

| ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL | |
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| REPORT TO : | County Council |
| DATE: | 18 May, 2021 |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 |
| REPORT BY: | Chairs of: 1. Corporate Scrutiny Committee 2. Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee |
| PURPOSE OF REPORT: | Report on the work of the two scrutiny committees during 2020/21 and provide an overview of the 2021/22 scrutiny work programme |
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1. Recommendations

The Council is requested to:

R1 Approve the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2020/21

R2 Note the continued progress made in implementing our local Scrutiny development journey and the impact this is having on practice.

R3 Appoint the chair of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee as the Scrutiny Champion for the period May, 2021 to May, 2022.

2. Background and context

2.1 This Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report encompasses the work undertaken by the two scrutiny committees between May 2020 and May, 2021.

2.2 The chairs of the two scrutiny committees led on developing the forward work programmes during this period. The scrutiny committees' work programmes are submitted to the monthly Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum and for approval at each scrutiny committee meeting

2.3 The Council's scrutiny function has been through an improvement journey, as a result of commissioning the Public Centre for Scrutiny to review our local scrutiny arrangements (December, 2017). The improvement programme put in place as a result of the review has come to an end, and a development programme has replaced it within the context of continuous improvement, driving improvements and developments at an appropriate pace which are outlined within the report.

The impact and added value of scrutiny activity is contributing to the Council's corporate priorities through support and challenge.

3. Role of the Scrutiny Champion

3.1 The Scrutiny Champion has an important role in promoting the overview and scrutiny function both within the Council and also with external partners of the Authority. It is not a mandatory or remunerated position. The role is considered key in demonstrating the Authority's commitment to ensuring that Scrutiny

maximises the contribution of non-Executive Members to the organisation's overall performance and "corporate health".

- 3.2** On 14th May 2015 the Council resolved that the chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee be appointed as Scrutiny Champion for the period May 2015 to May, 2016 and thereafter that the role of the Champion should alternate between the two scrutiny committee chairs. The Chair of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee should therefore be appointed as the designated Scrutiny Champion for the coming year.

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| Appendix: |
| Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 |

Overview and Scrutiny

Annual Report: 2020-21

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1. FOREWORD

Councillor Aled Morris Jones

- **Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee 2020/21**
- **Scrutiny Champion 2019/20→ 2020/21**



It is my pleasure to provide an overview of the work of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee over the last 12 months. The scope of work of the Committee is discussed in this report and it is fair to note that the workload continues to be considerable and varied. A total of 11 meetings were convened during the municipal year, which is greater than last year despite the pandemic.

- **Annual budget setting 2021/22** – one of the main responsibilities of the Committee is to contribute to the process of setting the Council's annual budget as this is a vital process which has a far-reaching impact on every field and service within the Council and on the public. The Committee considered the proposals for the budget for 2021/22. The contribution of the **Finance Scrutiny Panel** has added value to the process, and detailed scrutiny work has been undertaken by the Panel which has assisted the Committee.
- **Quarterly monitoring of performance** – the Committee monitored performance on a quarterly basis during 2020/21, using the corporate scorecard which addresses a number of indicators for all individual services. The scorecard continues to evolve as an effective tool for Elected Member scrutiny of performance and the data of the various services. It must be recognised that the pandemic has naturally impacted on some targets.
- Our work as a committee has also included monitoring and scrutinising a number of **Annual Reports** including the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services and the Annual Performance Report to name a few, which is a core element of the Committee's work.
- **Transformation priorities** – the Corporate Scrutiny Committee contributed towards the schools' modernisation programme in the Llangefni area. The Public Speaking Protocol in Scrutiny Committee was implemented in these meetings in order to ensure the public's input in the Council's strategic decisions and to listen to their voices.
- **Covid 19 Pandemic**- the Committee scrutinised the Council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic including the financial aspects and it was decided to scrutinise two particular aspects in more detail namely the Wellbeing of Council staff and communities and monitoring the effectiveness of the Track and Trace strategy (TTP).

I would like to thank members of both our panels, the **Finance Scrutiny Panel** and the **Social Services Improvement Panel** that have made a considerable contribution to the work of this Committee, and is seen as good practice nationally.

To close, I would like to stress that the Scrutiny function has successfully adapted during the pandemic, and that all meetings are now held virtually. Thank you to all Committee members and Officers who have assisted and for their noticeable contribution during 2020/21.

Councillor Aled Morris Jones

(Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Scrutiny Champion).

Councillor Gwilym O Jones

- **Chair of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 2020/21**



I believe that scrutiny plays a very important role in the Council's governance through holding decision makers to account, challenging in a constructive manner, and ensuring that the voice of the public and communities is heard in the decision making process. The fact that the Public Speaking Protocol is now operational is a substantial step forward, and formalises the process for the public to be able to express their views in Scrutiny Committees.

Firstly, I would like to thank Members of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee for their contributions and commitment to the work of the Committee which makes an important contribution to delivering the Council Plan, and sustaining the standards of our public services. The Committee has made fair and robust recommendations to the Executive on a number of subjects and key areas over this period, and also the Authority's partnership work:

- **Anglesey and Gwynedd Public Services Board (PSB)** – the Committee has led on scrutinising the work of the Board which is a partnership between Gwynedd and Môn. This includes the work on delivering the Anglesey and Gwynedd Wellbeing Plan, and the governance arrangements. We have seen some good examples of scrutiny work with Members enquiring about the risks faced by the Board, how the Board has amended its work programme as a result of the pandemic, and how this will impact the Board during the Recovery phase.
- **North Wales Economic Ambition Board** – the Committee scrutinised the new Governance Agreement 2 Contract, and key questions were raised such as how the possible risks of over expenditure within projects are to be managed, and how the Board has adjusted to the Covid 19 pandemic, and will continue to do so during the recovery phase and Brexit. This is the designated Committee that will scrutinise the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, which will be essential in order to ensure the maximum economic benefit for North Wales and Anglesey in particular.
- **Schools' performance** – The Committee scrutinised the statutory partnership which exists between the Council and GwE. The contribution of the Schools' Progress Review Panel continues to be key in this field, but the work of visiting schools and monitoring individual school performance has currently been set aside due to the pandemic. However, the Panel intends to restart these visits when conditions permit.
- **Other partnerships** – the Committee has scrutinised a number of reports in order to hold partners to account as well as ensuring the best possible outcomes for the public. These reports have included the North Wales Partnership Board Annual Report, the Community Safety Partnership Annual Report, and the Equality Annual Report. However, some partners that were scheduled have been postponed as a result of the pandemic, in particular the emergency

services, as they have been responding on the front line to the pandemic. Arrangements will be made to invite these partners when circumstances allow.

I would like to thank all members of the Partnership and Regeneration Committee, and the Schools' Progress Review Panel for the effective team work over the past year. All members have succeeded to adjust and ensure that the scrutiny function continues virtually throughout the pandemic, and I feel that a number of these good practices will continue to the future, and means that the Council can undertake scrutiny in an innovative way, making the best use of officers' and Elected Members' time.

Councillor Gwilym O Jones

(Chair of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee)

Covid-19 Pandemic Unique Context

1.1 It is true to say that the pandemic has had and continues to have a far reaching impact on people's lives, our communities and the manner in which the Council provides its services. This period (**managing the emergency response to the Pandemic, the Recovery Period and the new Normal**) is an extremely challenging time for the Council and all other public sector organisations across Wales as we continue to face the challenges of the Covid-19 emergency. This has meant that the Council has had to change its way of working as a result of the global health emergency.

1.2 In line with The Coronavirus Act 2020 and the subsequent Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 we hold virtual meetings following the Strategy for Committee Meeting put in place in May¹. As a result of the pandemic, the requirement to scrutinise some annual reports was put aside, or the schedule was extended in order to undertake the work to introduce an element of flexibility to the forward work programme on a local level.

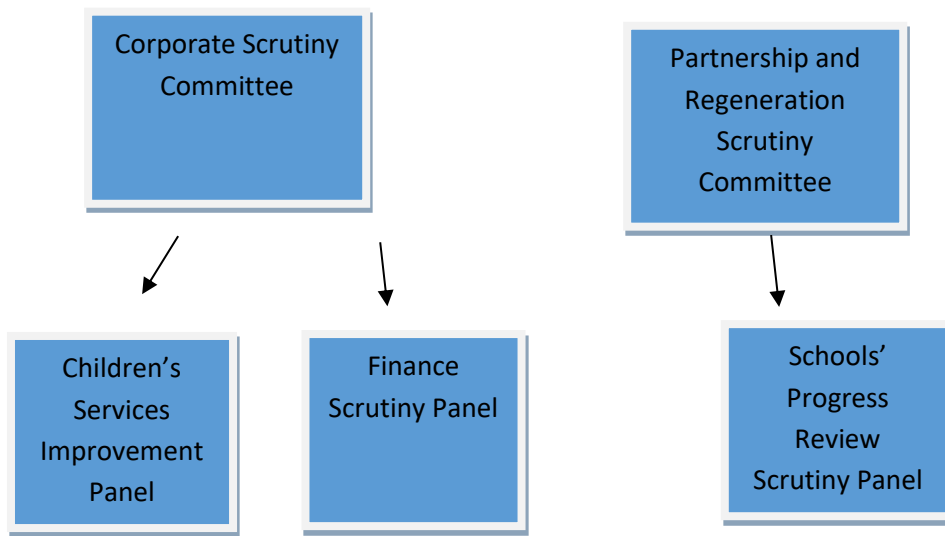
1.3 Both Scrutiny Committees resumed their work programmes from September, 2020. Both Committees have met regularly and resumed the priority scrutiny work. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has successfully scrutinised, ensuring that the Council achieves its corporate objectives and also objectives for its services. The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised partnerships and has complied fully with all statutory requirements. However, some partners that were scheduled have been postponed as a result of the pandemic, and the Committee's work programme has been prioritised to complement local requirements and also pressure facing our partners.

2.0 OUR LOCAL STRUCTURE

Scrutiny committees form part of the way in which local government in Wales operates. Their prime role is to hold the decision-makers to account, drive improvement, act as the voice of the community and play a role in policy development and review. A summary of the national policy context is outlined in **APPENDIX 1**.

¹ Committee Meeting Strategy until April, 2021 (IOACC, May, 2020).

2.1 Our local structure comprises of 2 scrutiny committees and three panels:



The remit and membership of our scrutiny committees are summarised in **APPENDIX 2**.

3.0 LOCAL SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

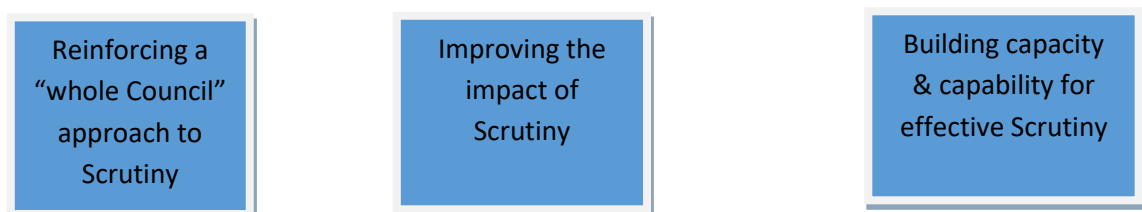
3.1 The Council's scrutiny function has been through an improvement journey, as a result of commissioning the Public Centre for Scrutiny to review our local scrutiny arrangements (December, 2017). The improvement programme put in place as a result of the review has come to an end, and a development programme has replaced it within the context of continuous improvement. The review provided a strong foundation to develop scrutiny role within the Council, and supports a robust and effective method of making decisions, and continues to evolve in a positive manner. These strong foundations are now the basis for the development programme which drives improvements and developments at an appropriate pace.

3.2 Key Improvement Themes

Within Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, our improvement programme has prioritised key themes (which are summarised below), in order to provide a robust framework to:

- Clarify the role and contribution of Scrutiny in the governance arrangements of the Council
- Identify the actions required in the short and medium term in order to further improve Scrutiny within the context of the pandemic and beyond.

SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY: KEY THEMES



3 ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SCRUTINY

4.1 A number of significant **outputs** were achieved by Scrutiny during the last municipal year which go some way in assisting us to assess the impact that the function has had locally:

- **Committee meetings** – a total of 16 scrutiny committee meetings were convened during 2020/21 from September, 2020 onwards as a result of the pandemic.

| Committee | Number of Committees convened |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Corporate Scrutiny Committee | 10 |
| Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee | 6 |

There are also robust arrangements in place to ensure feedback at meetings of the Executive by scrutiny committee chairs on matters that have been considered by both committees.

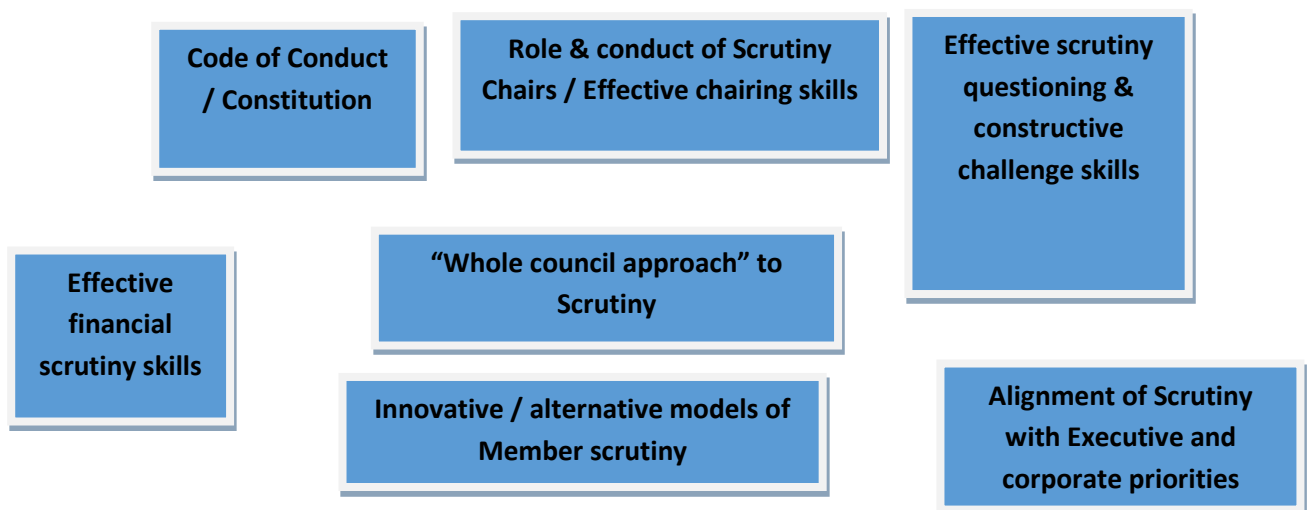
- **Scrutiny Panel meetings** – there have been regular meetings of all 3 scrutiny panels during 2020/21 from September, 2020 onwards as a result of the pandemic.

| Panel | Number of meetings convened |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Social Services Improvement Panel | 7 |
| Finance Scrutiny Panel | 4 |
| Schools Progress Review Panel | 7 |

These panels have been embedded into practice by:

- ✚ Putting in place robust governance arrangements to support each panel.
- ✚ Ensuring a clear focus / remit and work programme for each panel.
- ✚ Putting in place a reporting / escalation process ensuring that the work of scrutiny panels is reported quarterly to the two Parent Committees, with Chairs of the Panel offering recommendations on plans or proposed decisions.
- ✚ Ensure appropriate pace for the work of the panels, which is in line with corporate priorities, and detailed scrutiny on Council's all important subjects.
- **Forward work programmes** – there is a well-established practice of forward work programming in place to underpin the work of both scrutiny committees. These programmes are an important tool in assisting scrutiny committee members to prioritise their work and have been discussed with the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Service. Both committees review the content of their forward work programmes on a regular basis in order to ensure that they remain relevant and keep abreast with local priorities. Our local forward planning arrangements now ensure greater focus on:

- i. Strategic aspects
 - ii. Citizen / other stakeholder engagement and outcomes
 - iii. Priorities of the 2017/2022 Council Plan and corporate transformation programmes
 - iv. Risks
 - v. Work of audit, inspection and regulation
 - vi. Matters on the forward work programme of the Executive.
- **Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum** – is well established and continues to meet on a monthly basis. The Forum is considered an important vehicle to oversee the scrutiny committee work programmes and jointly negotiate priorities with the Scrutiny Committees' Chairs and Vice-chairs. It also takes lead responsibility for developing and continuously improving the overview and scrutiny function in the Council. The role of the Forum has also evolved to include monthly conversations between the Executive (Leader), Chairs/Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny and the Senior Leadership Team (Chief Executive) to ensure better alignment between work programmes.
- **Development, training and support for Members** – by:
 - ✚ Ensuring momentum to some key element of governance / scrutiny despite the impact of Covid-19:



- ✚ A large part of the corporate Members training and development programme has currently been put on hold as a result of the pandemic, and training has focused on upskilling members in terms of technology, and ensuring that everyone is able to participate effectively in virtual meetings (alternative/innovative models of Member scrutiny).
- ✚ Convening monthly briefing sessions to share information / raise Scrutiny Members' awareness of key issues (e.g. Corporate Joint Committees and Holyhead Port). Also, as a forum for Member self-evaluation / reflection on the performance of scrutiny.

- **Scrutiny across a broader base** – a broader approach to Member scrutiny has been further developed during the year by:
 - i. Effective forward planning to ensure alignment between topics discussed at Member briefing sessions, scrutiny panels and full scrutiny committee meetings.
 - ii. Ensuring clarity of role for Members on corporate programme boards and ensuring robust, timely high level reporting to scrutiny committees, escalating slippage as required.
 - iii. Developing the breadth of topics discussed at Member briefing sessions, in support of Scrutiny and ensuring information available to Members on strategic and transformation topics.
- **“Closing the Scrutiny loop”** – by having in place robust arrangements to:
 - i. Report on progress or escalate issues from:
 - ✚ Scrutiny panels to parent committees
 - ✚ Scrutiny committees to the Executive
 - ✚ Corporate programme boards to scrutiny committees.
 - ii. Enable and encourage self-analysis and reflection by Scrutiny Members in order to identify strengths and areas for further development / focus.
- **Scrutiny & Wellbeing of Future Generations** – developing the role of Scrutiny by:
 - ✚ Ensuring Members focus on the 5 ways of working to frame questions
 - ✚ Developing a revised scrutiny report template, placing wellbeing of future generations at its core
 - ✚ Raising awareness and providing information in Member briefing and development sessions
 - ✚ Reviewing progress made in developing the role of scrutiny against best practice
 - ✚ Putting in place a framework to scrutinise the Public Services Board and key partnerships.
- 1. **Citizen engagement in Scrutiny** – developing a policy statement as the foundation to further develop our engagement with citizens through Member scrutiny and putting steps in place to ensure that the voice of citizens is heard in the local decision making. The Public Speaking Protocol in Scrutiny Committees has been operational since October, following adoption by Full Council in September, 2020. There is a specific section on the Council’s website promoting the Protocol, and a press released drafted to raise awareness of its existence and to promote its use by the public.

Measuring outcomes:

- 4.2 Capturing and assessing the impact of Scrutiny is a challenge to achieve as the **outcomes** of overview and scrutiny activities are not always tangible and often do not easily lend themselves to being measured in a systematic way. Furthermore, it is not easy to measure the effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny function’s ability to influence decision makers through discussion and debate. There are however some

examples where the input of scrutiny has added value and / or influenced the way in which proposals have been implemented by the Council.

General Scrutiny Outcomes

- **Forward work programmes** – scrutiny work programmes are now a rolling programme focusing on the quality of scrutiny with fewer items in order to add value. Our arrangements also ensure alignment of Scrutiny Committees' work programmes with the Executive and Senior Leadership Team work programmes.
Outcome: rolling work programme for scrutiny committees, aligned to corporate priorities.
- **Development, training and support for Members** – ensuring that Elected Members involved in Scrutiny have the right skills and competencies to undertake the work is a key element of the Councils scrutiny arrangements. A Member Development and Training Plan is in place, which includes elements such as chairing meetings, deciding for the benefit of future generations (Future Generations Act 2015), with an 'Introduction to Scrutiny' e-module available for all elected members. However, as previously mentioned parts of the programme have been put on hold for the time being as a result of the pandemic, and this year's training has focused on developing Members' IT skills in order for them to participate virtually in Council meetings. The monthly members briefing sessions are informal development sessions, and a means of receiving information which also assists Member scrutiny work
Outcome: Members involved in the Scrutiny process have the right skills and competencies and have access to the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively (**better decisions**).
- **Citizen engagement and participation** – scrutiny input to the **schools' modernisation programme** (Llangefni Area) also included direct engagement with the public at the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, which added value to the decision making process.
Outcome: this involvement by local people and other stakeholders in Member scrutiny has further developed our capability to ensure that the voices of local people are heard as part of the decision making process (**better public engagement**). Also, a strong foundation upon which to improve outcomes for citizens.
- **Self evaluation; Measuring the impact of scrutiny-** evaluating the impact of the improvement journey and the key themes outlined as part of this journey namely; Reinforcing a whole Council approach to Scrutiny; Wellbeing of Future Generations and Scrutiny; improving the impact of scrutiny; Increasing scrutiny's capacity and abilities; Improving engagement with the public in our scrutiny work. As part of the assessment the recent scrutiny successes were highlighted, and the areas for further improvement to drive scrutiny work. It was noted that the Members' level of understanding of the complexities of various Council services had increased significantly over the year.

Financial Scrutiny

- **2021/22 budget setting process** – a more strategic and outcome based approach to budget setting based on best practice is embedded into local practice. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has considered and scrutinised the final budget proposals and have submitted recommendations to the Executive in terms of budget setting for 2021/22. The Finance Scrutiny Panel has played an important role in this process too through scrutinising the final proposals for the revenue and capital budgets. The Scrutiny comments and recommendations influenced the Council's final decision.

Also, the Finance Scrutiny Panel undertook detailed scrutiny work on setting the council tax in a way that protects the Council's services and ensures provision for risks that are difficult to measure, and which is affordable for the public. In summary, The Panel and the Committee added value to the decision making process.

- **Service Reviews-** The Chair of the Finance Scrutiny Panel attended all of the recent service reviews as part of the budget setting process, and reported back to the Finance Scrutiny Panel. It was noted that the majority of possible proposed cuts will have a significant impact on the Council's ability to provide services, and that implementing the proposed cuts is a significant risk to the Council.

Outcome: a more systematic approach to financial scrutiny, as an essential building block of sound financial management and governance.

- **Monitoring Capital and Revenue Budgets-** The Panel scrutinise and monitor the council's capital and revenue budgets quarterly, focusing on overspend and addressing any financial pressures.
- **Covid-19 impact on the Council's financial position-** The Scrutiny Panel received a presentation by the Director of Function (Resources)/ 151 Officer summarising the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's financial position. The additional costs and loss of income as a result of the pandemic were outlined. The Panel heard how the regular RSG advance payments by Welsh Government have had a positive impact on the Council's financial situation.

Outcomes:

- A more strategic approach to financial scrutiny making a robust and important contribution towards financial management and governance arrangements.
- Implementation of some positive mitigation measures in response to significant budget pressures with specific services or within the Council in general.

Scrutinising Social Services

- **Social Services Improvement Scrutiny Panel** –The Panel has been scrutinising the progress of the Adults improvement plan, and the children's services development plan. This work has also seen Members receiving training and awareness raising sessions in order to enrich their knowledge regarding the field and the challenges to assist them to scrutinise this vital field, and as a result further developing their Scrutiny skills in the social services area. As a result of the pandemic, Laming visits were put on hold with visits being convened virtually since March, 2021. A work programme is in place for the remainder of the calendar year in order to scrutinise specific aspects of the service. Scrutinising the performance of Social Services is also a substantial part of the Panel's work programme.
- **Social Services Reponse to Covid-19-** a presentation on the Social Services reponse during the pandemic was given, and the manner in which the service adapted to the circumstances was scrutinised. An overview and a specific session was provided on how Care Homes have adapted during the pandemic, outlining the challenges and lessons learned.
- **Draft Internal Audit Report and Corporate Parenting Panel Action Plan** - an internal audit was carried out of the effectiveness of the Corporate Parenting Panel at the request of the Chief Executive, the Leader and the Interim Director of Social Services, specifically looking at governance arrangements (membership, terms of reference, reporting process, record keeping). The audit concluded that there are similarities between both Panels, and that there is an opportunity to align the work of the panels

more closely. Work is therefore now underway to ensure that the same arrangements are operational for the Corporate Parenting Panel, and to reduce the number of Social Services Improvement Panel meetings from 12 to 8, and to hold a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel quarterly. This change will mean greater alignment between both Panels as well as extending knowledge of scrutiny members in the subject area.

- This work stream has led to the below positive outcomes:

Outcomes:

- ✚ A team of Members who have developed a high level of knowledge about the complexities and the challenges the social services face, and a level of expertise in the service area.
- ✚ Creating conditions that are conducive to effective Scrutiny e.g. there has been a tangible improvement in the level and depth of questioning by the Panel that are challenging and promote continuous improvement.
- ✚ Scrutiny activity that is well planned, efficient and objective and based on evidence from a range of sources including undertaking Site Visits and speaking to service users which provides a clear insights to the standard of the provision in order to scrutinise the field.
- ✚ Better understanding by Elected Members of the complexities and risks in Social Services in order to be able to effectively scrutinise, hold to account and identify priorities in moving forward as a result of the range of sources that are available to them.
- ✚ A broad overview of the performance of Social Services- financial performance and performance against the Improvement Plan.

(better decisions, better outcomes)

Scrutinising the Education field

- **Monitoring School Performance** – Scrutiny is playing an active part in monitoring and encouraging improvement by both schools and the Council's Learning Service. Despite this, the work stream has been partially put on hold for the time being as a result of the pandemic, and the Panel intends to resume these visits when conditions allow. As a result, the Panel will need to adapt the manner in which it operates and scrutinises individual schools' performance, and there is scope for the Panel to undertake this work virtually on Teams in the near future.
- As a result of the pandemic, the Panel did not meet between May - August 2020, recommencing the work from September onwards. Since September, 2020, Members of the Schools' Progress Review Scrutiny Panel have:
- Met with Head Teachers of one primary school and two secondary schools. As part of the Panel's scrutiny work, two (separate) secondary schools were invited to discuss two specific journeys namely a school journey during the pandemic, and an improvement journey together with other relevant developments and challenges. Detailed and effective presentations were received from the schools with an opportunity for panel members to question and challenge as relevant. The intention going forward is to invite the other three secondary schools under the same procedure.

- Scrutinised GwE's Progress Report 2020/21: Supporting schools during the pandemic.
- Scrutinised the Learning Service and Anglesey Schools' Response to Covid 19. Specific presentations were provided on Care Centres and Remote Learning, Blended Learning, and support for vulnerable children and Holyhead project.
- Scrutinised an Update on the Developments of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Partnership.
- Undertook a self-evaluation exercise
- Submit timely progress reports to the parent committee.

Outcomes:

- ✚ The responsibility for school performance ultimately lies with the Head teacher and School Governing Body. However, constructive scrutiny by the Panel and the Committee during this period has contributed to improvement of education on the Island.
- ✚ Panel Members have sound knowledge of schools' complexities and risks which is of great assistance to them when effectively scrutinising individual schools' performance, holding them to account as they have comprehensive information about individual school standards and the wider context the schools operate within.

Scrutiny of Partnerships

- **Working in collaboration with key partners**

Scrutinising the Council's work of working in partnership with other public sector organisations is vital and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) 2015 Act reinforces the need to further strengthen scrutiny of partnerships. Both Scrutiny Committees met for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic during September, 2020, and since then, the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee has met regularly and has resumed scrutiny work on key partnerships and have complied with statutory requirements. However, some scheduled partners have naturally been postponed as a result of the pandemic, and the Committee's work programme has had to be prioritised to complement local needs and consider requirements and pressure faced by our partners.

The Committee scrutinised a number of our partners' annual reports including Community Safety Partnership Annual Report (2019/20), Regional Partnership Board Annual Report (Part 9: Health and Social Services) 2019/20, and GwE Progress Report 2019/20, to name a few. This scrutiny work is a key aspect of the Committee's work in order to ensure that the Council's partners and partnerships deliver for the benefit of Anglesey's residents.

North Wales Economic Ambition Board- The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is the designated Committee to scrutinise the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board which will be essential in order to ensure the greatest economic benefit for North Wales and Anglesey in particular. The Committee scrutinised the Board's new Governance Agreement 2, and key questions were raised such as how possible risks of overexpenditure within projects will be managed, and how the Board has adapted to the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to adapt during the recovery period and Brexit.

In moving forward, statutory items need to be addressed, and also attention needs to be given to items where there has been slippage as a result of the pandemic in 2020 (Betsi

Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, Police Commissioner and North Wales Police, Medrwn Môn and North Wales Emergency Planning Service). The intention is to invite the partnerships where there has been slippage in the work programme as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic to discuss their partnership work to coincide with the Recovery period.

Outcomes:

- ✚ Ensured that partners are working together to meet statutory obligations in terms of working together. The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee assured that partners are working effectively on the Island, and that the services offered are of high standard and meet the needs of the local population.
- ✚ During this period Members of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee have enhanced their knowledge, and will be in a stronger position to provide effective scrutiny by way of regular monitoring in moving forward.
- ✚ The Committee's forward programme has matured, and the Members have a developed thorough knowledge about the Council's partnership work. Also, the scrutiny questions challenges the partnership work, and are a way of ensuring that the partnership work contributes towards achieving the Council Plan, and offers first class services to Anglesey's inhabitants.

- **Scrutiny of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Public Services Board**

Anglesey and Gwynedd Public Services Board was established in 2016, in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which emphasises the need to scrutinise partnerships, and the need for public bodies to work in collaboration in order to ensure the very best results now and in the future. The progress in terms of delivering the Wellbeing Plan was scrutinised on 10 March, 2020.

The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee continued to scrutinise the partnership during this period.

Outcomes:

- ✚ Scrutinising the governance structure and delivery arrangements of the PSB. The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee assured that governance arrangements complied with statutory requirements and no changes required at present.
- ✚ The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the pace of implementing the work streams of the Wellbeing Plan, and received confirmation of the main risks and the mitigation measures, and the practical steps taken by the Board in order to integrate its priorities into plans and strategies of other public bodies.

Measuring the Impact of our Development Journey:

The table below summarises the impact of some of our key development areas during 2020/21:

IMPACT OF OUR SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

| Priority Area | How | Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| Scrutiny Vision | <p>We have ensured a whole Council approach to scrutiny.</p> <p>The Council has a Scrutiny Champion to ensure a supportive environment for scrutiny to succeed.</p> <p>Strong foundations laid by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs to improve outcomes for the public, better decisions and governance.</p> | <p>Evidence → increase in Member confidence; better scrutiny in committees; questioning strategy; quality of Member contributions in panel work and maturity of questioning strategies; feeling of Team Scrutiny amongst most Members.</p> <p>(better decisions, better outcomes)</p> |
| Scrutiny forward work programmes | <p>Further developed our arrangements and have put more emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic aspects • Public engagement • The priorities of the Council Plan (2017/22), and corporate transformation programmes • risks • audit, investigation and regulation work • Items on the Executive's work programme <p>• Have developed a covering report for the work programme which is presented in every Scrutiny Committee.</p> | <p>Rolling work programmes concentrating on less items in order to add value, and concentrate on the quality of scrutiny.</p> <p>Alignment – have ensured effective forward planning in order to ensure alignment between topics discussed in Members briefing sessions, scrutiny panels, and scrutiny committee meetings. Alignment between work programmes across the Council.</p> <p>Well planned, effective and objective scrutiny.</p> <p>(better decisions)</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme alignment conversations with the Leader and Chief Executive at the Scrutiny Chairs/Vice-Chairs Forum (monthly). • Monthly discussion between the Leader, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager. • Regular alignment conversations → scrutiny officers and heads of service. | |
| More innovative methods of Scrutiny | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Panel's Contribution- the Panels have been a means of scrutinising specific services and matters in more detail, and report to the Scrutiny Committees in order to inform decisions. This has included reviewing and developing the work programmes of the Panel. • Self-evaluation- The three panels undertake regular self-evaluations and report on progress to the two parent Committees in order to measure successes, and to identify priorities in moving forward. | More innovative methods of undertaking the scrutiny work (SAC proposal for improvement), leading to better results and more impact. (better decisions, better outcomes). |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny outside of Committees- the monthly briefing sessions are a way of scrutinising key areas outside of formal meetings, which assists the Members to undertake informed scrutiny in the Scrutiny Panels and Committees as a result. | |
| Scrutiny Template | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The template includes clear scrutiny questions, ensures compliance with the requirements of the Well-being Act and is having an impact on the depth of the questioning in the meetings. | <p>Clarity of Scrutiny role → concise objectives, clear scrutiny questions, compliance with the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.</p> <p>(better decisions)</p> |
| Member development, training and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A scrutiny development programme has been developed. • Monthly briefing sessions are held which correspond to various items on the Committee work programmes. | <p>(better results, better decisions)</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Public Engagement</p> | <p>The Scrutiny Committee meetings are advertised on the Council's social media.</p> <p>A Public Speaking Protocol in Scrutiny Committee is operational.</p> <p>Ensured the voice of the public as part of the Schools Modernisation Programme.</p> | <p>(Better outcomes, better decisions, better engagement)</p> |
| <p>Public Services Board (PSB)</p> | <p>A programme was put in place in order to address the two recommendations made by Wales Audit Office on Public Services Boards.</p> <p>Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager has worked closely with the Council's scrutiny function; has agreed on scrutiny schedules, and the areas to be scrutinised (scrutinise the delivery of the Wellbeing Plan, the Annual Report and the governance arrangements). They have also worked in collaboration in order to align scrutiny cycles to coincide with the Board's meetings.</p> <p>The PSB share information and minutes to ensure that the scrutiny committees has the necessary information to scrutinise effectively.</p> | <p>Effective scrutiny of the work of the Public Services Board, an increase in the Members' confidence and understanding as a result of receiving regular reports on the progress of the work.</p> <p>Compliance with national guidance.</p> <p>(better engagement)</p> |

4.4 Self-assessment of Scrutiny effectiveness

Our work around measuring the outcomes and impact of Scrutiny practice in the Council has also included some survey work with Members again this year, through small group discussions with Scrutiny Members and the Senior Leadership Team.

Self-assessment core questions:

- What were the highlights in Scrutiny during the past year?
- In your opinion, what impact did Scrutiny have during 2020/21 in supporting the Executive to make effective decisions?
- Are there any aspects that could be improved or delivered more effectively in the future?
- What development needs do you have to support you in the role?
- Any general observations on the influence and / or impact on the work of Scrutiny Members in the decision making processes?
- In your opinion, are there opportunities to further develop the scrutiny function within the Council?
- As a result of the pandemic and working virtually, what has worked well and what can be developed further in moving forward?

What our Members had to say...

Below is a flavour of what members of the Scrutiny Committee and Panels had to say. The findings of this exercise have fed into our improvement priorities for 2021/22.

LOOKING BACK

We have continued with virtual scrutiny work and have delivered all of the Committee's usual scrutiny work despite the pandemic and its associated challenges. All Members have succeeded to contribute to the scrutiny function during the year.

The Scrutiny Panels provide an opportunity for members to scrutinise specific matters in more detail, reporting and submitting recommendations to the Scrutiny Committees which facilitates the process

The Scrutiny Committee dynamics work well, as Members have different skills and background information which is of great help in scrutinising different areas the Committees are responsible for.

The preparation meetings held prior to the Committees are very useful and have developed during the past year, and the key scrutiny questions are of assistance to use as scrutiny Members.

The Scrutiny Panels mean that we have developed expertise and detailed information about the services which is of assistance to us in undertaking the scrutiny work in general.

The technology has meant that we have been able to continue to scrutinise throughout the year, and have developed our skills further.

LOOKING FORWARD

I feel that we as a Committee need to follow up items that have come before the Scrutiny Committee, through progress reports or updates on specific items.

I feel that there is a need not to overload work programmes and meetings in order to ensure that we can scrutinise in detail and to give due consideration to every item in order to add value.

There is a need to ensure that the Committee's contribution is heard by other council's Scrutiny Committees when a partnership exists between local authorities, and vice versa, in order to ensure consistency and that the voice of the Committee is heard.

It would be useful to receive presentations and reports prior to the Panel meetings in order to be able to scrutinise prior to the meeting it's self in order to prepare and think of scrutiny questions in advance.

It would be useful to have an independent opinion on the Scrutiny function, to see whether the function can be strengthened and further developed.

Consider continuing to hold some meetings virtually in future such as preparation meetings.

5.0 LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021/22

5.1 The Authority will continue on the next stage of its development journey and the following key areas have been prioritised in the recently published development programme for action over the coming months:

KEY SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

| Theme | How | Desired Outcome ² |
|---------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Vision | Continue to mainstream our Scrutiny vision, and ensure that every Elected Member and Officer have a robust | <i>Better outcomes</i> |

² Outcomes and Characteristics for Effective Local Government Overview and Scrutiny – Good Scrutiny? Good Question! Wales Audit Office, 2014

| Theme | How | Desired Outcome ² |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| | understanding of scrutiny's purpose and value within the Council's governance. | |
| Member Development and Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommence the training and development training to support and develop Scrutiny Members – focus on self-evaluation; chairing skills; scrutiny of performance data; financial scrutiny; information technology matters; E-learning. • Convene short, regular briefing/ development / review sessions with Scrutiny Members. | <i>Better decisions</i> |
| Scrutiny Panels | <p>Support the work of the panels through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the forward work programmes of the 3 Panel align with the Council's corporate priorities. • Developing an evolving focus to the work of the Panels. • Ensuring that the Panels complete self-evaluation exercises at least once a year. • Hold a review of the Scrutiny Panel's effectiveness as part of the Council's governance structure. | <i>Better decisions</i> |
| Citizen Engagement in our Scrutiny work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to mainstream the Protocol for Public Speaking and raise the public's awareness of its existence, in order to ensure greater public participation by providing a clear structure for the public to request to speak in Committees. | <i>Better engagement</i> |
| Wellbeing of Future Generations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support chairs in developing the role of scrutiny whilst meeting the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. | <i>Better outcomes</i> |

| Theme | How | Desired Outcome ² |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To fully embed a robust questioning strategy using the Well-being of Future Generations Act to ensure that key scrutiny questions are included in every committee report and are asked in the Panel and Committee meetings. Review our arrangements in order to ensure that they comply with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the thinking of the Commissioner's Office. | |
| Public Services Board and partnership working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to scrutinise the work of the Public Services Board in delivering the Wellbeing Plan and the Board's governance arrangements, and the effectiveness of partnerships in accordance with the national guidelines. Continue to invite key partners to come before the Committees in order to scrutinise their work on the Island. | <i>Better engagement</i> |
| Innovative models of Member Scrutiny | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, consider more innovative and effective ways of scrutiny, taking full advantage of technology to this end. | <i>Better decisions, better outcomes, better engagement</i> |
| Alignment and Ownership of Scrutiny Work Programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the scrutiny panels and committees' work programmes monthly to align with the process of updating the Executive's forward work programme. Ensure a discussion about the forward work programme in every meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs Forum/ committee/ panel, and ensure Members input in forming the work programmes in order to ensure ownership. | <i>Better results, better outcomes</i> |

| Theme | How | Desired Outcome ² |
|--|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make use of the regional and national good practice to steer the work programmes | |
| Self-assessment of our local Scrutiny arrangements | <p>Members to continue to complete self-assessments, which includes identifying recommendations to improve the current scrutiny arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the process of preparing the Scrutiny Annual Report. To assess the results and the impact of our scrutiny panels. | <i>Better outcomes</i> |
| Raising awareness/sharing information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the information regarding the Council's scrutiny arrangements on the Council's website, and amend in order to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that Elected Members can succeed in their role Enable the voice of individuals and stakeholders to have a prominent place in the scrutiny process | <i>Better decisions, better outcomes, better engagement</i> |
| Closing the Scrutiny Circle and alignment with the Transformation Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability through reporting on the progress of the Panel's work quarterly, and continue to formalise the procedure of reporting to the Scrutiny Committees through the Panel's Chairs as a matter of course. | <i>Better decisions, better outcomes</i> |
| Preparation for the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange specific briefing sessions for scrutiny Members on the implications of the Measure on the Council's scrutiny function through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that information is available to scrutiny committees. <p>Consider the implications of the Measure by making it</p> | <i>Better decisions, better outcomes,</i> |

| Theme | How | Desired Outcome ² |
|-------|--|------------------------------|
| | <p>mandatory for authorities to appoint joint scrutiny Committees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the terms of reference of the Scrutiny Committees/the Constitution including the provision. | |

6.0 CONTACT SCRUTINY

6.1 To find out more about scrutiny in Anglesey or to give your views please contact:

Scrutiny Unit,
Isle of Anglesey County Council,
Council Offices.
Llangefni.
Anglesey.
LL777TW

| | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| Anwen Davies | Scrutiny Manager (leading on supporting the Corporate Scrutiny Committee) | (01248) 752578 AnwenDavies@ynysmon.gov.uk |
| Sioned Rowe | Scrutiny Officer (leading on supporting the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee) | (01248) 752039 SionedRowe@ynysmon.gov.uk |

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report: 2020/21

APPENDICES

WHAT IS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY? National policy context

National context:

Scrutiny committees form part of the way in which local government in Wales operates. As well as establishing a decision making executive, the Local Government Act 2000 requires one or more scrutiny committees. Their primary role is to hold decision-makers to account, drive improvement, act as the voice of the community and play a role in policy development and review.

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS)³ advocates four key principles in support of effective Member scrutiny:

- i. Provide “critical friend” challenge to executive policy makers and other decision makers
- ii. Enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard
- iii. Be carried out by “independent minded governors” who lead and own the scrutiny process
- iv. Is evidence based and drives improvement in public services.

³ Good Scrutiny Guide, Centre for Public Scrutiny 2004

REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP OF OUR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The overview and scrutiny function at the Isle of Anglesey County Council continues to be delivered through a structure comprising of two parent scrutiny committees - Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Remit:











- The focus of work of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee is to provide assurance regarding the performance and delivery of all services; ensure the council achieves its corporate and service objectives (as outlined in the Corporate Plan, Annual Budget, Budget and Policy Framework, Performance Management Framework, Corporate Policies or their successor plans and policies); and to support and make recommendations for continuous improvement.
- Members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee hold preparation meetings in advance of every committee in order to prepare and focus discussion at the formal meetings of the committee. This is regarded as good practice and it is intended to continue with these arrangements in 2020/21.

Membership

- The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is chaired by Councillor Aled Morris Jones and supported by Vice Chair Councillor Dylan Rees. Ten Elected Members sit on the committee⁴ with provision for 4 co-opted members:

⁴ Councillor membership of the Scrutiny Committees reflect the political balance of the Council

Membership of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

| | Name | Ward | Political Party/Group | | Name | Ward | Political Party/Group |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
|  | Cllr Aled Morris Jones (Chair) | Twrcelyn | Anglesey Independents |  | Cllr Dylan Rees (Vice-chair) | Canolbarth Môn | Plaid Cymru |
|  | Cllr Lewis Davies | Seiriol | Plaid Cymru |  | Cllr John Griffith | Talybolion | Plad Cymru |
|  | Cllr Alun Roberts | Seiriol | Plaid Cymru |  | Cllr Nicola Roberts | Canolbarth Môn | Plaid Cymru |
|  | Cllr Richard Griffiths | Twrcelyn | The Independent Group |  | Cllr Richard O Jones | Twrcelyn | The Independent Group |
|  | Cllr J Arwel Roberts | Ynys Gybi | Wales Labour Party |  | Cllr Bryan Owen | Bro Aberffraw | Anglesey Independents |

Member of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee during part of 2020/21.

Cllr Margaret Roberts



PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE











Remit:

- The primary focus of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is to ensure that the interests of the citizens of the Island are promoted, and that best use is made of Council resources, in line with the Council's priorities, that demonstrate added value from working with partners. The remit of the committee includes regional and national arrangements as well as local arrangements.
- The committee is also the nominated Crime and Disorder Committee dealing with crime and disorder matters, as required under Section 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. It is also the designated committee for scrutinising the work of the Ynys Môn and Gwynedd Public Services Board.
- The Committee has introduced a practice of holding briefing meetings with members prior to each formal scrutiny committee meeting. This is regarded as good practice and it is intended to continue with these arrangements in 2020/21.

Membership:

- The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee was chaired by Councillor Gwilym Jones and supported by Vice Chair Councillor Glyn Haynes. Ten members also sit on this committee with provision for 4 co-opted members:

Membership of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

| | Name | Ward | Political Party/Group | | Name | Ward | Political Party/Group |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
|  | Cllr Gwilym O Jones (Chair) | Llifon | The Independent Group |  | Cllr Glyn Haynes (Vice- chair) | Caergybi | Labour Party |
|  | Cllr Dafydd Roberts | Bro Rhosyr | The Independent Group |  | Cllr Vaughan Hughes | Lligwy | Plaid Cymru |
|  | Cllr Alun Roberts | Seiriol | Plaid Cymru |  | Cllr Margaret Roberts | Lligwy | Plaid Cymru |
|  | Cllr Nicola Roberts | Canolbarth Môn | Plaid Cymru |  | Cllr Trefor Lloyd Hughes | Ynys Gybi | Plaid Cymru |
|  | Cllr Kenneth P Hughes | Talybolion | Anglesey Independents |  | Cllr Robert Llewelyn Jones | Caergybi | Anglesey Independents |

Our scrutiny committees can undertake their work in one of the following ways:

- Consider a topic during a formal meeting
- Consider a topic in more detail by establishing a scrutiny outcome panel OR
- Conduct informal sessions on a particular area of policy.

Again during 2019/20, the scrutiny committees were aware of the need to seek to focus their work on outcomes and within the Wales Audit Office framework of characteristics and outcomes for effective local government overview and scrutiny⁵:

- Better outcomes
- Better decisions
- Better engagement

Call-in of decisions: Scrutiny committees can “call-in” a decision taken by either the Executive, Portfolio Holder or an officer to whom the Executive has been delegated with a specific decision making power. The scrutiny committees only exercise a “call-in” when there is good reason to do so (through a Test of Significance), and during 2020/21 this was exercised twice, by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee called in the following decision made by the Executive / Portfolio Holder:

1. Executive Decisions

- Land at Mona Industrial Estate - Application by the Anglesey Agricultural Society to amend lease conditions
- Llangefni Area Schools’ Modernisation Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol y Graig

⁵ Good Scrutiny? Good Question!, Wales Audit Office, 2014

APPENDIX 3

A vision for delivering effective scrutiny in Isle of Anglesey County Council

Vision

Scrutiny in Anglesey aims to secure better outcomes for citizens and communities and add to the effectiveness of the Council by helping make public services more transparent, inclusive, accountable and cost effective.

Guiding Principles for Scrutiny in Anglesey

- Scrutiny is characterised by an atmosphere of mutual trust, co-operation and shared responsibility for achieving the best outcomes for local communities.
- Non-Executive Members are non-political in carrying out their support and challenge roles.
- Scrutiny activity directly broadens the evidence base upon which decisions and programmes of transformational change are predicated by providing a view on how proposals are likely to resonate with local communities.
- Non-Executive Members help ensure that a strategic, long term approach is taken when major service reconfiguration is being considered by providing constructive challenge in testing assumptions, examining risks and challenging how resources are prioritised.

Our Values

Overview and Scrutiny in Anglesey....

- Is 'forward and outward' and proactive rather than 'inwards and reactive'.
- Has a clearly defined and valued role in the council's improvement and governance arrangements.
- Is non-political, methodologically sound and incorporates a wide range of evidence and perspectives including those from strategic partners, regulators and the public.
- Is led by councillors who have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively.
- Receives effective support from the council's senior leadership team who ensures that information provided to overview and scrutiny is of high quality and is provided in a timely and consistent manner.
- Takes into account concerns expressed at ward level in a non-parochial way when managing its forward work programme.
- Is well planned, chaired effectively and makes best use of the resources available to it.

- Is recognised by the executive and senior leadership team as an important council mechanism for community engagement, and facilitates greater citizen involvement in governance.
- Builds trust and positive relationships with a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders.