



## City of Cardiff Council *Improving Scrutiny* Project: Project Brief, January 2015

### Project Purpose

- Cardiff is proud of its scrutiny arrangements and the important part scrutiny plays in Council improvement, and in representing citizens in holding to account the Cabinet for the decisions it makes. However, the Council is going through significant change in many ways, and will look very different in five years' time.
- Effective local governance relies on a cohesive web of accountability, of which internal review is an intrinsic part. The purpose of the Project will be to ensure that scrutiny remains agile and able to play its role as a critical friend, in an environment that will see greater emphasis on partnership, collaboration, commissioning and other alternative models of delivery.

### Project Aim

- To equip Cardiff's Scrutiny function to meet the current needs and anticipated future challenges facing the Council's Executive and non-Executive Members.
- To ensure that the Council's scrutiny structure enables Members to provide robust and effective overview and scrutiny that is relevant to the priorities of the organisation's Corporate Plan and operational challenges.
- To seek evidence to support recommendations for Members to agree any potential changes to current governance arrangements, as part of a wider major transformation of the City of Cardiff Council's services and structures.

### Project Objectives

- To take forward the learning from Cardiff's participation in the 2013 Wales Audit Office *Improving Scrutiny* Study, especially by using the 15 characteristics in the newly developed "Framework for Effective Scrutiny in Wales" as a mechanism for self-evaluation of the quality of scrutiny in Cardiff, and the planning of future Scrutiny Work Programmes.

- To assess and make recommendations on the structures and arrangements that will be most appropriate to manage the scrutiny of the Council's transformation in coming years. To consult upon politically and organisationally, and take proposals forward for inclusion in the Council's 2016/17 Budget proposals.
- To address recommendations in the Local Government Measure (Wales) 2011, and subsequent recommendations in the Williams Review, to consider opportunities for improvement to current collaborative scrutiny arrangements with partners.

## Key Project Themes

- The purpose of Scrutiny as part of a holistic and effective governance framework in Cardiff, and its likely future challenges and priorities. The appropriate balance of priority achieved between holding to account, policy development and review, performance and improvement monitoring, finance and budget scrutiny etc.
- Maximising the impact of Scrutiny in Cardiff, and also to measure that impact so that resources can be most effectively targeted towards areas of highest impact. Setting in place effective and appropriate Scrutiny arrangements to deliver agreed priorities.
- Optimising interfaces between scrutiny and:
  - External regulators, auditors and inspectors to ensure effective Council performance and minimise the burden of external regulation.
  - The local population, so that the public has confidence in local democracy in the city, and sees Scrutiny as an accessible and effective avenue to represent its views and concerns.
  - Cabinet Members, managers and key stakeholders so that everyone is clear about their role in supporting effective governance in Cardiff.
- Optimising arrangements for the scrutiny of partnerships, as public sector collaboration, transformation and commissioning grow ever more complex.
- Appropriate arrangements for maximising Scrutiny Member and officer skills and competency.

## Project Key Stakeholders

- Council Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Members;
- Council Leader and Cabinet; Opposition Party Group Leaders; Council Members;
- Chief Executive and senior management of the Council;
- Cardiff Third Sector Council and community and voluntary organisations regularly connecting with Scrutiny;
- Local strategic partners, key stakeholders and stakeholder organisations;
- Professional partners in the world of regulation, audit and inspection, regional and local government in Wales;
- The Centre for Public Scrutiny, WLGA Scrutiny Chairs Network and National Scrutiny Officers' Network; Regional local government partners.

# Project Methodology

## Desk Research (October 2014 to March 2015)

- Scan the horizon for legislative and policy changes in the wider environment that will influence Scrutiny in Cardiff over the coming 10 years.
- Identify from past reviews and evaluation of scrutiny in Cardiff the key learning points that have been derived, and to test how they can be applied.
- Glean from best practice analysis criteria for measuring the impact of scrutiny.
- Benchmark how effective scrutiny is conducted elsewhere, and how lessons can be applied to Cardiff.

## Face to face interviews (October 2014 to March 2015)

- Identify from key Project stakeholders their view on the key project themes identified above.

## Structured conversations (March and April 2015)

- Arrange events with Members and officers to Scrutiny Chairs to shape evidence from the desk research and interviews into draft key findings.

## Project Report (May 2015)

- Scrutiny Chairs to craft a report with key findings and recommendations for Cabinet to consider, and to enable implementation of agreed future arrangements.

# Project Governance

Recognising the connections this Project makes between the organisational and the political, the Project will have a hybrid governance structure:

- It will operate as a joint scrutiny task and finish inquiry comprising the Council's five scrutiny chairs, and report through the Policy Review and Performance Committee.
- It will serve as a PQA Project within the *Improved Governance* strand of the Council's *Programme of Organisational Change*. Paul Keeping (Operational Manager, Scrutiny Services) will be Project Manager, and Marie Rosenthal (County Clerk and Monitoring Officer) will be Senior Responsible Officer. The Project will apply the Council's 'Service Review' methodology to achieve its aims.

The Project will be undertaken in partnership with the Centre for Public Scrutiny, a charity providing expertise and capacity in non-executive governance, as one of nine major case studies featured in a UK wide analysis of local authority transformation.

## For further details please contact:

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## Improving Scrutiny Project - Project Plan

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Sept 2014	Advisory support from CfPS confirmed	Increase capacity and expertise
Oct 2014	Project scoped and Scrutiny Chairs engaged as Project leads	Provide Project leadership
	Agreement of Project governance arrangement within Org Devt Programme	Provide Project governance
Early Nov 2014	Project Mandate agreed	Provide Project direction
18 Nov 2014	Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum	Develop methodology
	CfPS interviews with: Scrutiny Chairs; Scrutiny officers; Monitoring Officer; Chief Officer, Change and Improvement.	Give initial direction for Project methodology
	Scrutiny chairs discuss Project with Council Leader and Chief Executive	Develop consensus for Project aims
Nov – Dec 2014	Desk Research on Core Cities scrutiny performance monitoring arrangements	Widen evidence base
8 Dec 2014	Project launched at Member Governance Seminar, and Briefed to Council Members and senior managers	Communicate Project aims and Member involvement opportunities
8 Jan 2015	Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum	Develop methodology
26 & 27 Jan 2015	CfPS interviews with key Project stakeholders (including Council Leader, Chief Executive, Cabinet Portfolio Member, Leaders of Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Independent Groups, Scrutiny Councillors who requested interviews, Director of Communities, representatives in WLGA and Welsh Government, Challenge Forum Advisor on Performance Management)	Widen evidence base
Feb 2015	Further interviews with key stakeholders (through the month)	Widen evidence base
	Desk Research into Scrutiny Process and good practice (through the month)	Widen evidence base
	Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum (late Feb)	Develop methodology
March 2015	Scrutiny Committees asked to establish a joint Scrutiny task and finish Inquiry (early March)	Enable Scrutiny Inquiry report to Cabinet
	Project Seminar for Scrutiny Members (early March)	Widen evidence base
	Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum (mid March)	Agree interim findings
	Interim Project findings circulated (mid March)	Prepare for Project Symposium
	Member and Manager Project Symposium (late March)	Seek consensus for key findings
April 2015	Scrutiny Chairs' Liaison Forum (early April)	Agree report, key findings & recommendations
	Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Report circulated (mid April)	Seek final feedback on draft report
May 2015	Final Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Report adopted by Scrutiny Committees and submitted to Cabinet	Formally adopt draft report
Tbc 2015	Cabinet receives and considers Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Report	Make decisions on way forward
Aug 2015	Implementation of agreed recommendations begins	Implement decisions reached by Cabinet

This timescale will enable managers to implement arrangements in time for the start of the 2016/17 financial year.