



# **SIARTER CRAFFU ADDYSG** ***EDUCATION SCRUTINY CHARTER***

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# **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)<sup>1</sup> 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 authorities<sup>2</sup> 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.

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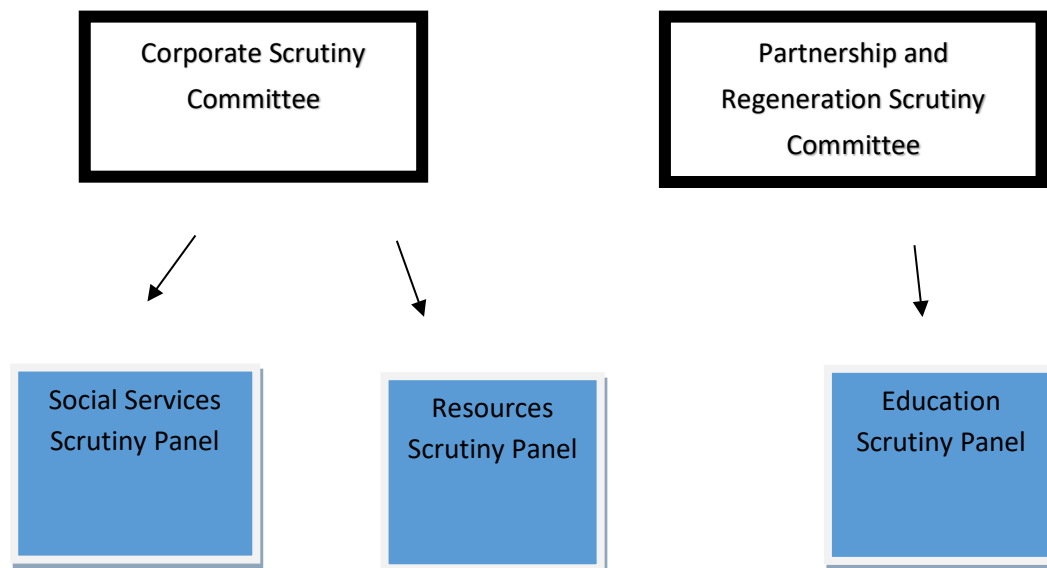
<sup>1</sup> Good Scrutiny Guide: Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (2004)

<sup>2</sup> 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 WESP<sup>3</sup>, 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.

<sup>3</sup> Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032







## 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**

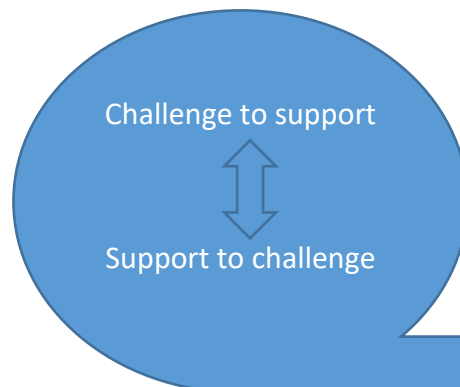
-  Scrutiny is characterised by an atmosphere of mutual trust, co-operation and shared responsibility for achieving the best outcomes for local communities on the Isle of Anglesey
-  Scrutiny Members are non-political in carrying out their support and challenge roles
-  Scrutiny activity directly broadens 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
- is recognised by the Executive and 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 range of internal and external stakeholders



### 3. 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 continuous reform on, clarity and understanding about accountability in the school system is essential.

Education is one of our 6 key strategic objectives<sup>4</sup> - 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

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<sup>4</sup> 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 and enhancing improvement, accountability and transparency.

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 local partners co-ordinate activities
- That all efforts are having a positive impact on learner outcomes.

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 outcomes
- ✚ **Quality and effectiveness** – 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**

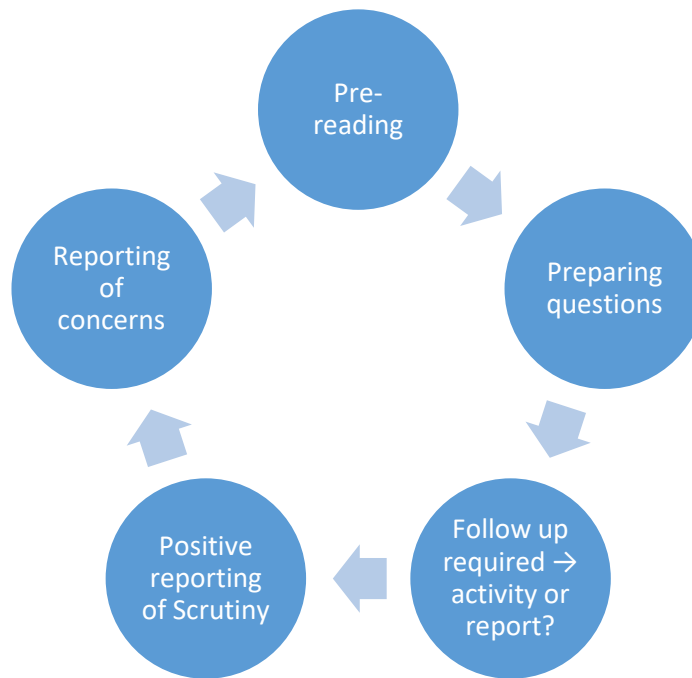
- **sticking to the broader vision for the Education Service**
- **being knowledgeable about the topic and researching before Scrutiny**
- **asking open, probing and supplementary questions**
- **looking in detail at topics**
- **detailed consideration at Committee**
- **be respectful when scrutinising**
- **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**



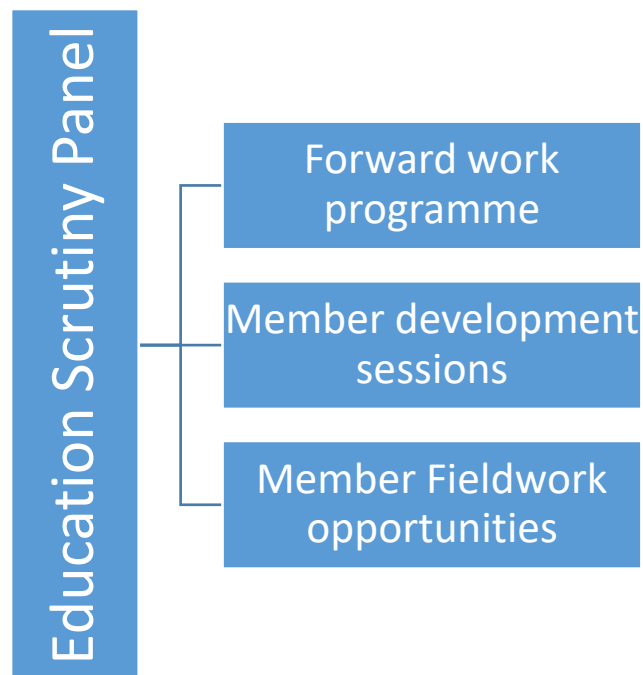
### Elected Members' Pledge

Our Elected Members are committed to:

- i. maintaining effective scrutiny by:



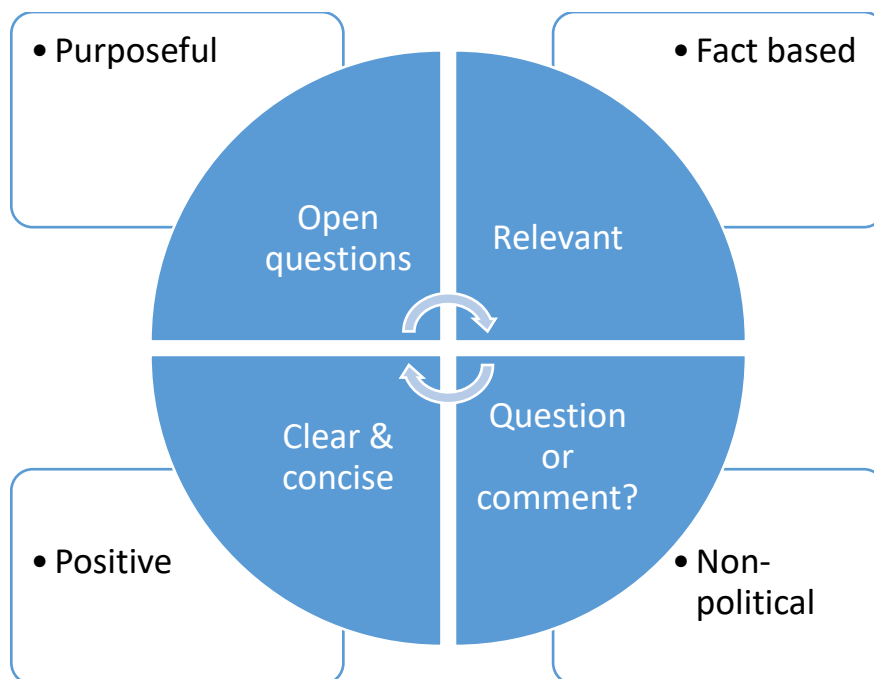
- ii. developing background knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the education provision for children and young people on the Isle of Anglesey by:
  - ✓ further developing our model of working which focuses on a smaller “group” - allowing Members to participate more, develop a level of subject “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 fieldwork sessions to individual 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:

Clarity -  
recommendations

Summarise

Remain on topic

Differentiate between  
questions and comments

Inclusive &  
respectful

Participation by all Members

### EXPLANATORY NOTE:

The Education Scrutiny Charter was drawn up by officers of the Isle of Anglesey County Council in 2022/23 and 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.