li> <li>• <b>Customer Services;</b></li> <li>• <b>Environmental Health;</b></li> <li>• <b>European matters and RDP</b></li> <li>• Grounds and Woodlands;</li> <li>• Homes for Older People</li> <li>• Housing Stock;</li> <li>• ICT infrastructure;</li> <li>• Leisure Centres and Sports Centres, Outdoor Recreation, Sports Pitches, Countryside Services/Rights of Way.</li> <li>• <b>Licensing;</b></li> <li>• Markets</li> <li>• Planning and Development Control;</li> <li>• <b>Regeneration – Grants and Job Creation / Business support(inc. grants)</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Regeneration and Procurement (Joint working with the People Scrutiny Committee)</b></li> <li>• Regeneration and Procurement (Joint working with the Environment, Infrastructure and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee)</li> <li>• Roads;</li> <li>• Street cleaning, public conveniences;</li> <li>• Street Lighting;</li> <li>• <b>Tourism:</b></li> <li>• <b>Trading Standards;</b></li> <li>• <b>Transportation;</b></li> <li>• Village Halls;</li> <li>• Waste; Refuse and Re-cycling.</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Youth Offending</li> </ul>
<p>People Scrutiny Committee Membership:  21 Councillors – Politically Balanced;  3 parent governor representatives;  1 Church in Wales Diocese representative;  1 Roman Catholic Church Diocese representative,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults' Social Services;</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Culture</li> <li>• Children's Social Services;</li> <li>• Commissioning and Procurement Working Group (Joint Working Group with the Audit Committee)</li> <li>• Education &amp; Learning;</li> <li>• Equalities and Welsh Language;</li> <li>• Finance – Revenues, Benefits;</li> <li>• <b>Gypsies</b></li> <li>• <b>Housing-Tenancies and Homelessness.</b></li> <li>• Libraries, Museums and Archive Services.</li> <li>• Mental Health;</li> <li>• Older People and Health;</li> <li>• Substance Misuse;</li> <li>• Voluntary Sector</li> <li>• Workforce /HR</li> <li>• Youth Services;</li> </ul>



**Service Improvement Plan: April 2015 – March 2018: Challenge by Scrutiny 2015**

<b>Scrutiny Working Group:</b>	Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group	<b>Date:</b>	13/02/2015
<b>Service Improvement Plan:</b>	Organisational development and Partnership Support (OD&PS)	<b>Version:</b>	V0.3
<b>Senior Manager:</b>	Dominique Jones	<b>Director:</b>	Nick Philpott

**General Overview:**

- Concern about Dominique Jones being seconded and who was going to take over as responsible office – clarification provided to the Joint Chairs.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Scrutiny Challenge / Comment</b>	<b>Head of Service Response</b>	<b>Change to SIP (Y/N)</b>
<b>3. Service Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to argue with the plan as these are plans about plans – therefore not tangible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>4. Key Priorities &amp; Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny not specifically mentioned – should be a link to development of scrutiny.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>5. Outline Improvement Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>5. Summary IO &amp; Action Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 20 – work not completed but it was understood that this would be developed.</li> <li>• Page 23 – no figures for finance – however this is not applicable as the target was already met in 2015-16.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<b>6. Key Performance Measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New measures to be included about Business as usual activities and whether they are being met.</li> <li>• CO2 – can this be shown better.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Service Improvement Plan: April 2015 – March 2018: Challenge by Scrutiny 2015**

<b>Scrutiny Working Group:</b>	Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs Steering Group	<b>Date:</b>	13/02/2015
<b>Service Improvement Plan:</b>	Strategic Programmes and Governance	<b>Version:</b>	V1.1
<b>Senior Manager:</b>	Andrew Durant	<b>Director:</b>	Nick Philpott

<b>General Overview:</b>
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Section	Scrutiny Challenge / Comment	Head of Service Response	Change to SIP (Y/N)
<b>3. Service Evaluation</b>	• No self evaluation.	•	•
<b>4. Key Priorities &amp; Risks</b>	• Risk 2 – is the risk rating correct at 3 Mediums? Should it not be a high risk?	•	•
<b>5. Outline Improvement Objectives</b>	•	•	•
<b>5. Summary IO &amp; Action Plan</b>	•	•	•
<b>6. Key Performance Measures</b>	• CO1 – need to populate sickness figures.	•	•

