

# **NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

27 July 2017

### **Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services – Karen Jones**

#### **Matter for Information**

#### **Wards Affected:**

All Wards

### **Overview and Scrutiny Development Update**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update in relation to the changes to Scrutiny arrangements within the Council.

#### **Background**

2. Following the Local Government Elections in May 2017, changes have been made to the Executive of the Council and this required consequential changes to Scrutiny arrangements.

## Current Position

3. A comparison of Scrutiny Committees prior to May 2017 and post May 2017 is set out below:

<b>Previous Arrangements</b>	<b>New Arrangements</b>
Policy and Resources	Policy and Resources Cabinet
Social Care, Health and Housing	Social Care, Health and Wellbeing
Children, Young People and Education	Education, Skills and Culture Leisure and Culture Scrutiny Sub Committee
Economic and Community Regeneration	Regeneration and Sustainable Development Community Safety and Public Protection Scrutiny Sub Committee
Environment and Highways	Streetscene and Engineering

4. The introduction of the sub committees in particular ensures that important issues related to smaller services and functions will be allocated additional scrutiny time. The sub committees are comprised of a smaller number of Members of the main committee, have no Cabinet Board meeting directly following completion of the scrutiny committee and meets on a quarterly, rather than a 6 weekly basis.
5. The work programme of the sub committees will be based on items requested by the sub committee but, more importantly, encourages the sub committee to look in advance at decisions to be made by the Cabinet Board and consequentially to scrutinise at earlier points in the decision making cycle.

6. Each scrutiny committee has received an induction to its roles and responsibilities directly before the first meeting, to highlight the key points that Members may want to prioritise within the Forward Work Programme.
7. There has been an increase in communication between the scrutiny officers and Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny Committees which is assisting in the management of the meetings, as well as ensuring actions are promptly followed through.
8. Scrutiny pre-briefings will now generally be half an hour before the main meeting following agreement at the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny forum in June 2017. It has been agreed that if there is a particular item on an agenda that could be contentious then it is at the Chair's discretion to extend the pre-briefing to an hour.
9. Attendance at the pre-briefings has seen significant improvement with nearly 100% turn out. The situation will continue to be monitored.
10. The Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny have met and agreed that they will meet on a quarterly basis to share information and experiences. It has been agreed that Councillor Arwyn Woolcock will be the Scrutiny Champion for the Council. As time progresses, it is expected that scrutiny work programmes will develop to reflect a more even balance between items for pre-decision scrutiny and performance scrutiny with items of community interest and policy evaluation.

### **Financial Impact**

11. There are no financial impacts associated with this report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

12. A screening assessment has been undertaken but a full equality impact assessment is not required.

### **Workforce Impacts**

13. There are no direct workforce impacts associated with this report but as the new arrangements continue to embed the resources needed to support the scrutiny function will be continuously reviewed.

### **Legal Impacts**

14. There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

### **Risk Management**

15. There is a risk that as the scrutiny function develops resources will be spread thinly which may affect the impact that scrutiny has in ensure accountability and transparency of decision making within the Council.

### **Consultation**

16. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

### **Recommendations**

17. To note the changes to the scrutiny arrangements within the Council

### **Reason for Proposed Decision**

18. Matter for information, no decision required.

### **Appendices**

19. None

### **List of Background Papers**

20. None.

### **Officer Contacts**

Karen Jones - Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services

e-mail: [k.jones3@npt.gov.uk](mailto:k.jones3@npt.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01639 763284

Rhys George - Electoral and Democratic Services Manager

e-mail: [r.j.george@npt.gov.uk](mailto:r.j.george@npt.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01639 763719