



**To/
Councillor Mary Jones
Chair of the Scrutiny
Programme Committee**

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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9th July 2018

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Service Improvement and Finance Panel to the Chair of the Scrutiny Programme Committee following the meeting of the Panel on 5th June 2018. It concerns the Terms of Reference of the Service Improvement and Finance Performance Panel and the aims of Scrutiny in general.

Dear Councillor Jones,

I am writing to you with the comments of the members of the Service Improvement and Finance Panel in relation to the role of Scrutiny in policy development and the link with the Policy Development Committees.

The Welsh Government states that *“There is a clear role for an authority’s scrutiny function in its improvement processes: as part of its role in holding local decision makers and policy makers to account, and in its policy development role”*.

From this we understand that Scrutiny Panels investigate not only performance but historic policy, current policy and make recommendations for improvement to policy and service provision. This has long been the role of Scrutiny and there is no indication from Welsh Government that this will change.

We feel that there should be a clear mandate of work for Policy Development Committees, with a clear statement about their role as policy developers. Policies are statements of intent and guide how a system should work. This is what the Policy Development Committees should be involved in.

Scrutiny Panels are there to make suggestions around policy and performance. Policy Development Committees focus on the detail and practicalities of achieving these. These areas are quite different in practice.

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Any form of development will need to be scrutinised and as such we need to understand the work plans of these committees so that the program committee can ask any panel/working group to look at the piece of development.

We are hopeful that by clearly clarifying the role of Scrutiny and Policy Development Committees there will be productive outcomes from both.

This letter does not seek a formal response but we would be grateful to receive any feedback.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Holley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Councillor Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel
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