

## ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> October, 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Committee Nominations – Finance Scrutiny Panel and Education Scrutiny Panel
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To nominate an Elected Member(s) from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to serve on the Finance Scrutiny Panel and Education Scrutiny Panel
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	Cllr Douglas Fowle
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Cllr Robin Williams, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Housing Cllr Dafydd Roberts, Portfolio Holder for Education and the Welsh Language
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Lynn Ball, Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer Marc Jones, Director of Function (Resources) / Section 151 Officer Marc Berw Hughes, Director of Education, Skills and Young People
<b>Report Author:</b> <b>Tel:</b> <b>Email:</b>	Anwen Davies, Scrutiny Manager 07971167198 AnwenDavies@ynysmon.llyw.cymru
<b>Local Members:</b>	Applicable to all Scrutiny Members

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### 1 - Recommendation/s

R1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is requested to nominate:

- 1 Elected Member to serve on the **Finance Scrutiny Panel**
- 1 Elected Member to serve on the **Education Scrutiny Panel**.

### 2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Not applicable

### 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** The potential impacts the decision would have on:

- protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
- those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making 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

Not applicable

#### 5 – Background / Context

##### 1. Background

1.1 Members will be aware that consideration was given to a number of panels which require Scrutiny Member representation at a meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee convened on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Nominations were agreed in respect of all 3 Scrutiny Panels. This report discusses membership of the Finance and Education Scrutiny Panels.

1.2 The terms of reference documents pertaining to both Panels are attached (**Appendix 1 & 2**) in order to assist Members in the selection process.

##### 2. Discussion

##### 2.1 Membership of the Finance and Education Scrutiny Panels

Panel membership is not subject to political balance principles and rules<sup>1</sup>. Core membership of the Panels includes:

##### Finance Scrutiny Panel

- **Elected Members** – 3 Members from both Scrutiny Committees<sup>2</sup>
- **Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing** – as observer with no vote
- **Officers** – Director of Function (Resources) / Section 151 Officer, Accountancy Services Manager, Scrutiny Manager.

##### Education Scrutiny Panel

- **Elected Members** – 4 Members from both Scrutiny Committees
- **Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language** – as observer with no vote
- **Officers** – Director of Education, Skills and Young People, Scrutiny Manager.

<sup>1</sup> The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out the main principles governing political balance of local authorities

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Scrutiny Committee and Partnership & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

## 2.2 Current Membership of the Finance and Education Scrutiny Panels

In light of deliberations by both Scrutiny Committees in June, 2022<sup>3</sup>, current membership of the Panel is as follows:

### Finance Scrutiny Panel

- **Corporate Scrutiny Committee (3 Members)**
  - i. Cllr Geraint ap Bebb (chair)
  - ii. Cllr Dyfed Wyn Jones
  - iii. Cllr Ieuan Williams
  
- **Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee (3 Members)**
  - i. Cllr Dylan Rees (vice-chair)
  - ii. Cllr Ken Taylor
  - iii. Cllr Derek Owen.

### Education Scrutiny Panel

- **Corporate Scrutiny Committee (4 Members)**
  - i. Cllr Dyfed Wyn Jones
  - ii. Cllr Arfon Wyn
  - iii. Cllr Alwen Watkin
  - iv. Cllr Keith Roberts
  
- **Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee (4 Members)**
  - i. Cllr Gwilym Jones (chair)
  - ii. Cllr Margaret Roberts (vice-chair)
  - iii. Cllr Non Dafydd
  - iv. Cllr Derek Owen.

2.3 One vacancy has arisen on the Finance Scrutiny Panel and also the Education Scrutiny Panel as a result of Councillor Dyfed Wyn Jones' resignation - resulting from his recent appointment to the Executive. These vacancies are from the cohort of Elected Members representing the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the Panels.

## 3. Issues for consideration

3.1 The Corporate Scrutiny is now requested to nominate one Elected Member to serve on the Finance Scrutiny Panel and also one Elected Member to serve on the Education Scrutiny Panel.

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

### 6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010

Not applicable

<sup>3</sup> Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 and Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2022

<b>6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)</b>
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Not applicable
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<b>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</b>
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Not applicable
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<b>7 – Financial Implications</b>
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Not applicable.
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<b>8 – Appendices:</b>
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Terms of Reference – Finance Scrutiny Panel and Education Scrutiny Panel
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<b>9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):</b>
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## TERMS OF REFERENCE & *MODUS OPERANDI*

### FINANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

## PART I – BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Financial Scrutiny

In the current economic climate, Members need assurance that the Council will make the best use of diminishing resources, particularly financial resources:

*"... Effective scrutiny is even more important as public services respond to the challenges of the global financial situation while continuing to try to improve services. Effective scrutiny can improve the evidence base for decisions on the allocation of resources as well as ensuring that decisions are transparent and are made in accordance with the needs of the local community..."<sup>1</sup>*

"How can we add value?" is the key question to be asked in terms of financial scrutiny and "how can we demonstrate that value is added at each stage of the financial process?" In this context, consideration should be given to the following issues:

- The process of setting the budget itself
- Determining priorities among competing demands
- Effective use of funds
- How financial monitoring and management takes place.

Financial 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 taxpayers and local communities. As such, effective Scrutiny can:

- Challenge effectively
- Hold decision makers to account; and
- Assist the Executive to develop a robust budget for forthcoming years.

### Our Local Arrangements

The scrutiny of the process of establishing the Council's annual budget has developed and matured over recent years laying the foundations for a better, more strategic process based on outcomes and good practice. In fact, the process has allowed for a more systematic path with regard to financial scrutiny, which is an essential component of sound financial management and governance.

The scrutiny work carried out by the Finance Scrutiny Panel<sup>2</sup> during the last Administration has also been a positive development in our financial scrutiny arrangements, through:

- Development of a model focusing on a smaller group
- Members developing a level of expertise
- Encouraging good attendance and teamwork.

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<sup>1</sup> Good scrutiny? Good question! Improvement study Auditor General Wales: Scrutiny in Local Government, May 2014. Also, Raising the stakes – financial scrutiny in challenging times. A guide for Welsh local authorities (Centre for Public Scrutiny, June, 2014)

<sup>2</sup> The Finance Scrutiny Panel was established in Summer, 2017 as a sub panel of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

## PART II – PANEL REMIT AND SCOPE

### REMIT

The Finance Scrutiny Panel will operate with the following key objectives:

- Develop a model of working on finance matters focusing on a smaller group to enable Members to become more involved, develop a level of expertise, encourage good attendance and teamwork
- Forum to discuss information regarding the Council's financial risks, as a basis to inform the forward work programme of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
- Free up space on the agenda of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee meetings in order to ensure scrutiny of transformational and strategic matters
- Forum to develop a group of Members with the expertise and ownership to lead financial discussions in the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

### SCOPE

Topic	Work programme	Timeline
<b>Induction</b>	Induction of Panel members	4 July, 2022
<b>Quarterly monitoring of the Revenue and Capital Expenditure</b>	Scrutiny of expenditure against budget profile	Quarterly
<b>The forthcoming year's budget</b>	Sharing information on financial risks to the Council in order to inform the forward work programme of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee	July → September
	Draft budget - the mechanics and process of the financial settlement	
	Overview of the position regarding any efficiencies	October → November
	Scrutinise risks associated with the budget proposals	
Scrutinise how achievable the proposals are		
	Scrutinise the Council Tax level for the following year	
<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	Scrutinise the principles and assumptions	September
<b>Service Areas</b>	Scrutinise pressures within individual service areas	To be scheduled within the annual budget cycle
<b>Debt Management</b>	Scrutiny of debt management performance (to include income collection rates)	To be confirmed

Topic	Work programme	Timeline
<b>Fees and Charges</b>	Scrutiny of fees and charges for the coming financial year	To be confirmed
<b>Second Home Premium</b>	Scrutinise the principles, assumptions and recommendations	November / December (tbc)
<b>HRA Business Plan</b>	Scrutinise the principles and assumptions	January / February
<b>Council balances and reserves</b>	Questioning and scrutiny	June / July

## PART III – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

### 1. Panel Membership

Panel membership will not be subject to political balance principles and rules<sup>3</sup>.

The core membership of the Panel will include:

- i. **Elected members** - 3 members from both scrutiny committees
- ii. **Portfolio Member for Resources** – as an observer, with no vote
- iii. **Officers** – Director of Function (Resources) and S151 Officer, Accountancy Services Manager, Scrutiny Manager

The Panel's work will require the attendance of other Elected Members (e.g. members of the Executive Committee) and / or officers from other service areas.

### 2. Frequency of Meetings and Quorum

- **Frequency of meetings** – the panel has been established as a standing panel to consider the breadth of local authority financial issues which are summarised in the table above. The panel will therefore meet regularly, in accordance with the schedules and timelines of the Council's budgetary processes.
- **Quorum** – this will not apply to the panel.

### 3. Recording Meetings and Reporting Arrangements

- It is intended for the panel to run in the format of a business meeting. The Scrutiny Unit will collate and distribute any papers in preparation for each meeting and provide a list of action points following each meeting
- **Reporting arrangements** - regular reporting by panel members to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

[20/06/22]

<sup>3</sup> The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out the main principles governing political balance of local authorities

## TERMS OF REFERENCE & *MODUS OPERANDI*

### EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL

## PART I – BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### 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 horizon<sup>1</sup>, there is a potential risk for much less clarity and understanding of who is accountable for what and who has the overview of local education systems.

It is therefore opportune to reconsider 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 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 element of the leadership role of Scrutiny Members. Good scrutiny is about adding value, strengthening decisions and outcomes.

Scrutiny of education is therefore 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 coordinate activities
- That all efforts are having a positive impact on pupils 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 taxpayers and local communities. As such, effective Scrutiny can:

- Challenge effectively
- Hold decision makers to account; and
- Assist the Executive to make robust decision for future generations.

### Our Local Arrangements

Scrutiny of schools has evolved and developed since the Schools' Progress Review Panel was established in 2012<sup>2</sup>. The role of the Panel until recently focused on improving performance of all schools by providing robust challenge on individual schools' performance; encouraging the sharing of good practice between schools, taking on board lessons learnt and individual schools' experience; enhancing local Members knowledge of key performance drivers and challenges facing schools on the Isle of Anglesey; evidencing that school performance was being monitored by Elected Members.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> The Schools' Progress Review Panel was established in November, 2012 by the former Education and Leisure Scrutiny Committee. It arose from recommendations made by Estyn at the time on the quality of education services for children and young people on Anglesey.



The scrutiny work carried out by the former Schools' Progress Review Panel during the past decade has been a positive development, having an impact on schools' performance by:

- Development of a model focusing on a smaller group
- Members developing a level of expertise
- Encouraging good attendance and teamwork.

## PART II – PANEL REMIT AND SCOPE

### REMIT

It is a **natural next step** to further develop Member scrutiny of education ensuring a broader scope to its work, with the following key benefits:

- 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
- Further strengthen the capacity of Members to challenge performance by improving the quality of information and data on schools
- Forum to discuss information around Service risks as a basis to inform the forward work programme of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
- 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

### What Estyn expects to see in terms of political leadership and scrutiny

Elected Members have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the education provision to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively:

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

### SCOPE

Topic	Work programme Focus	Timeline
Effective Scrutiny	Induction of Panel members – workshop format.	14 July, 2022
Skills	Skills set - training & development inputs to ensure clarity of role and subject knowledge to enable effective scrutiny eg Estyn, GwE, service area leads.	Delivery throughout the municipal year ensuring alignment with Panel scrutiny work

Topic	Work programme Focus	Timeline
Self-evaluation	<p><b>Self-evaluation</b> – Member critique of own performance to enable review, reflection &amp; learning. Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Stock take</li> <li>ii. Review, evaluate and reflect</li> <li>iii. Establish foundation for next period</li> <li>iv. Confirm Member ownership.</li> </ol>	Annual – to be determined by Panel members
<b>Standards</b>	<p>Scrutinise performance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Service</li> <li>• Individual schools</li> </ul> <p>in order to raise standards in the County.</p> <p>[data source: Welsh Government revised guidance on performance data]</p>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
	<p>Scrutinise performance on wellbeing aspects with a particular focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance</li> <li>• Exclusions</li> <li>• Trauma informed schools</li> </ul> <p>[data source: local authority data on attendance &amp; exclusions]</p>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<p>Scrutinise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• voice / influence of stakeholders in the provision of education on the Isle of Anglesey</li> <li>• effectiveness of partnership working in supporting the delivery of education services</li> </ul>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
<b>Voice of the Learner</b>	Scrutinise the effectiveness of mechanisms in place to hear the voice of the learner as an integral part of the education provision on the Isle of Anglesey	TBC – discussion with Panel members
<b>Service effectiveness</b>	<p>Monitor and scrutinise the effectiveness of education provision (strengths &amp; weaknesses) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vulnerable children &amp; young people – Additional Learning Needs, Looked After Children (LAC), Free School Meals cohort</li> <li>• talented &amp; able learners</li> <li>• Curriculum adaption (to meet learner needs)</li> <li>• Any other key priorities identified by the Service</li> </ul>	TBC – discussion with Panel members

Topic	Work programme Focus	Timeline
	<b>Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018</b>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
	<b>Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 - Curriculum for Wales</b>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
<b>Leadership</b>	Scrutinise effectiveness of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>education leadership at all levels</li> <li>succession planning</li> <li>staff development and retention</li> </ul>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
	<b>Professional Learning</b>	TBC – discussion with Panel members
<b>Welsh Language (10 year focus)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scrutinise / monitor delivery of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan for the Isle of Anglesey</li> <li>Monitor local performance against national performance indicators on an annual basis</li> </ul>	TBC – discussion with Panel members

## PART III – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

### 1. Panel Membership

Panel membership will not be subject to political balance principles and rules<sup>3</sup>.

The core membership of the Panel will include:

- i. **Elected members** - 4 Elected Members from both scrutiny committees
- ii. **Portfolio Member for Education** – as an observer, with no vote
- iii. **Officers** – Director of Education, Skills and Young People, Scrutiny Manager.

The Panel's work will require the attendance of other Elected Members (e.g. members of the Executive Committee) and / or officers from other service areas.

### 2. Frequency of Meetings and Quorum

- **Frequency of meetings** – the panel has been established as a standing panel to ensure accountability, oversight and scrutiny of the education system on Anglesey, as summarised in the table above. The panel will therefore meet regularly, in accordance with the timeline for the submission of progress reports on education scrutiny to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.
- **Quorum** – this will not apply to the panel.

<sup>3</sup> The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 sets out the main principles governing political balance of local authorities

### 3. Recording Meetings and Reporting Arrangements

- It is intended for the panel to run in the format of a business meeting. The Scrutiny Unit will collate and distribute any papers in preparation for each meeting and provide a list of action points following each meeting
- **Reporting arrangements** - regular reporting by panel members to the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

[23/05/22]