

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL <u>Scrutiny Report Template</u>	
Committee:	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	19 th September, 2023
Subject:	Education Scrutiny Charter
Purpose of Report:	Seek comments from the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Education Scrutiny Charter
Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr Dylan Rees
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Carwyn Jones, Portfolio Holder - Corporate and Customer Experience Cllr Dafydd Roberts, Portfolio Holder - Education and the Welsh Language
Head of Service	Lynn Ball, Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer Marc Berw Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People
Report Author: Tel: Email:	Anwen Davies, Scrutiny Manager 07971167198 AnwenDavies@ynysmon.llyw.cymru
Local Members:	Relevant to all Scrutiny Members

1 - Recommendation/s

The Committee is requested to:

- A1** Offer comments on the content of the Education Scrutiny Charter
- A2** Approve the Charter as a basis for the scrutiny of Education issues
- A3** Note the aim of developing the document in due course as a general Scrutiny Charter across the breadth of scrutiny work undertaken by the Council.

2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Direct link with the Council Plan: 2023-2028.

Education is one of the six key strategic aims (Council Plan: 2023-2028) namely - ensuring an effective provision for today and for future generations. It is considered that Elected Members have a crucial role in realising this aim by scrutinising and holding to account.

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 Potential impacts that this decision could have on:

- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)
- opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

[focus on equality and the Welsh language]

4 - Key Scrutiny Questions

1. What are the main drivers behind producing a Scrutiny Charter for education issues?
2. To what extent is the implementation of the Charter bound by financial implications?
3. The introduction of a Charter as a basis for the Scrutiny work of the Council is an additional element to existing local processes. What arrangements are in place in other authorities?

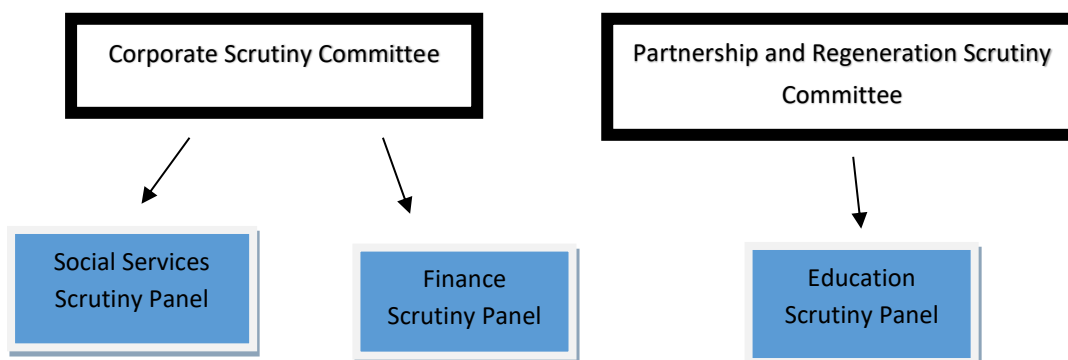
5 – Background / Context

1. National Policy Context

1.1 Scrutiny Committees form part of the way in which local government in Wales operates. As well as establishing an Executive to make decisions, there is also a statutory requirement¹ to establish at least one scrutiny committee. Their primary 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.

2. Background and local context

2.1 Members will be aware that our local Scrutiny structure comprises of two committees and three Scrutiny panels as follows:



¹ Local Government Act 2000

2.2 Scrutiny panels have been set up to undertake work streams on behalf of the parent committees² and are working groups without decision making powers.

2.3 These panels have been embedded into practice by:

- i. Putting in place robust governance arrangements to support each panel
- ii. Ensuring a clear focus / remit and work programme for each panel
- iii. Putting in place a reporting / escalation process ensuring that the work of scrutiny panels is reported in a timely manner to the two parent committees
- iv. Ensure an appropriate pace for the work of the panels which is in line with corporate priorities and also complete detailed scrutiny on the Council's key work-streams.

3. Education Scrutiny Charter

3.1 Members will be aware of our local vision (leading principles and values) for effective scrutiny which is summarised in the Education Scrutiny Charter attached.

3.2 Estyn's Inspection of the Local Authority – last year Estyn conducted an inspection of the Local Authority³ and included two recommendations:

R1 Strengthen processes for evaluating the effect of the Learning Service's work

R2 Develop and strengthen formal scrutiny arrangements

The Scrutiny Members on the Education Scrutiny Panel⁴ and the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee⁵ were given the opportunity to scrutinise progress against Estyn's recommendations and propose the post-inspection plan as a meaningful, comprehensive and robust plan for adoption by the Executive. In May 2023⁶, an externally facilitated workshop was held for members of the Education Scrutiny Panel with the aim of co-producing the principles and content for an effective scrutiny model and effective scrutiny skills in the field of education.

3.3 The next natural step forward for us locally is to prepare an overarching summary that brings together the commitment and values of the Council to provide a basis for scrutiny work by Elected Members on education issues of strategic importance. A copy of the proposed Education Scrutiny Charter is attached. It is intended to further develop the document in due course as a

² Corporate Scrutiny Committee and / or the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

³ Anglesey Local Authority Inspection Report June 2022

⁴ Meeting of the Education Scrutiny Panel held on 22nd September 2022

⁵ Meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 18th October 2022

⁶ Interactive face to face workshop for members of the Education Scrutiny Panel on 25th May 2023

general Scrutiny Charter across the breadth of scrutiny work undertaken by the Council.

3.4 Stakeholder Input – the Charter was drawn up by Council officers and the process included input from Elected Members:

- ✚ Education Scrutiny Panel
- ✚ Scrutiny Chairs/Vice—chairs Forum
- ✚ Political Group Leaders
- ✚ Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

4. Matters to be Considered

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is now requested to:

- offer comments on the content of the draft Education Scrutiny Charter
- approve the Charter as a basis for the scrutiny of Education issues
- note the aim of developing the document in due course as a general Scrutiny Charter across the breadth of scrutiny work undertaken by the Council.

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

6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010

6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)

6.3 Potential impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

7 – Financial Implications

N/A

8 – Appendices:

- Education Scrutiny Charter
- An introduction to Overview and Scrutiny - Appendix 1
- Guidance on Questioning for Members of the Education Scrutiny Panel – Appendix 2

9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):

Anwen Davies, Scrutiny Manager, Anglesey County Council, Council Offices, Llangefni. LL77 7TW.



SIARTER CRAFFU ADDYSG
EDUCATION SCRUTINY CHARTER

Index of Content:

	Page
1. National Policy Context	3
2. Background & Local Context	4
3. Our Vision for Effective Scrutiny	5
4. Delivering Effective Education Scrutiny	6
Explanatory Note	12

SIARTER CRAFFU SCRUTINY CHARTER

This Charter is an overarching summary bringing together the Council's commitment and values underpinning Elected Member scrutiny of matters which are of strategic importance to the Local Authority.

1. NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 Scrutiny

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 Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)¹ 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.

1.2 Welsh Language

There is a significant national policy basis relating to the Welsh language that decision makers and those responsible for holding them to account should be aware of. First and foremost is the Welsh Government language strategy namely Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers. The education system is key to creating and nurturing Welsh speakers of the future in order to realise the vision of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. There is a duty on all local authorities² to prepare a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) setting a strategic direction for planning, delivering and developing Welsh medium teaching in the local area.

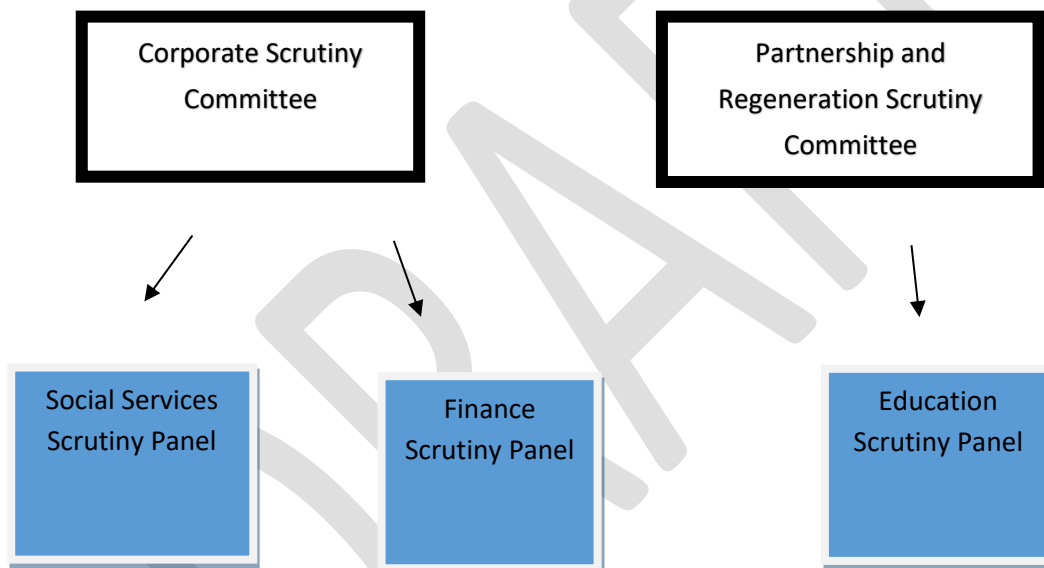
¹ Good Scrutiny Guide: Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (2004)

² The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

2. BACKGROUND & LOCAL CONTEXT

2.1 Scrutiny

Our local Scrutiny structure is made up of two Scrutiny Committees and three Panels:



The role / purpose of Scrutiny in our governance arrangements is provided in **Appendix 1**.

2.2 Welsh Language

Alongside our WESP³, we have a number of policy commitments to develop the Welsh language through the education system and more widely. The Welsh language and education are priority areas in the Council Plan: 2023-2028. The aim of our strategy to promote the Welsh language and our Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy is to develop use of the language locally throughout the education system – early years, statutory education, post-16 education, higher / further education and lifelong learning.

³ Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

3. OUR VISION FOR EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY

Our vision for delivering effective scrutiny:

Vision

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

Our Guiding Principles for Scrutiny on Anglesey

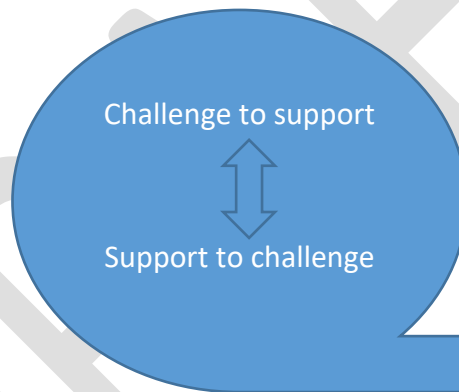
- ✚ Scrutiny is characterised by an atmosphere of mutual trust, co-operation and shared responsibility for achieving the best outcomes for local communities on the Isle of Anglesey
- ✚ Scrutiny Members are non-political in carrying out their support and challenge roles
- ✚ Scrutiny activity directly broadens the evidence base for decisions and transformational change by providing a view on how proposals are likely to be received by local communities
- ✚ Scrutiny Members help ensure that a strategic, long term approach is taken when major service strategies are being considered by providing constructive challenge in testing assumptions, looking at risk and challenging how resources are prioritised.

Our Values

Scrutiny on the Isle of Anglesey

- ✚ is forward and outward thinking and proactive (rather than inwards and reactive)
- ✚ has a clearly defined and valued role in the Council's governance and improvement arrangements
- ✚ is non-political and incorporates a wide range of evidence and perspectives including those from strategic partners, regulators and the public
- ✚ is led by Elected Members who have the training and development opportunities they need to undertake their role effectively

- ✚ receives effective support from the Council's Leadership Team who ensures that information provided to Scrutiny is of high quality and provided in a timely and consistent manner
- ✚ takes into account concerns expressed at ward level in a non-parochial way when managing the forward work programme
- ✚ is well planned, chaired effectively and makes best use of the resources available to it.



4. DELIVERING EFFECTIVE EDUCATION SCRUTINY

Scrutiny of education

Education accountability and Member scrutiny of the wider education system is a critically important role and one that requires the Local Authority and its partners to work together effectively. Following changes to how schools operate and with more reform on the horizon⁴, there is a potential risk for much less clarity and understanding of who is accountable for what and who has the overview of the local education system.

Education is one of our 6 key strategic objectives⁵ - ensuring an effective provision for today and for future generations. Isle of Anglesey County Council have therefore reconsidered the question of what the role of Elected Members is in this system. There needs to be clear and structured local oversight and leadership in order to ensure checks and balances outside of individual schools' own governance systems on how the overall education system is

⁴ Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 – creates a legislative framework to improve the planning and delivery of additional learning provision;

Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 – establishes the Curriculum for Wales in law

⁵ Council Plan 2023-28



operating at a County level. To this end, the Education Scrutiny Panel has an important contribution to make. Ensuring meaningful and robust scrutiny of education is a key component of the leadership role of Scrutiny Members. Good scrutiny is about adding value, strengthening decisions and outcomes.

Scrutiny of education is therefore also about holding local providers to account, and at a strategic level:

- Looking at / scrutinising how all the components work together eg how GwE discharge their duties, how local partners co-ordinate activities
- That all efforts are having a positive impact on learners and communities.

Education scrutiny is much more than adding value to the decisions of the Executive alone. It is about ensuring that a proper scrutiny process forms part of the planning, implementation and follow up on key decisions that have an impact on learners, taxpayers and communities.

What we expect to see

We expect to see political leadership and effective scrutiny by Members who have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the education provision to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively:

- ✚ **Standards** – challenge performance in order to raise standards around education attainment
- ✚ **Quality** – an understanding of the breadth and quality of education provision
- ✚ **Leadership** - understanding of the effectiveness of education leadership at all levels in the County.

Creating the conditions:

The following actions and behaviours seek to ensure effective scrutiny of education matters by our Members:

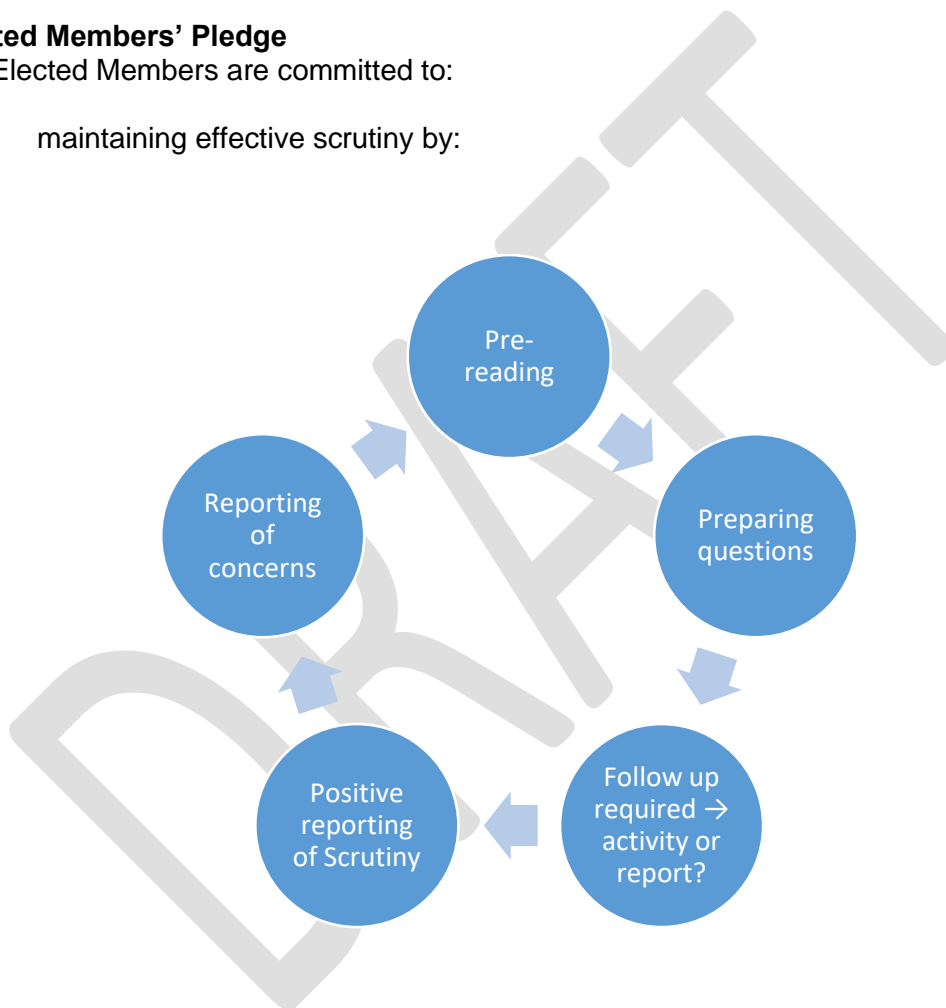
Conditions For Effective Education Scrutiny – Elected Member Commitment

- **sticking to the broader vision for the Education Service**
- **being knowledgeable about the topic and researching before Scrutiny**
- **asking open, probing and supplementary questions**
- **looking in detail at topics**
- **detailed consideration at Committee**
- **be respectful when scrutinising**
- **build respectful, productive relationships between Elected Members and officers**
- **close to schools, ears on the ground to collate informal evidence**
- **ensure ample opportunity for open conversations at Panel level**
- **have robust Committee and Panel forward work programmes to set direction**
- **respect the choice of language of fellow Members with the duty to comply with the Welsh language standards**
- **support the Council's commitment through its Welsh language policy and other plans to develop use of the language**

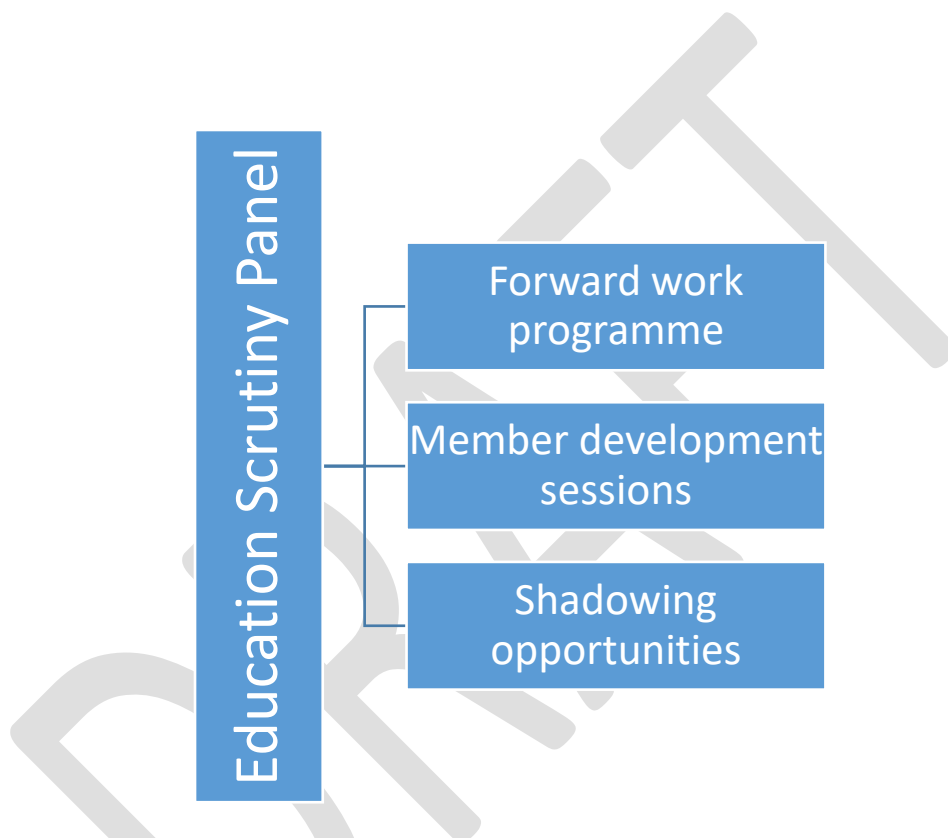
Elected Members' Pledge

Our Elected Members are committed to:

- i. maintaining effective scrutiny by:



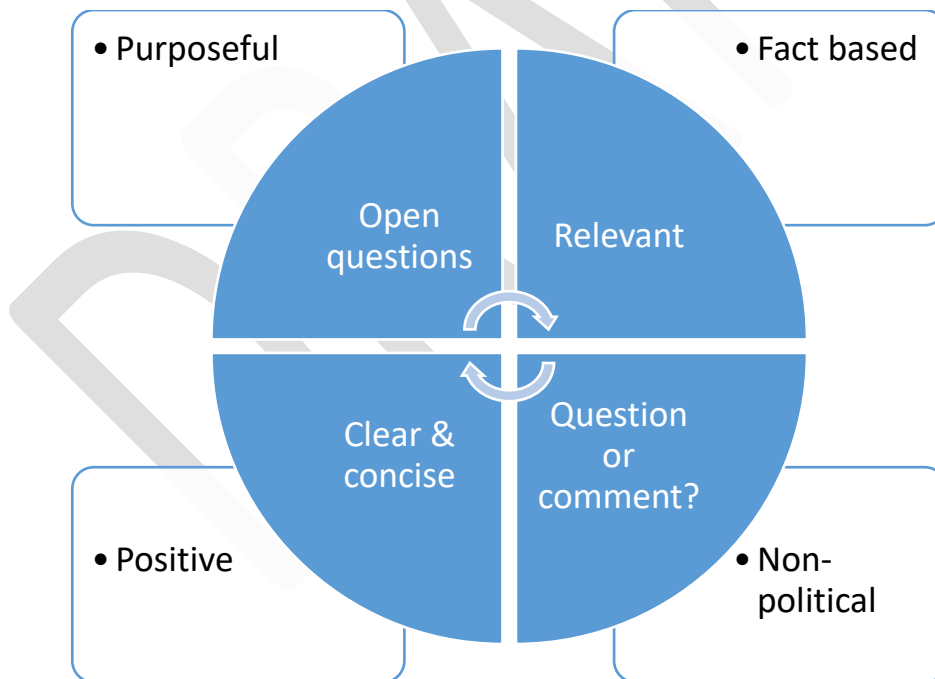
- ii. developing background knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the education provision for children and young people on the Isle of Anglesey by:
 - ✓ further developing our model of working which focuses on a smaller “group” - allowing Members to participate more, develop a level of subject “expertise”, encourage good attendance and team work. Also as a forum to develop a group of Members with the ownership and expertise to lead discussions on Education matters in the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee -



- ✓ building trusting relationships and enable team building amongst Panel members in order to encourage an appetite to further develop Scrutiny work
- ✓ providing periodic opportunities in the calendar for Member self-evaluation to enable reflection and learning
- ✓ fully participating and engaging in shadowing opportunities (including visits to schools) as a means of keeping in touch with every day challenges facing Head Teachers and staff in our schools. This to include reporting back to Panel members on key issues and risks.

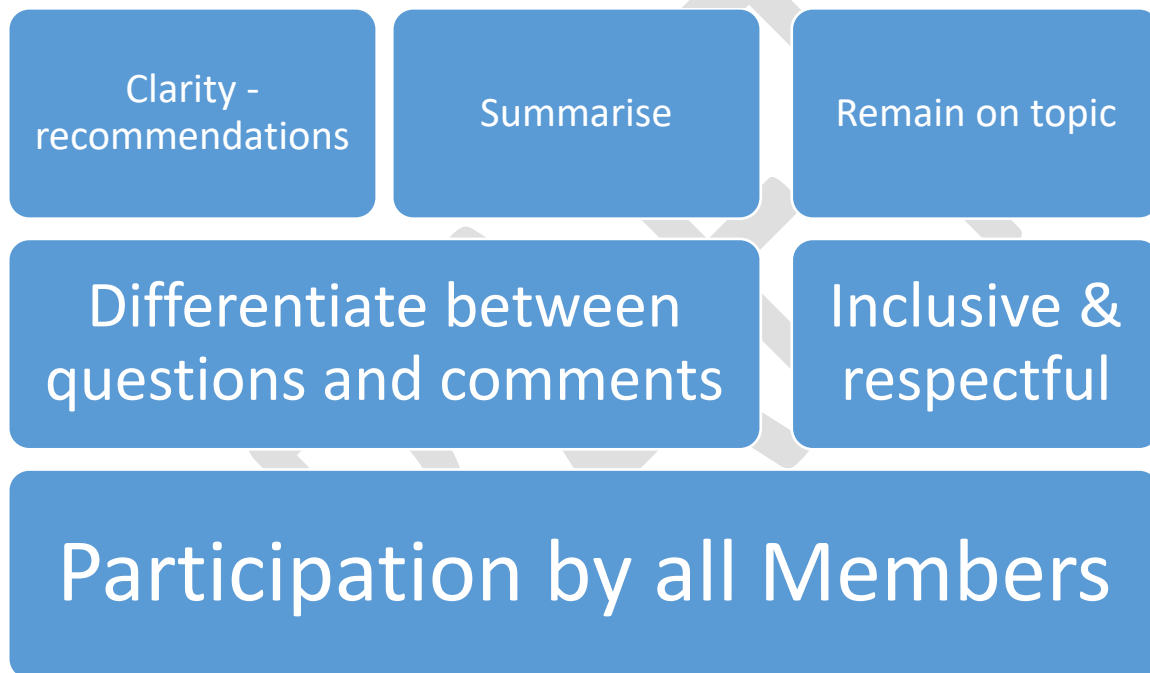
- iii. developing an effective questioning strategy as a foundation for all Scrutiny activity:

Good question?



Further guidance on effective questioning is provided in **Appendix 2**.

iv. effective chairing of Panel and Committee meetings:



EXPLANATORY NOTE:

The Education Scrutiny Charter has been drawn up by officers of the Isle of Anglesey County Council and has included input from Elected Members namely:

- i. Education Scrutiny Panel
- ii. Parent Scrutiny Committees namely the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
- iii. Scrutiny Chairs / Vice-Chairs Forum
- iv. Political Group Leaders
- v. Leadership Team.

AN INTRODUCTION TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

“Effective public scrutiny committees can be a powerful vehicle for change. It can improve the delivery of services; it can connect the public to decision-makers and politicians; it can improve efficiency.....”

[Centre for Governance and Scrutiny 2008]

WHAT IS SCRUTINY?

Focus on matters of real concern to citizens of the Isle of Anglesey.

Challenge decision makers to drive forward better performance.

Provide checks and balances for Executive decision making.

4 KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Provide a “critical friend” challenge to the Executive.
2. Reflect the voice and concerns of citizens.
3. Be led and owned by Members of the Council.
4. Make an impact on service delivery.

WHAT SCRUTINY IS NOT.....

Getting involved in minor matters or matters involving individuals.

Dealing with complaints or regulatory matters e.g. planning or licence applications.

Dealing with matters that are still subject to court proceedings.

Political.

A debating Chamber.

Considering matters subject to review by another organisation within or external to the Local Authority.

Opportunity to ask questions of officers on non-agenda items.

Negative.

A place to have a nice look at things.

WORK OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Scrutiny Committees can:

1. Review and scrutinise decisions of the Executive, individual Portfolio Holders or Offices of the Council.
2. Prepare reports or make recommendations.
3. Review any matters referred to it under "Call In" rules and prepare reports and recommendations as required.
4. Review and scrutinise the performance of services.
5. Respond to external organisations whose actions affect the residents of the Island.
6. Require Executive Members and senior officers to attend meetings and to be challenged about matters within their areas of responsibility.
7. Invite expert advisors, other Members of the Council, stakeholders or members of the public to take part in Scrutiny reviews.
8. Refer matters to the Scrutiny Panels (made up of smaller groups of Members).

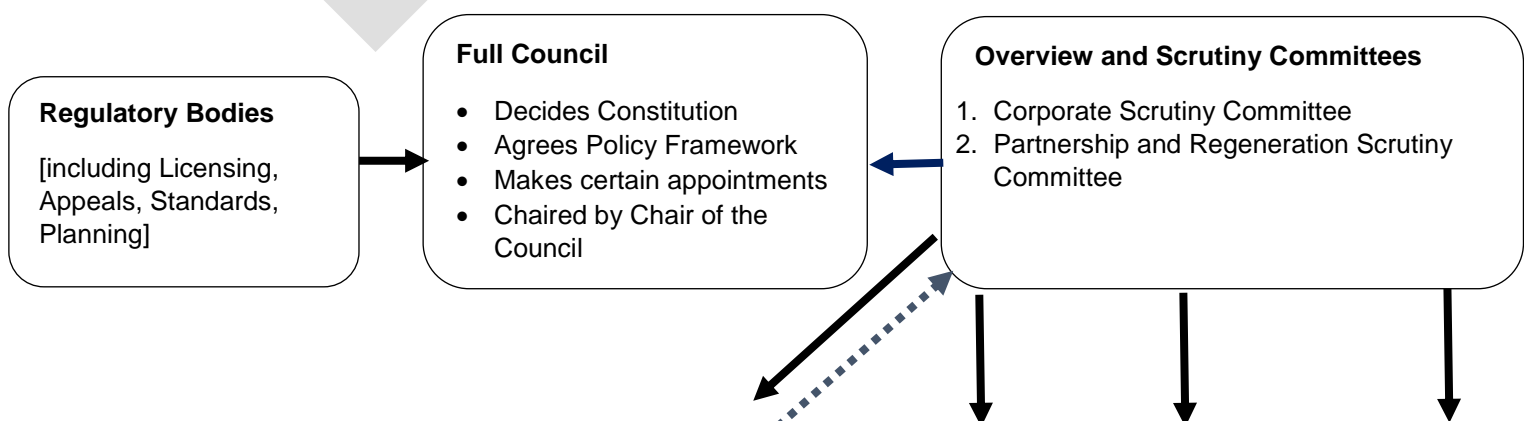
COUNCIL STRUCTURE

The Council has 35 Councillors in total. 9 Councillors form the Executive, the main decision making body. The Council also has a number of Committees to deal with matters like Licensing, Planning and internal issues such as Governance and Staffing Matters.

The rules governing the way in which Overview and Scrutiny Committees operate including the legislative context can be found in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

There are 2 Overview and Scrutiny Committees involving the majority of our Elected Members.

SCRUTINY WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS



**Executive
Leader and Portfolio Holders (9)**

- Proposes policy and budget
- Implements policy framework
- Takes delegated executive decisions as a group or individuals

Social
Services
Scrutiny
Panel

Finance
Scrutiny
Panel

Education
Scrutiny
Panel

DRAFT

Good Question? A Guide for Education Scrutiny Members

Your short factual introduction: this gets everyone focused on the key issue. Use the title of anyone you address for clarity

Your open question(s): these questions start with → Who, What, When, Where, How, Why and can't be answered with a yes or no answer. No problem to use two short linked questions

Your probing question(s): these questions usually start with phrases like "Given that you have stated that" Or "Can you be more specific about...." "Can you explain then why...." "What else is required?" "So that I may understand....." "Describe how this will look in 3 years...." "What difference will this make?"

Your closed summarising question(s): these questions can be asked by you or (if you miss it) by the Chairman at the end of your contribution. They aim to achieve absolute clarity of an answer and are aimed at achieving a clear "yes" or "no" answer for the respondent. Feel free to use 2 short linked closed questions. These questions begin with "So you are stating that....."; "You feel therefore that" ; "So you are clear that" ; "Your target is therefore"