

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	7 th February, 2023
Subject:	Education Scrutiny Panel
Purpose of Report:	Provide an update on progress of the Education Scrutiny Panel
Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr Dylan Rees
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Ieuan Williams
Head of Service:	Marc Berw Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People
Report Author:	Anwen Davies, Scrutiny Manager
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Local Members:	N/A

1 – Recommendation/s

The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

R1 Note the initial progress to date regarding the work of the Education Scrutiny Panel

R2 Support the intention to develop a revised scrutiny model for Education matters as a basis for the Education Scrutiny Panel and the two parent Scrutiny Committees as noted in Part 5, paragraph 2.7 below.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Direct link to the Council Plan:

- Ambition to work with the people of Anglesey, their communities and with partners to ensure the best possible services are delivered which will improve the quality of life for everyone across the Island. One of the 3 aims of the Plan is to “create conditions that will enable everyone to reach their full potential.”
- Identifies Education as a priority – ensuring effective provision for today and future generations.

The work of the Panel makes a contribution towards this aim.

3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-

3.1 Impact the matter has on individuals and communities **[focus on customer/citizen]**

3.2 A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality **[focus on value]**

3.3 A look at any risks [focus on risk]**3.4 Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [focus on performance & quality]****3.5 Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:**

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]**3.6 Possible effects this decision could have on:**

- The groups that are protected under the Equalities Act 2010
- People who face socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (whilst making strategic decision)
- Opportunities for people to use Welsh and not to treat the Welsh language less favourably than English **[focus on equality and the Welsh language]**

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

At the Panel's request:

1. To what extent is the Scrutiny Committee satisfied with the initial direction of the Panel's work?
2. What suggestions does the Committee have to further strengthen the Panel's work?
3. What other areas does the Panel need to scrutinise?

5 – Background / Context**1. CONTEXT**

Members will be aware that scrutiny has developed during the previous Administration through the work of 3 scrutiny panels. The new Administration¹ has confirmed that the structure of the scrutiny panels for the current Council will be as follows:

- Social Services / Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Panel
- Finance Scrutiny Panel
- **Education Scrutiny Panel.**

The Panel's Governance Arrangements

The Panel's terms of reference² has been confirmed by the Scrutiny Committee in order to create the conditions to allow the Panel to broaden the scope of its work with the following key benefits:

- i. Develop a model of working in Education which focuses on a smaller group to enable Members to be more involved, to develop a level of subject expertise and to encourage good attendance and teamwork

¹ Meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 21st June, 2022

² Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 21st June, 2022

³ Meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 20th April and 27th June 2017

- ii. Further strengthen the capacity of Members to challenge performance by improving the quality of their general information and their understanding of schools' performance data
- iii. Forum to discuss information around Service risks as a basis to inform the forward work programme of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
- iv. Forum to develop a group of Members with the expertise and ownership to lead discussions on education matters in the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

Members will be aware of the robust governance arrangements in place to underpin the work of the Panel³ and it is intended to continue to hold monthly meetings of the Panel in the future. Furthermore, a process has been established for Cllr Gwilym Owen Jones, Panel chair to report progress on a quarterly basis to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor	Scrutiny Committee
Gwilym O Jones (Panel Chair)	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Margaret M Roberts (Panel Vice-Chair)	
Non Dafydd	
Derek Owen	
Arfon Wyn	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
Dyfed Wyn Jones	
Alwen Watkin	
Keith Roberts	

Membership of the Panel:

In terms of local context, it is noted that 2/3 of the membership of the Education Scrutiny Panel comprises of Members newly elected in May of this year⁴. It will therefore be necessary for the Council to continue to create the conditions for all Members to fully take part in the Panel's scrutiny work e.g. skills for effective scrutiny, effective questioning, understanding of the Education system, raise awareness of national education work streams etc. It is therefore the intention to make full use of the forward work programme to ensure appropriate and timely inputs to support members of the Education Scrutiny Panel.

2. FOCUS OF WORK OF THE EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL

This is the Education Scrutiny Panel's second progress report and covers quarter 2 of the current administrative year.

5 meetings of the Panel⁵ were held during this period and the following matters were considered:

⁴ Local Government Elections May, 2022

⁵ Education Scrutiny Committee held on 22/09/22, 20/10/22, 24/11/22, 22/12/22 and 24/01/23

2.1 Estyn Inspection Report for Anglesey County Council

The conclusions of the inspection were considered in detail, concentrating on the following aspects - main conclusions, recommendations and the post inspection action plan.

Noted – general overview of the inspection:

- Sound quality and effectiveness of leaders in the Learning Service contributed very effectively to ensuring education services were of high standard
- Developed a “Team Môn” ethos and way of thinking – joint working and everyone’s contribution appreciated, developed and used for the sake of the Island’s children and young people.

Two recommendations – firstly, strengthen processes to evaluate the work of the Learning Service. Secondly, develop and strengthen formal scrutiny arrangements.

The Panel looked in detail at the questions that were the basis for the inspection:

- i. How well does the local authority and regional service support schools to improve the quality of teaching and leadership?
- ii. How effective is the Local Authority’s provision to support vulnerable learners who are in danger of disengagement?
- iii. How effective is the Local Authority’s provision to promote the wellbeing of every child and young person?
- iv. How effective is the Local Authority’s approach to modernising schools, including strengthening the Welsh language?

Following scrutiny, the Panel agreed to the following action points:

- Accepting the post Estyn inspection action plan as the basis for the Council’s response to the recent inspection
- Present before the Panel the relevant data regarding children and young adults who are taught at home, that do not engage with education
- Put arrangements in place for the Panel to complete a self-evaluation of it’s contribution to Education scrutiny (February 2023).

Outcome: Panel has a better understanding of the main findings and recommendations from Estyn’s inspection as a basis to monitor progress against the post inspection action plan over the coming period.

2.2. Curriculum for Wales

During the Panel’s meeting in October⁶, the Panel received a detail presentation from GwE officers regarding the following aspects of the Curriculum for Wales:

- i. What is changing and why things are changing
- ii. The legal duty upon schools and what this will mean in practice
- iii. Progress to date on local action
- iv. Key priorities over the next period.

Outcome: Understanding of the Curriculum for Wales as a basis for the Panel’s scrutiny work – as a critical friend and to monitor progress in schools on Anglesey.

2.3 Shadowing GwE

A presentation by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People during a meeting of the Education Scrutiny Panel held on 24th November, 2022 on the opportunities to shadow GwE officers. The Panel noted the following:

⁶ Education Scrutiny Panel meeting that was held on 20th October 2022

- i. Number of opportunities for members of the Panel to observe – support in schools, good practice, challenges facing schools, areas that are being developed, work standards, officers at work, school staff at work etc
- ii. An opportunity, through observation, to gather information, ask questions, share what was seen with members of the Panel, be a part of the discussions
- iii. Feedback form in place for members of the Panel to report back to the full Education Scrutiny Panel. Framework similar to Laming Visits in Social Services
- iv. This an innovative approach for members of the Panel to look at a broad range of areas and also a way to upskill. Important to ask questions to challenge in a supportive and constructive way
- v. Aim to establish a model of good practice that concentrates on impact and outcomes.

Following the discussion, arrangements were put in place for members of the Panel to shadow GwE officers.

2.4 Role and Expectations of the Regulatory Framework – Political Leadership and Scrutiny

During the Panel's meeting in December⁷, Estyn gave a detailed presentation on aspects of the regulatory framework concerning political leadership and scrutiny. The following key points were noted in particular:

- i. Numerous aspects to Estyn's role as an inspectorate:
 - Provision in schools
 - Inspecting individual schools against the standards framework
 - Local Authority Link Inspector in place to promote joint working
- ii. The Inspectorate has numerous functions:
 - Critical friend
 - Scrutiny
 - Collaboration
 - Ensure accountability through the inspection process
 - Provide a report regarding each inspection that offers an honest picture, based on two-way flow of information.
- iii. There is a positive relationship between Estyn, the Local Authority and individual schools on Anglesey.
- iv. Numerous elements to Estyn's schools' inspection framework → learning; wellbeing; teaching provision; leadership and management
- v. A very positive inspection from Estyn of the Local Education Authority⁸. Anglesey in a strong position because of the nature of the relationship between the Education Authority and GwE. Two recommendations – one to focus on the need to strengthen public scrutiny on education matters. It was noted that there was evidence of progress
- vi. Reference was made to the characteristics of effective scrutiny of education matters as a basis to further develop our local methods.

Outcome:

An understanding by the Panel of the Estyn regulatory framework for education and in particular political leadership and scrutiny.

⁷ Education Scrutiny Panel that was held on 22, December 2022

⁸ Inspection of Anglesey Education Authority, June 2022

2.5 Terms of Reference and Context for the Panel's Work

The Panel also reviewed the terms of reference at its meeting on 22th December, 2022 (following the first 6 months of the administrative year). It was noted that it was key to ensure that the Panel does not develop into an additional layer of accountability, but instead develops to be a part of our collective joint accountability.

Outcome: robust governance arrangements as a basis for the Education Scrutiny Panel's scrutiny work.

2.6 Schools' Improvement Guidance → Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability (Welsh Government)

Role of Elected Members, School Governors and the process for schools causing concern

During the meeting in January⁹, the statutory obligations of the Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability (Welsh Government) were considered. Some specific responsibilities on the Scrutiny Committees and the Education Scrutiny Panel:

- Ensure the Executive is held to account for the standard and impact of the services provided by the Council to support schools
- Scrutinise the Council's work to support schools (rather than holding schools to account)
- Scrutinise how effective the joint working is between the Local Authority and GwE
- Monitor and scrutinise the use of statutory powers to support and improve schools that are a cause for concern
- Consider the impact of decisions to re-organise schools on school improvement.

Outcomes:

- i. Improved understanding of the new accountability framework's statutory obligations and the timetable for implementation
- ii. Further develop the education scrutiny model at a local level in a way that complies with the outcomes of the Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability
- iii. Members to continue to take part in activities to shadow GwE as an integral part of the Education Scrutiny Panel's work.

2.7 Anglesey's Annual Report from GwE: 2021/22

On 25 January, 2023, GwE's Annual Report: 2021/22 was received and was a historical statement. The document gave evidence and recognised the nature of joint working and the partnership between GwE and the Local Authority. It was noted that it was timely to start a discussion about the arrangements and the timeframe to scrutinise on future Education matters, giving particular attention to the following aspects:

- Submitting the GwE Annual Report much earlier in the meetings' calendar.
Outcome: create conditions to scrutinise based on current information
- Consider the propriety of inviting GwE to submit a series of thematic reports that align with subjects on the Panel's forward work programme. **Outcome:** aligning information to effectively support scrutiny
- Look at the nature of the information to be included in the Annual Report to the future in the format of a compendium and based on progress reports during the

⁹ Education Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 25 January 2023

year. **Outcome:** revised scrutiny model on Education matters as a basis for the work of the Panel and the two Scrutiny Committees.

2.8 Scrutiny Panel's work programme for the period September 2022 → April 2023

The Panel's forward work programme was reviewed at all meetings, with the aim of ensuring a robust work programme to support the Panel's contribution to the Council's governance arrangements. It was noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Panel¹⁰ would focus on the following matters:

- i. The Additional Learning Needs Code Wales:
 - Additional Learning Needs Regulations (Wales) 2021
 - Education Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2021
 - Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
- ii. Estyn Recommendations (2022) – revisit to scrutinise progress made against the post inspection action plan
- iii. Forward work programme – review.

6. MATTER TO BE ESCALATED TO THE PARENT COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION

No matters to be escalated by the Panel.

6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]

6.1 The possible effects on the groups that are protected under the Equality Act 2010

N/A

6.2 The possible effects on people that face socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decision)

N/A

6.3 The possible effects on opportunities for people to use Welsh and not to treat the Welsh language less favourable than English

N/A

7 – Financial Implications

N/A

8 – Appendices:

N/A

¹⁰ Education Scrutiny Panel, 16 February, 2023

9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):
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Councillor Gwilym Owen Jones
Schools Scrutiny Panel Chair

Date: 16/01/2023

(revised 18/01/2023)