

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
REPORT TO:	County Council
DATE:	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
REPORT TITLE:	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2024/25
REPORT BY:	Chairs of the: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corporate Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>2. Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</li> </ol>
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	Report on the work of both scrutiny committees during 2024/25 and provide an overview of the scrutiny work programme for 2025/26
PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):	Not applicable
DIRECTOR / HEAD OF SERVICE:	Lynn Ball, Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer
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LOCAL MEMBERS:	Applicable to all Scrutiny Members

## 1. Recommendations

Full Council is requested to:

**R1** Approve the Scrutiny and Overview Annual Report for 2024/25

**R2** Note the continued progress made in implementing our Scrutiny 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 2025 to May 2026.

## 2. Background and Context

**2.1** This Annual Report on Overview and Scrutiny encompasses the work undertaken by the two scrutiny committees and three scrutiny panels between May 2024 and May 2025.

**2.2** The chairs of both scrutiny committees led on developing the forward work programmes during this period. The scrutiny committees' forward work programmes are submitted to regular meetings of the Scrutiny Committee Chairs and Vice- chairs Forum and for approval at every meeting of the scrutiny committees.

**2.3** Whilst the impact and value of scrutiny activity continues to make a meaningful contribution to the Council's corporate priorities through support and challenge, the Local Authority commissioned an external review of our scrutiny arrangements, which was completed within the context of our local corporate governance framework. The recommendations have informed our scrutiny development programme moving forward. Progress is to be monitored by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum and Leadership Team.

### **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 Full Council resolved 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 forthcoming year.

<b>Appendix:</b>
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2024/25

# **Overview and Scrutiny**

## **Annual Report: 2024-25**



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# 1. FOREWORD

## **Councillor Douglas Massie Fowle**

- **Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee 2024/25**
- **Scrutiny Champion → 2024/25**



It is with pleasure that I 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 10 meetings were convened during the civic year:

- **Annual budget setting 2025/26** – one of the main responsibilities of the Committee is to contribute to the process of setting the Council's annual budget. This is a crucial part of our corporate governance arrangements, having a far-reaching impact on every service area of the Council as well as the public. The Committee considered both the initial draft budget proposals and also the final draft budget for 2025/26 with a significant contribution by the Finance Scrutiny Panel again this year – with the Panel completing in-depth scrutiny of both the revenue and capital budget proposals on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee.
- **Council Plan: 2023-2028** – Members scrutinised a number of key strategic plans which when implemented will enable the Local Authority to realise the 6 key strategic objectives of the Council Plan for 2023-2028. The Committee scrutinised the following plans:
  - Annual Delivery Plan: 2024/25
  - Draft Corporate Self-Assessment 2024
  - Môn Actif Strategic Plan
  - Local Housing Market Assessment 2024
  - Procurement Strategic Plan and New Contract Procedure Rules
  - Flood Risk Management Strategic Plan.

The Committee recommended that these strategic plans be adopted, providing a clear direction for the Council's strategic priorities for the five year period.

- **Quarterly Performance Monitoring** – the Committee monitored performance on a quarterly basis throughout 2024/25, using the corporate scorecard which reports on a range of indicators across the breadth of Council Services. The scorecard continues to evolve as an effective method for Elected Members to scrutinise performance and data. The Scrutiny Committee established a Scrutiny Task & Finish Group during 2024 to examine the performance of one Key Performance Indicator namely KPI 29 (the average number of calendar days taken to let a lettable unit of accommodation excluding Difficult to Let units) with a view to improving performance. The Panel's findings were approved by the Executive in June 2024 as a catalyst for improving performance in this service area.

- Our work as a Committee also included monitoring and scrutinising of the Annual Performance Report 2023/24. This is another core element of the Scrutiny Committee's work.
- **Ambition North Wales** – The Committee reviewed the quarterly monitoring reports and raised relevant questions regarding the progress of ongoing projects—an essential task to maximize the economic benefits for North Wales, and Anglesey in particular. For example, the mitigation measures to address any delays and how the risk of over-expenditure in individual projects will be effectively managed.
- **Housing Services** – The Committee scrutinised the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2025-55 which sets the direction for developing and maintaining the Authority's council housing stock. Members focused specifically on the following themes – alignment with the Council's wider strategic priorities (Council Plan: 2023-2028); affordability of the expansion programme to increase the Local Authority's housing stock; achievability of the priority to maintain and work towards the Welsh Housing Quality Standards II 2023; the risks related to the need for sufficient internal and external capacity to deliver the schemes. The Committee recommended the business plan for adoption by the Council.
- **Social Services** – in the Autumn, Members scrutinised the Annual Report for the North Wales Regional Partnership Board (Part 9): 2023/24. The Committee noted progress made through working collaboratively across health and social care services to help support resilient communities and to also ensure a seamless service for individuals requiring care and support. This is aligned to the priorities of the Council Plan namely 'Social Care and Wellbeing' – directly providing the right support at the right time'.
- Finally, the Committee also reviewed the Care Inspectorate for Wales: Adult Services Improvement Check Letter and Action Plan in October. Members revisited this workstream again in April 2025 to review progress and distance travelled. The Report will assist in shaping further service improvements in Adults' Services in line with local priorities.

To end, I acknowledge the work done by the Finance and Social Services Scrutiny Panels and thank all Committee Members and officers who have assisted during 2024/25. I would like to express my gratitude to the Officers from the Scrutiny Team for their ongoing assistance. Lastly, I would also like to take advantage of this opportunity to thank both Councillor Dyfed Wyn Jones and Councillor Sonia Williams for their support as Vice chair during the past 12 months.

**Councillor Douglas Massie Fowlie**  
**(Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee)**

## **Councillor Dylan Rees**

- **Chair of Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee 2024/25**



I am delighted to present an overview of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's work over the past 12 months.

During this time, the Committee has made well-considered and impactful recommendations to the Executive on several critical issues and service areas, as well as on the activities of the Authority's strategic partnerships.

- **Welsh Language** – in June, the Partnership & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee looked at one of the six strategic objectives of the Council Plan for 2023-2028 namely the Welsh Language. The Welsh language is an integral part of our identity, culture and heritage and we have a responsibility to ensure that it continues to develop and thrive. The following areas in particular were scrutinised by Members -
  - I. Welsh Standards Annual Report: 2023/24
  - II. Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2023/24 - Measuring Progress
  - III. Revised Welsh Language Policy
- **Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board** –the Scrutiny Committee welcomed both the Chair and Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board at a meeting of the Committee in November 2024. Representatives from Audit Wales also attended to discuss a recent report on urgent and emergency care flow out of hospitals in the North Wales region. The meeting served as a platform for a productive and constructive dialogue with the Health Board, focusing on key areas of collaboration, including:
  - ✓ Health Board Improvement Programme – high level overview
  - ✓ Resilience of Community Clinical Services on the Isle of Anglesey
  - ✓ Joint Working between the Health Board and Isle of Anglesey County Council Adults' Services

The Committee posed pertinent primary and supplementary questions resulting in productive scrutiny of a key strategic partner to the Local Authority. As a result, a tangible outcome was achieved: the Health Board has agreed to attend Scrutiny Committee annually. Additionally, arrangements will be made to convene a briefing or forum session, bringing together representatives from the Health Board and Elected Members. This will provide Members with an opportunity to share their constituents' experiences and concerns regarding the provision of healthcare.

- **Emergency Services**- In July 2024, the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee hosted representatives from the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Welsh Ambulance Services Trust. The meeting encouraged productive discussions and scrutiny, focusing on the following key areas:
  - ✓ Current service provision on the Isle of Anglesey;
  - ✓ Resilience, challenges and affordability of the current service delivery model on Anglesey;

✓Joint working with the Isle of Anglesey County Council

Members asked relevant questions of both Emergency Services regarding response times in rural parts of Anglesey, highlighting the potential risk to lives due to delayed Fire Service and Welsh Ambulance Service responses. The meeting marked a continued commitment to strengthen the partnership between the Isle of Anglesey County Council and the Emergency Services, with plans to invite the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service and Welsh Ambulance Service Trust to attend annually.

- **Strategic Partnerships**-The Scrutiny Committee also invited the following key partners to address the Committee over the past 12 months:
  - I. Ynys Mon Citizens Advice
  - II. Môn CF
  - III. Menter Môn
  - IV. Medrwn Môn

Scrutinising the work of our funded partners is crucial to ensuring alignment with the Council Plan 2023-2028 and the regional partnership landscape. The following key areas were examined by Members:

- ✓ Organisation purpose, role and priorities
  - ✓ Budgets (core and grant funding) and staffing structure
  - ✓ Partners –their collaborators
  - ✓ Nature of joint working with the Isle of Anglesey County Council
  - ✓ Outputs and outcomes created for people and communities across the Island
  - ✓ Opportunities, challenges and risks to the future.
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- **Council Plan: 2023-2028** – Members scrutinised a number of key strategic plans which when implemented will enable the Local Authority to realise the 6 key strategic objectives of the Council Plan for 2023-2028. To that end, the Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the following plans and reports-
    - I. Modernising Adult Services Strategic Plan
    - II. Corporate Safeguarding Report
    - III. Annual Report on Equalities
    - IV. Shared Prosperity Fund
  - **Anglesey and Gwynedd Public Services Board (PSB)** – The Committee leads on scrutinising the work of the Board, which is a partnership between Gwynedd and Anglesey. This includes scrutinising the delivery of the Wellbeing Plan, governance arrangements and the Annual Report. During the 2024/25 civic year, Members carefully considered the Board's annual report: 2023/24 and examples of quality scrutiny work were seen with Members asking how the Public Services Board fits into the complex regional partnership structures and maximise collaboration to avoid duplication of effort.
  - **Education Scrutiny** – Members added value through scrutinising key areas of education services on the Isle of Anglesey with the Education Scrutiny Panel looking in detail at some key priority areas –
    - I. Schools in a Category, Estyn Follow Up or Receiving Additional Support
    - II. GwE Annual Report for Anglesey: 2023/24
    - III. Gwynedd and Ynys Mon Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion Service



During the year, the Committee received the latest information about standards in schools on Anglesey, providing assurance that improvement measures are in place, as well as appropriate support, for schools that raise concerns.

The above summary highlights the Scrutiny Committee's contribution to the Council's decision-making over the past year. The scrutiny process is vital to the Council's corporate governance, holding decision-makers accountable, challenging constructively, and ensuring public input. The Public Speaking Protocol formalises the process for public participation in Scrutiny Committee meetings.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to members of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee and the Education Scrutiny Panel for their collaborative efforts over the past year. Their dedication, valuable contributions, and unwavering commitment have played a crucial role in advancing the work of the Committee, significantly supporting the delivery of the Council Plan and upholding the high standards of our public services.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my Vice-chair, Councillor Gwilym Owen Jones, for the invaluable support he has provided me with.

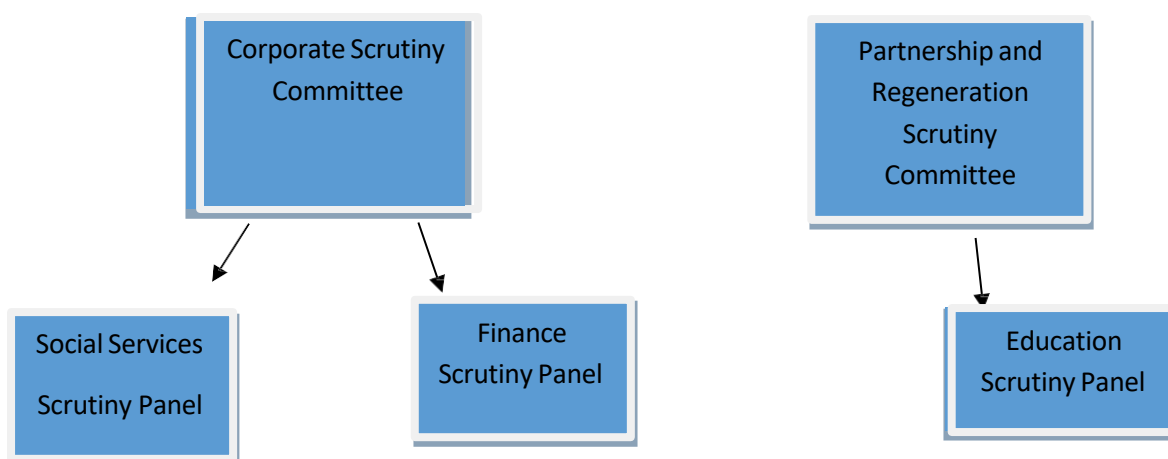
**Councillor Dylan Rees**  
**(Chair of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee)**

## 2. CONTEXT

**2.1** This Annual Report captures achievements during the 2024/25 civic year and provides an insight into how Scrutiny on the Isle of Anglesey has been able to influence the decision-making process. On Anglesey, Scrutiny is delivered through two Scrutiny Committees made up of locally elected Councillors and co-optees and 3 Scrutiny Panels. Scrutiny continues to have a strong voice in the Local Authority by delivering a full programme of formal meetings. However, we want to achieve more ensuring that the views and experiences of our local communities are heard about what is working well and where improvements are needed. Citizen engagement and participation is one of the development themes that we will focus on during 2025/26.

**2.2** 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, be a critical friend, 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**.

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



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

**2.3** Both Scrutiny Committees met regularly and completed their priority scrutiny work during 2024/25. The Corporate Scrutiny Committee has undertaken successful scrutiny, ensuring that the Council achieves its corporate objectives and its service objectives in line with the Council Plan 2023-2028. The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee has scrutinised some key strategic partnerships and has fully complied with all statutory requirements.

### 3. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The development and support areas during 2024/25 have focused on the following inputs:

- i. for individuals new to their role (Co-opted Members and officers supporting Member Scrutiny)
- ii. a continued focus on technology (upskilling Members)
- iii. developmental training for scrutiny chairs and vice chairs, focusing on key leadership skills, impact demonstration, and effective questioning strategies. This included tailored training for the chair and vice chair of the Finance Panel.

✚ Our Member training and development programme is ongoing and provides opportunities to self-evaluate the impact of scrutiny work on our corporate governance arrangements.

✚ We will continuously review our Member training and development programme in order to fully respond to the key messages of our recent scrutiny review. This will ensure that the conditions are created for continuous improvement and robust scrutiny by Elected Members. Our training and development opportunities for the year ahead will therefore focus on supporting our scrutiny improvement plan.

✚ Scrutiny across a broader base – a broader approach to Member scrutiny has been further developed and consolidated during 2024/25 by:

- i. effective forward planning to ensure alignment between topics discussed at Member briefing sessions, scrutiny panels and 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 a breadth of topics discussed at Member monthly briefing sessions in support of Scrutiny and ensuring information available to Members on key strategic and transformation topics

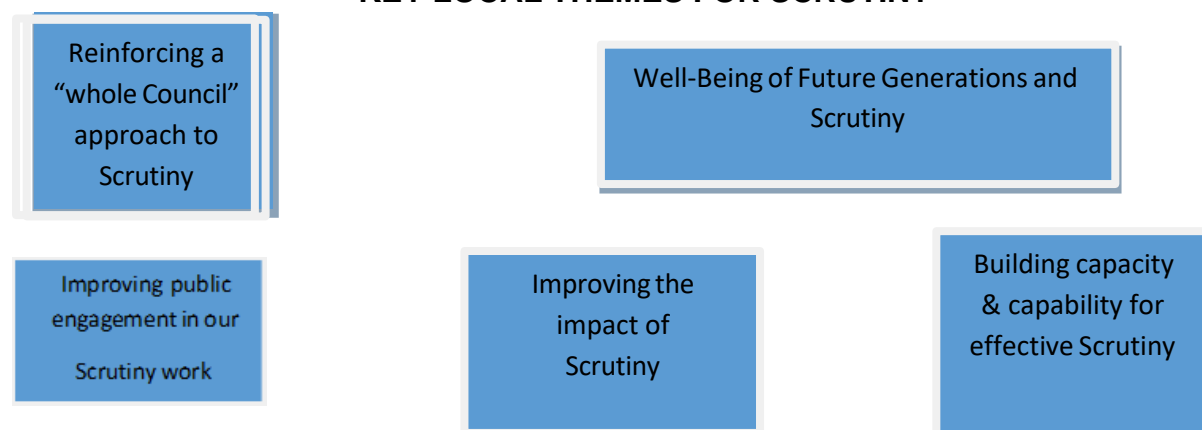
## 4. KEY LOCAL THEMES FOR SCRUTINY

### 4.1 Key Themes

A number of key themes underpin our local scrutiny work streams (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 current legislative requirements.

#### KEY LOCAL THEMES FOR SCRUTINY



## 5. ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF SCRUTINY

### 5.1 MEASURING OUTPUTS

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

**5.1.1 Committee meetings** – a total of 21 scrutiny committee meetings were convened during 2024/25:

Committee	Number of Meetings Convened
Corporate Scrutiny Committee	10
Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee	11

There are 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.

**5.1.2 Scrutiny Panel meetings** – there have been regular meetings of the 3 scrutiny panels over the past 12 months:

Panel	Number of meetings convened
Social Services Scrutiny Panel	4
Finance Scrutiny Panel	6
Education Scrutiny Panel	10

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
- ✚ Introducing a reporting / escalation process ensuring that the work of scrutiny panels is reported regularly to the two Parent Committees, with Chairs of the Panels proposing recommendations when appropriate
- ✚ Ensuring 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 all important subjects.

**5.1.3 Scrutiny Recommendations**-Scrutiny is all about holding to account and driving improvements to public services

In looking at our Scrutiny work by Elected Members during 2024/25 whether at a formal, public committee meeting, smaller scrutiny panel or task and finish group, Scrutiny made the following number of recommendations....



Scrutiny therefore provides meaningful recommendations which add value to our decision-making process and have led to positive change.

#### 5.1.4 Scrutiny Recommendation-Case Example

In November 2024, Senior representatives of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board attended a meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to consider partnership working between the Health Board and Local Authority. Following robust deliberations and scrutiny questioning, a key recommendation was agreed. Illustrating scrutiny adding value and driving positive change: -

##### Recommendation:

“That arrangements be made to convene a briefing/forum session with representatives from the Health Board and Elected Members so that Members can express their electorates experiences and concerns as regard to the provision of health care.”



**5.1.5 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 are discussed regularly with the Leadership Team and Heads of Service. The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum review progress on a regular basis.



Both committees and the 3 panels 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 ensure focus on:

- i. Strategic aspects
- ii. Citizen / other stakeholder engagement and outcomes
- iii. Priorities of the 2023-2028 Council Plan
- iv. Risks
- v. Work of audit, inspection and regulation
- vi. Matters on the forward work programme of the Executive.

**5.1.6 Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum** – is well established and continues to meet regularly. 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 conversations between the Executive (Leader), Chairs/Vice-Chairs of Scrutiny and Leadership Team (Chief Executive) to ensure effective alignment between work programmes across the work of the Authority.


**5.1.7 “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

ii. Enable and encourage self-analysis and reflection by Scrutiny Members in order to identify strengths and areas for further development / focus.

**5.1.8 Scrutiny & Wellbeing of Future Generations** – developing the role of Scrutiny by:

-  Ensuring Members focus on the 5 ways of working to frame questions,<sup>1</sup> Introducing a revised scrutiny report template, placing wellbeing of future generations at its core

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<sup>1</sup> Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration, Involvement (Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015)

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 other key partnerships.

### 5.1.9 Citizen and other Stakeholder Engagement Participation in Scrutiny –

- ✚ Scrutiny provides a vehicle to allow the views of residents, local communities, key partners and other significant stakeholders to be heard in the Local Authority's decision-making process thus adding value to democracy



We currently engage with stakeholders and the public by:

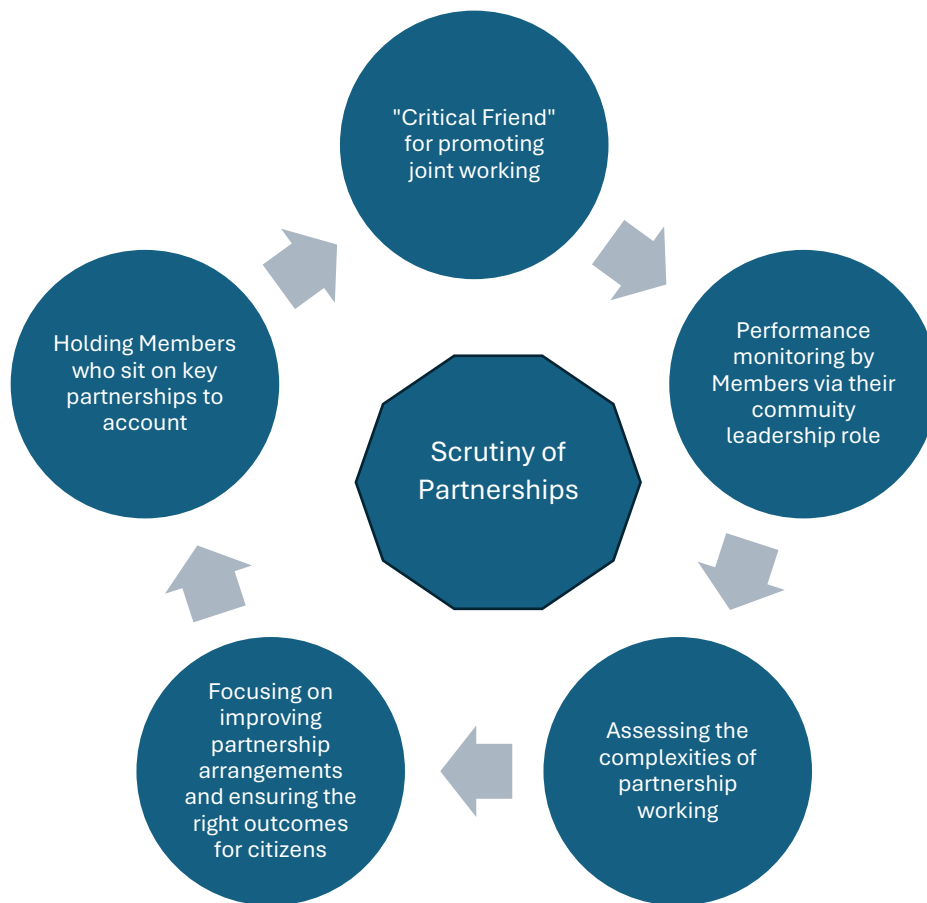
- ✓ Having a Protocol for Public Speaking in Scrutiny Committees as a key element of our corporate governance arrangements
- ✓ Publishing each Committee's forward work programme on the Council's website providing public awareness of our forthcoming work and opportunity for wider contribution
- ✓ Inviting key partners to contribute at public meetings in order to broaden our understanding, inform discussions in the Council and add value to our partnership working locally
- ✓ Having co-optees on our Scrutiny Committees representing the Church in Wales, Catholic Diocese and parent governors
- ✓ Questioning strategies which include questions of public interest
- ✓ Site visits to local services to observe frontline service delivery (Scrutiny Panels)
- ✓ Ensuring transparency by webcasting our Committee meetings for public viewing
- ✓ Publicising our Committee meetings on social media in order to encourage engagement
- ✓ A specific Scrutiny contact point via the Council's CRM<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ providing the public with an accessible point of contact specifically related to the democratic process

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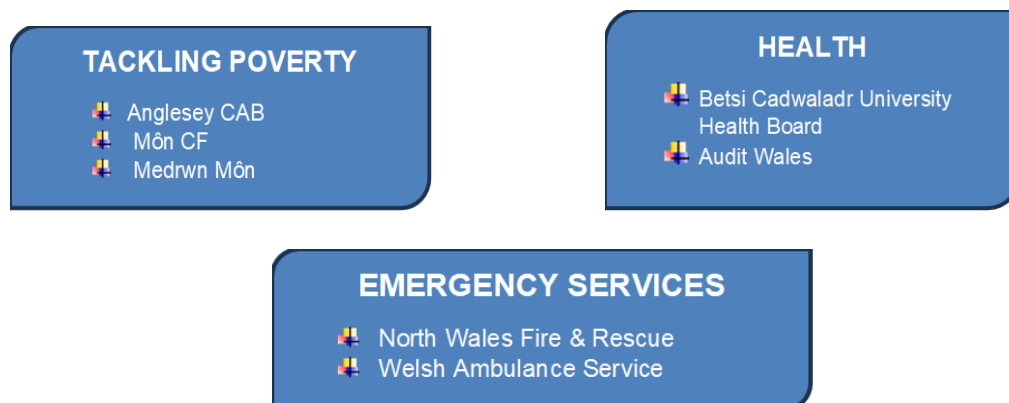
<sup>2</sup> Customer Relationship Management System (CRM)



- Our Scrutiny of Partnerships provides a forum for constructive challenge and an opportunity for learning and self-reflection by:



### Examples of our work involving stakeholders during 2024/25:



**Enhancing our Engagement** – Scrutiny is all about driving improvement of Council services and we want to go further in our engagement with the public and other stakeholders. We are therefore reviewing our arrangements for

promoting citizen and stakeholder engagement in Scrutiny in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

Our aim is to strengthen the Council's engagement with the public and improve public awareness of its existing democratic participation arrangements.

## 5.2 MEASURING OUTCOMES

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, methodical way. Also, 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.



### 5.2.1 IMPACT OF SCRUTINY

All told, the ultimate goal of Scrutiny is to drive improvement in Council service delivery. Understanding the added value of the work of Scrutiny and its overall impact comes from the outputs and outcomes of our wide range of activities during the civic year. Scrutiny on the Isle of Anglesey therefore makes an impact by:

- ✓ Raising public awareness of Council Services which includes what works well and not so well
- ✓ Shining a light on Council services of significant public interest and value
- ✓ Providing an arena for decision-makers, stakeholder and public collaboration
- ✓ Challenging policy assumptions through allowing more voices to be heard in the decision-making process
- ✓ Providing assurance to decision makers on key policies, partnerships and service delivery
- ✓ Proposing recommendations to the Council's decision-makers
- ✓ Highlighting possible improvement opportunities in policies and service delivery

### 5.2.2 INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Our work measuring the outcomes and impact of Scrutiny practice in the Council has also included some survey work with Members and Senior Officers, through small group discussions using a set of core questions as a framework. The findings of this exercise have fed into our improvement priorities for 2025/26:

#### Self-assessment core questions:

- What were the highlights in Scrutiny during the past year?
- In your opinion, what impact did Scrutiny have during 2024/25 in supporting the Executive to make effective decisions?
- What aspects 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?

#### SCRUTINY CHAIRS AND VICE CHAIRS:

What our Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs had to say.....

The finding of our Scrutiny Review have enabled us to build on our Executive Members' willingness to engage with Scrutiny. Portfolio Holders are now more clearly seen to be held to account rather than Officers

The varying levels of experience among scrutiny members can impact the quality of the discussion at meetings

The new select committee-style seating plan introduced at scrutiny committees has worked particularly well

A highlight for me was the Scrutiny Task & Finish Group: Letting of Local Authority Housing. This demonstrated genuine and impactful Scrutiny

Identifying additional actions that arise from Committee meetings and reporting on progress shows evidence of how we add value to the scrutiny process. This is good practice

Scrutiny Members should feel more confident in challenging, asking supplementary questions, and seeking additional information to ensure a deeper understanding

## SCRUTINY MEMBERS:

What our Scrutiny Members had to say...

The opportunity to consider a broad range of Service areas has enabled me to do my scrutiny work more effectively

Scrutiny provides valuable guidance to the Executive, helping them understand views of the public and inform their decisions.

For me one of the highlights of the year was the detailed scrutiny work of the Education Scrutiny Panel. This provided a valuable indepth look at the education provision in the classroom

Greater recognition should be given to the scrutiny panels for their valuable contribution to scrutiny

A highlight for me was the visit to Schools with a focus on the positive steps being taken to improve and develop the Welsh language provision

We need to follow up with supplementary questions in committee meetings in order to get to the root of the issue

The Education Scrutiny Panel has developed significantly over the years, establishing a clear purpose and direction. We need to ensure we continue with this and that we are scrutinising and providing evidence of our work as a Scrutiny Panel

Now that we have the opportunity for face-to-face meetings will greatly improve our ability to ensure effective scrutiny

It's important to thoroughly follow up on the actions discussed during meetings to ensure accountability and improvements in performance across our service areas

## EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

What our Executive Members had to say....

Scrutiny is a very important element of the Council's work and every meeting plays its part in this process

The diligent work of our Scrutiny Committees provide the Executive with the confidence to make sound decisions backed by the support of critical challenge

Recent changes introduced to highlight Portfolio Holders' accountability during Scrutiny meetings, have strengthened our Scrutiny Committees

An additional meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee attended by the Chair and Chief Executive of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board highlighted an excellent example of Scrutiny work. Specifically, a question on planning applications that highlighted Councillors frustration and the Chairman's recognition of its importance

It is crucial that Scrutiny Members positively and thoughtfully challenge reports to ensure robust and transparent decisions by the Executive

## LEADERSHIP TEAM:

Some of the aspects which could be improved or delivered more effectively in the future are:  
1.) Attendance at scrutiny committees in person rather than online  
2.) Increased supplementary questions

A greater Officer understanding of preparation meetings, will result in more effective scrutiny in public meetings

Some of the highlights for me during the past year were:

- Scrutiny's input into the process of setting the budget
  - Scrutiny of external bodies
- Consistently robust arrangements in place for public meetings

## 6. LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025/26

The Local Authority has commissioned an external review of its current scrutiny structure and arrangements. This review considered:

- i. best in class practice and benchmarking against other organisations which provided a robust set of recommendations in moving forward
- ii. measuring outcomes and impact of Member scrutiny as an integral part of practice.

The outcomes of this review forms the basis of the next chapter in our development journey.

### KEY SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENT THEMES: 2025/26

Theme	How / Summary of Actions	Outcome
<b>A more Focused, Balanced and Member Led Work Programme</b>	<b>Test of Significance:</b> Revise our arrangements for a focused, balanced and Member led work programme by introducing a new test of significance process	<b>Proactive engagement by scrutiny councillors to prioritise items for the scrutiny forward work programme</b>  <b>Concise Committee agendas</b>
<b>A more Streamlined and Flexible Scrutiny Structure and Governance Arrangements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i. Balance of formal and informal meetings:</b> Continue with the current Scrutiny panels and create capacity to do more targeted and prioritised scrutiny task and finish / field work.</li> <li><b>ii. Terms of Reference and Reporting Arrangements:</b> Ensure revised terms of reference and reporting arrangements for Panels to provide feedback to Parent Committees which are fit for purpose</li> <li><b>iii. Non Discussion Items:</b> Prioritise items for consideration by Scrutiny via a robust Test of Significance process</li> </ol>	<b>A well designed structure where “form follows function”</b>
<b>Public Engagement and Participation in Scrutiny</b>	<b>i. Public Speaking Protocol:</b> Review and periodically promote our public speaking protocol	<b>Meaningful resident participation which adds value to Scrutiny</b>

	<p><b>ii. Allocate a seat</b> in scrutiny committee meetings for public representation</p> <p><b>iii. Broader Engagement and Participation</b> – explore further action to enable broader engagement and participation in Scrutiny</p>	
<b>Well-being of Future Generations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support chairs in developing the role of scrutiny whilst meeting the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015</li> <li>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</li> <li>Continuously review our arrangements to ensure that we remain compliant with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act</li> </ul>	<b>Better Outcomes</b>
<b>Partnership Working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to co-produce a robust programme to scrutinise Key Strategic Partners</li> <li>Ensure alignment with the Council's Corporate Register of Partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Promoting a collaborative approach to decision-making and ensuring diverse perspectives are considered</b></p> <p><b>Evaluating the success of partnerships, ensuring they are delivering on intended objectives in line with the Council Plan and vision</b></p>
<b>Continued Self-Assessment of our Local Scrutiny Arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure a robust self-evaluation framework for Scrutiny Members as a key component of the Scrutiny Annual Report, collaborating with Members of the Executive and Leadership Team</li> </ul>	<p><b>Provide a well-rounded and thorough self-assessment of our local scrutiny arrangements</b></p> <p><b>Outward looking</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise opportunities through National UK wide Professional Organisations to benchmark against best in class</li> </ul>	<b>Measure progress and identify areas for growth or improvement</b>
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## 7. CONTACT SCRUTINY

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

Scrutiny Team, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Council Offices, Llangefni, Anglesey, LL777TW

Anwen Davies	Scrutiny Manager	<b>Tel:</b> 07971167198 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:AnwenDavies@ynysmon.llyw.cymru">AnwenDavies@ynysmon.llyw.cymru</a>
Elin Allsopp	Scrutiny Officer	<b>Tel:</b> 07812700543 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:ElinAllsopp2@ynysmon.llyw.cymru">ElinAllsopp2@ynysmon.llyw.cymru</a>

# **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report: 2024/25**

## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1

### 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 Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)<sup>2</sup> advocates four key principles in support of effective Member scrutiny:

- i. Provide constructive “critical friend” challenge;
- ii. Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- iii. Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role;
- iv. Drive improvement in public services.

<sup>2</sup>Good Scrutiny Guide, Centre for Governance and Scrutiny 2019

### 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 committee meetings 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 ensure these arrangements are in place for 2024/25.

#### Membership

- The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is chaired by Councillor Douglas Massie Fowlie and supported by Vice Chair Councillor Sonia Williams Twelve Elected Members sit on the committee<sup>5</sup> with provision for 4 co-opted members:

## Membership of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

### Elected Members

Name	Ward	Political Party/Group	Name	Ward	Political Party/Group
	Cllr Douglas Fowle (Chair)	Crigyll Anglesey Independents		Cllr Sonia Williams (Vice-chair) Aethwy	Plaid Cymru
	Cllr Ieuan Williams	Lligwy Y Grŵp Annibynnol		Cllr Arfon Wyn Bro Aberffraw	Plaid Cymru
	Cllr John Ifan Jones	Bro Aberffraw Plaid Cymru		Cllr Aled Morris Jones Twrcelyn	Anglesey Independents
	Cllr Jackie Lewis	Talybolion Plaid Cymru		Cllr Keith Roberts Ynys Gybi	Welsh Labour



Cllr Llio A  
Owen

Talybolion

Plaid Cymru



Cllr  
Robert  
Llewelyn  
Jones

Parc a'r  
Mynydd

Anglesey  
Independents



Cllr Alwen  
Pennant  
Watkin

Bodowyr

Plaid Cymru



Cllr  
Geraint  
ap Bebb

Cefni

Plaid Cymru

### Co-opted Members



Mr John Tierney

Representing: The Roman Catholic  
Church in Wales



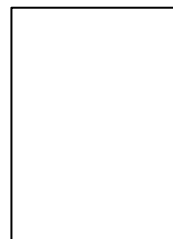
Mrs Wenda Owen

Representing: The Church in Wales



Mrs Gillian Thompson

Representing: /Parent Governor – Primary  
Schools Sector



Vacant Seat: Parent Governor –  
Secondary Schools Sector and  
ALN

## **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 2024/25.

### **Membership:**

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

## Membership of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee

### Elected Members

Name	Ward	Political Party/Group
------	------	-----------------------



Cllr Dylan  
Rees  
(Chair)

Canolbarth Môn

Plaid Cymru



Cllr  
Non  
Dafydd

Canolbarth Môn

Plaid Cymru



Cllr  
Eurn  
Morris

Lligwy

Plaid Cymru



Cllr Sonia  
Williams

Aethwy

Plaid Cymru



Cllr Ken Taylor

Bro'r Llynnoedd

Plaid Cymru

Name	Ward	Political Party/Group
------	------	-----------------------



Cllr  
Gwilym O  
Jones  
(Vice-  
Chair)

Bro'r  
Llynnoedd

The  
Independent  
Group



Cllr  
Margaret  
Roberts

Lligwy

Plaid Cymru



Cllr Jeff  
Evans

Tref Cybi

Anglesey  
Independents



Cllr Derek  
Owen

Twrcelyn

Anglesey  
Independents



Cllr Pip O 'Neill

Tref Cybi

Welsh Labour





Canolbarth Môn  
Cllr Paul Ellis  
Anglesey Independents



Cllr John Ifan Jones  
Bro Aberffraw  
Plaid Cymru

**Co-pted Members**



Mr John Tierney  
Representing: The Roman Catholic Church in Wales



Mrs Wenda Owen  
Representing: The Church in Wales



Mrs Gillian Thompson  
Representing: /Parent Governor – Primary Schools



Vacant Seat: Parent Governor – Secondary Schools Sector and ALN

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 2024/25, the scrutiny committees were aware of the need to seek to focus their work on outcomes and within the Audit Wales framework of characteristics and outcomes for effective local government overview and scrutiny<sup>3</sup>

- 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 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 2024/25 this was not exercised.

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<sup>3</sup> Good Scrutiny? Good Question!, Wales Audit Office, 2014

## APPENDIX 3

### A VISION FOR DELIVERING EFFECTIVE SCRUTINY IN ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Our 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 Principles

- ✓ 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 variety of internal and external stakeholders.





### SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Scrutiny is a key element in holding to account, in a positive and constructive manner, the work of the Council's decision makers (the Executive and officers) and partner organisations in order to help the Council deliver its vision as set out in the Council Plan 2023-2028<sup>4</sup> and to make better decisions. Scrutiny supports services to maintain high service standards and to steer them towards improved efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 This Protocol applies to all Scrutiny Members, all Members of the Executive and Council officers who support and engage with the Scrutiny function.

## 2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims of this Protocol are to:
- i. clarify the relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny Committees
  - ii. ensure smooth conduct of business
  - iii. maintain effective communication between Scrutiny and Executive Members and Council officers
  - iv. Promote an effective role for Scrutiny and foster a good working relationship between Scrutiny Committees and the Executive and Council officers ensuring that Scrutiny makes a valuable contribution and added value to the effective running of the Council.

## 3. Holding the Executive to Account

- 3.1 The role of Scrutiny is to hold the Executive to account by:
- Considering decisions taken by the Executive, individually and collectively, and items on the Forward Work Programme through formal scrutiny committee meetings
  - Reviewing service performance and performance against policy and targets
  - Being prepared to ask searching, probing questions that provide constructive challenge and are relevant to the matters being scrutinised
  - Being positive and respectful in their interactions with Executive Members
  - Representing the voice of the public
  - Listening to the responses provided and assist the Executive in identifying areas for further consideration and improvement
  - Being non-political in carrying out their support and challenge roles.
- 3.2 In return, Executive Members will:

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<sup>4</sup> The Council Plan: 2023-2028

- Be willing to be open, honest and engaged in providing a response to constructive challenge
- Value the importance of Scrutiny
- Be supportive of the scrutiny process and invite and seek an opinion from Scrutiny Members on decisions to be taken, where appropriate
- Provide a positive contribution to Scrutiny meetings
- Attend meetings when invited to do so to answer questions and present information.

## **4. Executive Accountability**

- 4.1 Building on the Executive's willingness to engage with Scrutiny, further improve accountability and transparency by Scrutiny being more clearly seen to be holding Portfolio Holders rather than officers to account by:
- Ensuring "Select Committee" seating arrangements in the committee room to provide a clear separation between Portfolio Holders and Scrutiny Members as well as Council Officers
  - Portfolio Holders to be briefed by the relevant lead Director or Head of Service prior to each Scrutiny Committee meeting
  - Opening presentations by Portfolio Holders to be succinct in order to allow as much time as possible for Scrutiny Members' questioning
  - Direct questions in meetings for response by Portfolio Holders in the first instance with Chief Officers assisting with response to supplementary questions as required
  - Scrutiny Committee reports to be published in the name of the relevant Portfolio Holder
  - With attendance of external bodies, the arrangements will differ depending on the role of the Council.

## **5. Scrutiny Forward Work Programme**

- 5.1 At the start of each municipal year, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum suggest topics using the Scrutiny Test of Significance to identify a small number of priorities (linked to the Council Plan 2023-2028) for inclusion in the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme.
- 5.2 The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum will formally monitor and review the Scrutiny forward work programme periodically throughout the municipal year.
- 5.3 The latest version of the Scrutiny forward work programme to be included on the agenda of every Committee meeting as an item for information only.

## **6. Behaviour, Values & Culture**

- 6.1 Along with the Members' Code of Conduct<sup>5</sup> and Council Plan<sup>6</sup>, Scrutiny and Executive Members will agree to operate in line with the following values and behaviours:
- Communicate effectively by asking focused questions on the subject being scrutinized
  - Commitment to preparing before meetings in order to ask probing questions

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<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 5.1: Members' Code of Conduct-Council Constitution

<sup>6</sup> Values and General Principles: Council Plan 2023-2028

- Foster a climate of trust, openness, honesty and integrity
- Be positive and respectful in their interactions with each other
- Manage any areas of disagreement in a constructive and professional way
- Collaborate and work in ways that champion the Council and the Island
- Be non-political and incorporate a wide range of evidence and perspectives

6.2 In accordance with the Officers' Code of Conduct<sup>4</sup>, Officers will agree to operate in line with the following values and behaviours:

- Comply with policies relating to equality issues
- Must not allow their private interests to conflict with their public duty
- Treat everyone with respect
- Be positive and embrace learning and development

6.3 Officers and Members will agree to work together in collaboration in line with the Relationship Protocol for Members and Officers<sup>5</sup> through utilising the following values and behaviours:

- Instil mutual confidence and trust
- Recognition of, and a respect for, each other's roles and responsibilities
- Respect each other's free (i.e. non-Council) time.

## **7. Response to Recommendations**

7.1 Scrutiny recommendations will be clear, reasoned and outcomes focused to assist response and monitoring and to help evidence the impact scrutiny has on Council business:

- Recommendations should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound).
- The Executive will give due consideration to Scrutiny recommendations and views
- At the Scrutiny Committee, Members will make proposals on matters on the agenda for consideration at a formal meeting of the Executive. At the meeting of the Executive, the Scrutiny Chair will present the Committee's recommendations and the Executive will consider those recommendations when making their formal decisions
- Responses will include an explanation for why any recommendations have not been accepted
- The relevant Scrutiny Chair will attend the Executive to give feedback from their Committee on relevant matters
- Scrutiny committees will record recommendations and responses for ongoing monitoring.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 5.2 Officers' Code of Conduct – Council Constitution

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 5.3.1 Relationship Protocol for Members and Officers-Council Constitution

## **8. Call-in**

- 8.1 Scrutiny can exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions (within its remit) made but not yet implemented by the Executive (or a member of the Executive) as set out in the Constitution. This enables Scrutiny members to consider whether the decision is appropriate. They may recommend that the Executive's decision stands. They may recommend that the Executive reconsider their decision or they may refer the Executive's decision to full Council.
- 8.2 Even if the Council objects to the Executive decision, it has no power to veto or change a decision of the Executive, unless it is contrary to the Budget set by Council, or a key policy/strategy which has been made by full Council (a reserved matter).
- 8.3 If a matter referred to full Council was within the jurisdiction of the Executive then while Council cannot change or veto the decision it may refer the matter back to the Executive with recommendations. If full Council does not object to an Executive decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary and the decision will become effective in accordance with the Constitution.
- 8.4 The call-in procedure set out within the Constitution shall not apply where the Executive decision is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The Chair of the Council must give prior approval if there is a recommendation that the Executive exclude call-in.
- 8.5 The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council, by the Head of Democracy, with any proposals for review if necessary.

## **9. Upholding the Protocol**

- 9.1 The Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer and Head of Democracy will be responsible for overseeing compliance with the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol which should be used by Members to support the wider aim of supporting and promoting a culture of scrutiny. The success of the protocol will be determined by:
- Recognition of the value of scrutiny
  - A clear record of constructive challenge
  - An open and accountable decision-making process.
- 9.2 A Scrutiny Annual Report will be submitted to full Council each year with the aim of demonstrating the impact of Scrutiny and effectiveness of the Protocol.

### **Footnote**

Seating arrangements for scrutiny committees - the demarcation between committee members (and officers who routinely support committee members), other councillors and other officers shall be clearly delineated for the benefit of the public.

**FINAL VERSION**

**05/02/2025**