

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 13 JULY 2020

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN REMOTE MEETING VIA SKYPE ON MONDAY, 13 JULY 2020 AT 14:00**

Present

Councillor CA Green – Chairperson

JPD Blundell
T Giffard

NA Burnett
RL Penhale-
Thomas

N Clarke
RMI Shaw

J Gebbie
JC Spanswick

T Thomas

Apologies for Absence

M Jones and KL Rowlands

Officers:

Meryl Lawrence	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny
Rachel Pick	Scrutiny Officer
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer Legal, HR and Regulatory Services

Invitees:

Mark Shepherd	Chief Executive
Huw David	Leader

170. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

171. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of 20/01/2020, 04/02/2020 and 13/02/2020 be approved as a true and accurate record.

172. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CROSS-PARTY RECOVERY PANEL - COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Chief Executive provided a summary of the report. He explained that the purpose of the report is to establish a Cross-Party Recovery Panel with the aim of shaping, informing and advising Cabinet on the Council's recovery planning, recognising the huge challenges we face post Covid-19 as we begin to ease the lockdown and move out of that phase. As far as the Council is concerned, change has been very significant. No Council staff had been furloughed. Understandably, a lot of the Council's services had been run differently including homeworking, agile working and the redeployment of staff with the focus being very much on the delivery of essential services with the aim of protecting the most vulnerable within the county borough and playing our part in stopping the spread of the virus. An unfortunate consequence of this had been emergency governance procedures, which, to some extent, has meant some Members' involvement through the normal processes of Scrutiny being suspended. He had set out in his report to Cabinet of 30 June 2020 the endeavours to keep all Members informed and involved as much as possible through weekly Group Leader meetings, Scrutiny Chair meetings and an enhanced programme of communications on a daily basis to keep people informed, including the circulation of formal decisions made under these emergency arrangements. That report set out a planning framework for the restart, recovery and renewal of the Council's services. A key part of the recovery element is the establishment of a Cross-Party Panel, recognising that equal elective Members of all

parties is crucial in order to establish a credible plan on a one-Council basis. He outlined some of the key priorities and considerations that the Council needs to deal with as part of its recovery. Those priorities and considerations fall in different timelines, i.e. some are fairly immediate while others will take longer. One of the challenges will be that recovery is not about everything happening at the same time but a programme of work that may take 12-18 months. Immediately, there is the challenge of reopening schools in September (details of which had been issued to Members and schools by the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support). He stated that the response to the economic crisis is ongoing, and Cabinet had discussed the formation of an Economic Task Force, predominantly comprising people from local businesses and industry to help formulate what the Council needs to do and how best to invest on that basis. The significance of some of the challenges includes homelessness (there is an expectation from Welsh Government that solutions are continued to be found to finding places for people to live, which is challenging both conceptually and financially) and continuing to form better relationships with some of its partners, particularly BAVO. The challenge will be how to nurture these relationships moving forward and how this plays a part in the recovery, recognising the benefits of this to communities and financially in order that the Council does not revert to how things were previously. Some things were very new to the Council, like having to provide PPE. The Council had to consider not only how to recover but how can it ensure to be resilient, should there be a second peak or something else that will require reverting to emergency procedures. Some things were already underway, e.g. most waste services were almost back to normal and libraries were starting to reopen (this does not preclude them having a different role as community hubs moving forward). He outlined the risks and opportunities around digital services, that staff had more readily embraced digital services during lockdown and consideration had to be given as to how much would be kept and how those who find it more difficult to access services digitally be protected. The Chief Executive envisaged the Recovery Panel as task and finish and some of its recommendations will need to be processed quickly. The Council's resources would need to be used widely in order to avoid duplication. He stated that the PSB intends carrying out a Community Impact Assessment and they are very keen to work with the Recovery Panel and identify quickly what the Council needs to prioritise on the basis of that assessment. The Wales Audit Office have also offered their support to the Panel, perhaps looking at best practice elsewhere or any other way they can add value. The Chief Executive was mindful there is an existing Panel for the budget (BREP) and it must be ensured that its work is coordinated and collated in a cohesive way to inform Cabinet and avoid duplication.

The Chief Executive envisaged that the Panel is flexible and agile and he referred to the Terms of Reference which proposed holding monthly group meetings, but that was a matter for the Panel to decide how often they meet, including any subgroups, in order to get the work done. This meant that the Panel would not be delayed by the usual 4- or 6-week cycle of Scrutiny committee meetings, where reports are required in advance. The Panel can therefore react much more effectively and invite people (key officers, Members, external stakeholders) to meet the Panel (all or part) on an ongoing basis. The main point in having the Panel is that Members can come up with key recommendations quickly that will improve the resilience of the Council's Recovery Plan, improve the Council's responsiveness, and ensure the Council makes the right decisions when we come to potentially reset the MTFs and Corporate Plan in the context of Covid-19.

A Member stated he was pleased that the Chief Executive had recognised that the issues needing to go to Panel for discussion will need recommendations quickly. He did not expect the Authority to wait 6-12 months for recommendations from the Panel because the Recovery begins now, if not already. Some of the recommendations will come from conversations that Panel Members will have had in their work, e.g. industry, where best practice is shared. This will be useful to the Authority going forward. How

can the Panel feed into the timeframes that work around decision-making processes and around Cabinet so that timely recommendations can be put forward. In response, the Chief Executive thought some of the Panel's initial recommendations would need to come forward ideally at the next Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for September to inform Cabinet and Council reports towards the end of September, when it is envisaged that the reset of the budget and Corporate Plan would be considered. The Chief Executive had asked each service area to review what worked well and less well during lockdown, where money was spent and saved, what investments were now required and what operating model would they look to utilise going forward. This, together with anything the Panel produces, would be helpful within the initial timeframe to inform key documents and where the Authority spends/invests its money going forward. The Chief Executive wished to make it clear that he did not expect the Panel to consider every item within this timeframe. He recognised that some items need to come forward quickly while others will inevitably take longer, perhaps even feeding into the following year's MTFS or Corporate Plan.

A Member asked if the Panel would be able to see the feedback that the Chief Executive referred to. The Chief Executive agreed that it would be helpful to the Panel to see the results and that they would be shared with the Panel. It would take some time to collate the feedback to make it into something readable and meaningful but would serve to shape and inform the Panel's thinking. The Chief Executive envisaged that there will be a range of recommendations from services whilst acknowledging that some of which the Local Authority will not be able to do.

Members considered it prudent to increase the size of the committee from 12 to 16, or not necessarily mirror the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A Member also asked if the frequency of meetings could be flexible.

In response, the Chief Executive felt it was a matter for the Panel to decide on the flexibility of when it meets but encouraged Members to be proactive and to meet regularly. As set out by the Terms of Reference, Members may want to call monthly meetings of all Members if subgroup meetings do not include all Members, but the Chief Executive stressed that he would not dictate the frequency of the meetings. His only concern with regard to increasing the size of the Panel in assembling all 16 Members for frequent meetings. The Chief Executive then read out the legal advice he had received from the Group Manager – Legal and Democratic Services regarding increasing the size of the Panel: 'The Panel can comprise further Members, with additional Members being nominated by the Group Leaders and it should be politically balanced. The terms of reference would require amendment to widen the remit of the membership from that of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chief Executive also informed the Committee and to increase the membership from 12 to 16 and to formally change the Terms of Reference at this meeting to provide that flexibility. This gave the Panel the option of increasing to 16 Members, notwithstanding the complications already discussed that include achieving a political balance.

The Chairperson confirmed that it was an agreement in principle that the Panel was seeking as to how they would go about increasing the membership, and that increasing the membership would be one of the conclusions of the meeting. The process that is to be used can be confirmed at a later date. The Chairperson pointed out that the Terms of Reference will need to be amended to reflect an increase in membership to 16.

A Member asked that if the Panel were to increase the membership, can dates and times of meetings be arranged well in advance to ensure availability. Consistency of Members in order to deal with the issues was also considered very important. Further, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor could be invited given that they have spent a year getting

to know the county and the stakeholders and their perspectives would be useful going forward.

In response, the Chief Executive stated that based upon the legal advice, membership of the Panel can be increased from 12 to 16. If the Mayor, for example, were to be invited as an additional Member of the Panel, this would be down to the relevant Group Leaders to make the nominations, and political balance must be exercised.

Further to the point above, a Member commented that the Mayor's position will change midway through the process, and it was therefore the position and not the person that would need consideration. The Member continued with the question of whether expert witnesses would be invited for their views given that there are specific sectors and industries that will need the Authority's support in the aftermath of Covid-19. He also asked about the transparency and/or confidentiality of the Panel. He further pointed out the importance of ensuring that the views and opinions of the community are included in the recovery plan e.g. processes and activities, and asked how these opinions would be sought.

In response, the Chief Executive agreed that the Panel may want to invite expert witnesses but to be mindful that these witnesses may not be available within the quick, agile and responsive timeframes required by the Panel. With regard to increasing the number of meetings, the Panel must ensure that Members and relevant Cabinet Members, officers and stakeholders are available, which could prove challenging. He further pointed out that the Terms of Reference allow for Scrutiny Officers to service the Panel meetings on a monthly basis, and additional meetings for information gathering may not be able to be serviced in the same way. It may be that the Panel Members attending the additional meetings bring the information back to the monthly meeting. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Panel is confidential as this is the basis upon which it has been established and is intended to remain so until such time that the Cabinet agrees with what has been put before them. The confidentiality of the Panel does not exclude the attendance of expert witnesses to provide their views.

A Member continued the question of flexibility. It was his understanding that the committee will advise the Cabinet. However, there may be instances where the Panel will wish to bypass Cabinet, or the Panel will require the Cabinet to work very quickly. It may even be more desirable to advise Welsh Government or UK Government in some instances. The Member was concerned that if there is a scenario where there are local lockdowns, does the Authority have the resources to deal with this, e.g. local furloughing schemes.

In response, the Chief Executive advised that the Member may wish to call in the Leader or any other Cabinet Member to ask questions on particular topics. With regards to local furloughing, it is likely this would be funded by the Government. The Chief Executive could see there was clearly excitement and ambition within the Panel but advised a cautious approach in making the remit so big that the Panel would be unable to deal with its scope. The Panel must remain focused, prioritised and aware of the timelines.

The Leader reminded colleagues that the Economic Task Force will be set up with the primary role of engaging and working with businesses to plan the economic recovery of the borough. This will give the opportunity for the business sector in particular to engage with the Authority. There may also be different expert witnesses that the Panel may wish to invite. Engaging with the public is an interesting point, the only difficulty would be to ensure it was representative. The Leader stated that the Members are representative of the public and Members may also wish to consider how they use the Citizens' Panel given that it is a mechanism that is tried and tested as a representative voice of the diversity of the borough in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and geographical distribution.

The Citizens' Panel could be used as a potential mechanism to gauge the views of the public beyond the role of elected representatives.

A Member brought up the value of green spaces, which was recognised nationally as essential. He referred to the Cabinet report and today's report that include vital issues that must be dealt with but very little mention of how green spaces are to be protected or enhanced in the long term. The Member accepted there are asset transfers taking place but believed that the Authority has a role in securing and protecting its green spaces in the future. The PSB had conducted a survey on the use of green spaces during Covid-19, which would be fed back in due course. In addition, the emerging LDP had a good understanding of the value of green spaces and had done some good work, and there are some Town and Community Councils that are interested in doing some work around this topic. However, this remains a non-statutory service and the Member was somewhat disappointed in the lack of recognition to it in the long term in any report.

In response, the Leader agreed that green spaces is a long-term goal but the report in this meeting is focused on the immediate short-term recovery. In terms of the medium to long term, Welsh Government has identified the need for a green recovery and the Authority shares this aspiration. This involves a range of ways to ensure the recovery is sustainable, which includes green spaces in its wider sense. This includes tree planting that can help with jobs in the short term, flood management and providing green lungs. Thus while the report is not comprehensive or long term, green spaces is an area that the Authority will be looking at with the expertise of Members. Welsh Government is looking at a number of themed areas and the Authority can ensure that the report, which the Leader believes is public, is shared with Members as a crucial partner.

The Member thanked the Leader for his response. He further asked about the resource issue within the Authority in order for work such as tree planting to be realised, which will need officers to implement at a time of austerity and financial cutbacks. He gave the example of planning applications for large developments where there are rarely comments from the Parks section about open spaces due to the lack of officer capacity. There is therefore a capacity issue within the Authority in the long term to help, advise and organise work for future green spaces, and this will need to be built into future financial plans.

The Chief Executive commented that Green Spaces and the ability to go for a walk is important to people's wellbeing, which has been shown particularly over the last four months. The challenge will be prioritising within a finite budget and uncertainty around how much of the Authority's Covid-19 expenditure will be covered by the Government. We also have increased costs and a significant loss of income e.g. increased council tax reduction scheme and a loss of income in car parks, sports fields and rents. Thus while green spaces are valid, at some point what is put before Cabinet must be prioritised, and when resetting the MTFS or looking at the Corporate Plan we must still determine which of the many things we would like to spend money on are the most important. For example, there was likely to be a significant increase cost on homelessness. While not comparing homelessness with green spaces, the Authority will not be able to do everything and would have to prioritise and determine the best way in which it could achieve some of what it can from within finite resources. The Chief Executive felt the need to bring this back to basics because, despite Covid-19, the forecast MTFS still requires the Authority to make significant savings over the next 2-3 years.

The Leader stated that in terms of making a difference and what the Council does in its day-to-day operations, he felt that the Authority's swift response to Welsh Government's request for temporary active travel measures is one of the best examples of what we do as an organisation. Some local authorities did not apply while others were unsuccessful, but we were successful in creating temporary active travel routes. He stated that this is

an example of creating a more sustainable future and we actioned it in a very short time. It is also an example of where the Authority is driven by Welsh Government, who control the bigger purse. This has also shown their commitment through funding different ways of working. The Leader pointed to the success of the Valleys Regional Parks and expressed his delight at the improvements underway at parks at Parc Slip Nature Reserve and at Bryngarw Park. Welsh Government will want to invest further in those types of green infrastructure and the Authority needs to be ready to take full advantage of further future funding so that Bridgend does not miss out.

The Chairperson agreed with the Leader that we will have to think differently and there may be a need for 'blended working'.

A Member commented that while references had been made to the short, medium and long term, they sought clarity on those timeframes and what would be discussed for each. It had been suggested that Members make speedy decisions on a weekly basis while conceding that the Panel would come to their own decisions. While the debate had been around the constituents, the Member felt that the debate should be centred on what the content of meetings would be.

In response, the Chief Executive stated that what had become apparent during the meeting was the different perceptions of short, medium and long term and it would be difficult for him to define in a way that everyone would agree on. He reiterated that he was asking the Panel to shape and inform Cabinet's decisions. He advised the Panel to prioritise initial recommendations as to what they agree will make a difference in the earlier stages, and then decide the longer-term issues moving forward. The Panel should therefore take some time going through the issues while bearing in mind the key corporate documents the Chief Executive referred to, and determine which issues they can potentially add more value to for a report to Cabinet in September. It was worth stressing that if the Cabinet was to revisit the MTFS and Corporate Plan at the end of September, this would mean that any other recommendation would only be applicable at the next MTFS from 1 April 2021.

Part of the problem was that people were talking in terms of short and medium term but this meant something different to each Member. The Member referred to how services had been delivered differently e.g. green spaces and the volunteering sector, and if the Authority does not support this going forward, another Covid-19 outbreak and resulting lockdown will result in significant difficulties because some of those volunteers will not be available.

In response, the Chief Executive stated that if a second peak of the pandemic was to occur in late autumn, this would fall into one of the initial recommendations that the Panel would need to make to Cabinet if it was felt additional financial/any other support was needed to go to, e.g., BAVO and other voluntary groups throughout the borough to ensure it can continue delivering some of the services that worked well during lockdown and are not sustainable without that support. One of the expert witnesses the Panel may wish to invite is the Chief Executive of BAVO regarding what she thought would be most helpful in terms of support moving forward. The Chief Executive stated that all have a responsibility to place this in the context of the Authority's overall budget. Some of these things may be relatively inexpensive and will be more about a change in how we do things and a different way of thinking. The Chief Executive suggest that it needed to embrace the way that relationship had built in the last four months and there are certain things it would wish to endure. He further advised that the Council need to be careful it does not revert to whatever the 'normal' was in February/March 2020. Unless it invested some time and effort in ensuring that relationship is put on a firmer footing, it will revert to the default setting prior to lockdown, which was a much more fragile relationship and a much less able and resilient third sector to be able to support the Council.

The Leader agreed with the Member that short, medium and long term meant something different to different people. The Leader welcomed the views of the Panel on all the actions it would take, whatever the timescale, and that one of the big advantages of the Panel and not a full committee meeting is that they can hopefully meet at very short notice. One of the lessons of the pandemic is that no one quite knew what decisions need to be made and decisions need to be taken very quickly. Decisions are therefore still being made on a weekly, if not daily, basis and we have very little time to make those decisions. Thus what had been found to be very helpful as the decision makers is that it can ask the Panel to meet with perhaps just a few days' notice to test a decision that has to be made. Decisions will still be made in a very short time as to how we respond to the pandemic, particularly if there is a second/third wave. Even if there is not a second/third wave, society is changing at a rapid rate with, for example, job losses and Welsh Government and the UK Government responding rapidly to this. The Authority also needs to respond rapidly, even if it is just on how we administer different initiatives and whether we take part in certain projects and funds. Thus even if the pandemic becomes more stable to manage, its impact will be felt for a long time and there will be a tidal effect of those impacts. Having the Panel to meet at short notice, if they can, will be very helpful to the Authority's decision making process.

The Chairperson reiterated that flexibility of the Panel is key, that legal advice has been received on additional membership, and it is the Panel's responsibility to set timetables. The Chairperson then asked if there were any further questions from the Members.

A Member asked if some of the Panel meetings could be held in the evening to fit around work commitments and to provide flexibility. This was in light of the Civic building being closed and no requirement to vacate the building at 6.30pm.

The Chairperson agreed that flexibility was key and that it could be flexible around the timing of meetings in order for the Panel to be as effective as possible. She pointed out that it did not wish to disenfranchise anyone and the frequency of the meetings is for the Panel to decide, notwithstanding that things can change and the necessity to react quickly.

The Leader advised that consideration would need to be given to its partners as to how it would ensure that the work of the Panel is aligned with the work of the PSB and to take advantage of the expertise that sits on that Board. Many of the most expert witnesses will be on that Board e.g. the Police, the Fire Service, the Health Service, the third sector, Natural Resources Wales, and the College. Consideration would need to be given how to make those partners available to the Panel but avoid duplication and benefit from that expertise.

The Chief Executive stated that the PSB Team are keen to work with the Panel and share their work on the Community Impact Assessment so that the work is integrated and aligned to avoid duplication. Thus one of the first actions the Panel may wish to do is meet with the PSB Team to talk about the work that the PSB is doing to help shape some of the direction in which the Panel may go. The Chief Executive felt there was a resource there that will help the Panel. In addition, there may be some scope for the Panel to influence to some extent the Community Impact Assessment being carried out.

The Chairperson thanked the Leader and the Chief Executive for their attendance before they left the meeting.

The Chairperson then asked the Scrutiny Officer to provide the salient points of the meeting. The Democratic Services Manager provided the following:

1. The Panel is able to increase its membership from 12 to 16, as confirmed by the legal representative via email. The membership needs to be politically balanced to comprise two additional Labour Group Members and one Member each from the Independent Alliance Group and Conservative Group as co-optees to the Panel. The Group Leaders nominate their additional representatives to be Members of the Panel in addition to the existing Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. In relation to the PSB's Community Impact Assessment due for completion by the end of September, it would be advisable to invite PSB Team Officers to one of the first meetings of the Panel.

3. While the Panel can be flexible and meet more frequently than monthly, the Democratic Services Manager raised concern about the impact of meetings held later in the day, especially in the evening, on the Scrutiny Team and whether Scrutiny Officers would be available to service those meetings.

A Member stated that while Terms and Conditions of staff and Employment Rights needed to be considered, the Panel needs to be flexible.

A Member commented that while green spaces are more a medium- to long-term goal and dependent on priorities and financial commitments, the report nevertheless references culture, leisure and libraries. The same priority should be accorded to green spaces and yet the future of green spaces is not mentioned in the report. There needs to be some recognition at this stage that this will be addressed in the future. The Chairperson agreed that the issue needs to be addressed and that the Panel could make recommendations to that effect.

A Member referred to the Chief Executive's suggestion that the Panel splits into working groups to tackle particular areas and asked if Members' preferences could be discussed at this meeting based upon their expertise and interests. These group meetings could be held in the evenings and Members can compile the notes and provide at the full Panel meeting without the need for Democratic Services' staff to service the subgroups. This could prove far more effective than a lengthy meeting attended by large numbers. The Chairperson suggested that Members email the Scrutiny Team with information about their expertise/interests in certain areas of work that can then inform membership of the subgroups under particular headings.

Recommendation

To note the report and approve the establishment of a Cross-Party Recovery Panel, comprising the 12 Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee plus 4 additional Members to be nominated by Group Leaders as follows: 2 Labour; 1 Independent Alliance, and; 1 Conservative, and to amend the membership in the Terms of Reference accordingly.

173. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Democratic Services Manager advised that the purpose of the report, was to provide Members of the Committee with a list of potential Forward Work Programme items for formal prioritisation. He referred to paragraph 4.1, that the Committee has a responsibility for setting and prioritising the overall Forward Work Programme for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees. He outlined the items/topics that had been prioritised and agreed by this Committee, which had been compiled from suggested

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items at previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and included information proposed from Corporate Directors.

The Chairperson asked Members if they wished to add anything to the list of topics.

A Member asked for homelessness to be included given that there had been a role for Scrutiny in the past when looking at, e.g., housing and empty homes. However, he did not wish for Scrutiny to duplicate any other work undertaken on the topic. In response, the Chairperson stated that Welsh Government would be instrumental in how the Authority can address the issue and that it will be dependent upon resources, but agreed that Scrutiny should play a role in homelessness.

A Member felt that putting Homelessness on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme would be duplication as it was something that was already being addressed. The Authority had already looked into claiming some of the £20M provided by Welsh Government for the temporary accommodation provided to the homeless and is awaiting a reply. The Authority must be able to rehouse those people who have been placed into temporary accommodation across the borough to avoid returning to living on the streets. The Chairperson agreed that we need to look at how successful we have been in solving the problem of homelessness in the future.

A Member asked if the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee could look at the PSB in September to coincide with the expected completion of the Community Impact Assessment. This will have a greater bearing on what the Panel wishes to tackle. In response, the Chairperson advised that the Panel would be meeting with the PSB Team shortly. The Member further explained that a Community Impact Assessment will identify what has been done well and the things it needed to do longer term to manage further pandemic spikes. For example, in relation to schools, opening to all pupils on 14 September with a 2-week delay to put all necessary measures into place. Thus by the middle of September there could be problems with schools and there are many other issues that need to be looked at. She argued that homelessness is a long-term issue and Welsh Government should have funded it a long time ago and that Local government needs to be vocal about the lack of funding available and it is something the Panel needs to consider going forward.

A Member asked if Scrutiny could have a part in the role of governors and how governors are appointed, organised and trained. She felt that schools, now more than ever, needed to have their governance as stable and professional as possible and that schools were being let down. She felt that governors were not being recruited properly, the right people were not sitting on governing bodies, and the training from Central South Consortium was not effective or frequent enough. The Member did not feel that all schools had a full complement of effective governors and if they did it would make a huge difference to how we respond to the pandemic crisis.

In response, it was the Chairperson's understanding that the only governors the Authority had any choice over were the LEA representatives. All others are voted for by parents or by the governing body agreeing to appoint a community member. While Scrutiny can advise Cabinet, it was not within its remit to appoint. She felt that on the whole, Cabinet's criteria was good for electing members from the Authority, Town and Community or retired teachers that have the necessary experience to make a contribution.

A Member agreed on the issue of governing bodies. Although she believed the governing bodies had become a lot more effective, she did not feel they were effective enough.

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A Member commented that it was his understanding that only LEA governors are appointed by the Local Authority. All other governor posts are appointed by the school. The Member has, in the past, proposed that more should be centralised to save Head Teachers from becoming experts in absolutely everything as well as the school. But this would mean a change in budgeting arrangements because schools have autonomy on how they spend their money. The Member agreed that not all governors seem to have the right acumen or skills, but in smaller schools the issue is securing governors at all, let alone being able to select from a list. The Member concluded by stating it was a complex area.

The Chairperson then reminded the Committee of the Recommendations at paragraph 9.1 of the FWP. The Recommendations at paragraph 4.2 were agreed and confirmed:

Recommendations

(1) That the items prioritised as outlined in paragraph 4.2 and those items delegated to the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees be confirmed;

(2) That any additional items be identified using the Criteria Form for future consideration on the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.

174. URGENT ITEMS

None.