

MEETING	EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	20 October 2022
TITLE	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme 2022/23
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	Present the Committee's draft work programme for 2022/23 for adoption.
AUTHOR	Vera Jones, Democracy and Language Manager

1. During the Committee's annual workshop on 14 July 2022 possible items to scrutinise during 2022/23 were considered. Items were prioritised bearing in mind the purpose of scrutiny in Gwynedd, namely:

CONTRIBUTE TO DRIVING IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICES FOR THE PEOPLE OF GWYNEDD

This will be done constructively by:

- Investigating concerns regarding the quality of our services
- Acting as a Critical Friend, and ensuring that appropriate attention is given to the citizen's voice
- Identifying good practice and weaknesses
- Holding the Cabinet and its members to account
- Reviewing or scrutinising decisions or actions that are not the responsibility of the Cabinet

2. Members discussed in smaller groups in terms of their own priorities from the list of possible items provided beforehand with an opportunity for members to suggest other possible items. When identifying their priorities members were asked to consider:

- ❖ *Does the matter affect a vast proportion of the population?*
- ❖ *Can scrutiny make a difference / have an influence? (People / service / performance)*
- ❖ *Is it timely to scrutinise the matter?*
- ❖ *Is the matter a priority for the Council?*
- ❖ *Are we clear about what we are trying to improve?*

3. Following reporting back from the groups, items to scrutinise were prioritised and the relevant Heads of Department and Cabinet Members were invited to note any additional matters that needed consideration in terms of the items

prioritised by Members of the Committee as well as provide observations on the timing of the scrutiny.

4. The Committee's draft work programme is attached as an appendix to the report. An effort was made to prioritise a maximum of three items per meeting in order to ensure that due attention was given to matters and that scrutiny would add value. This was not always possible on every occasion with four items programmed for one meeting. All members are expected to ensure their attendance for the morning and afternoon session.
5. During September, the Chair and Vice-Chair had meetings with Cabinet Members and Heads of Department in the Education and Economy sectors. Further attention was given to the timing of some scrutiny items with the recommendations of the Chairman and Vice-chairman included below:

Principles of Sustainable Tourism (Visitor Economy Plan)

This item was prioritised in the workshop and programmed for the meeting on 2 February 2023. The need to consider if scrutiny was needed before the Cabinet approved the principles in the Autumn was noted.

The sustainable tourism principles will be presented to the Cabinet on 22 November 2022. The committee gave input on the principles on [4 February 2021](#). In order for scrutiny to add value, it is suggested to scrutinise the 'Visitor Economy Plan' on 2 February 2023 in line with the timetable. By timing the scrutiny in this way, there will be an opportunity for the Committee to scrutinise the draft work programme for implementing the 'Visitor Economy Plan'. The proposal can be scrutinised making suggestions of change to the draft work programme.

Gwynedd Schools' Balances

This item has been programmed for the 23 March 2023 meeting. It is recommended that consideration should be given to reprogramming the item to be scrutinised following the current financial year in order to pay attention to the true position of schools' balances rather than a projection of the situation. The matter can be addressed in the 2023/24 annual workshop, with scrutiny at the first meeting of the Committee a possible option.

Regeneration Framework

This item was prioritised in the annual workshop but not programmed for a specific meeting. It is understood that the item has been programmed for the Cabinet Meeting on 24 January 2023. The Cabinet will consider adopting the

framework which will include 13 live plans identifying what is important and what needs to be done in each area.

The direction of the proposed Framework was scrutinised at the meeting of [8 February 2022](#). Considering the work programme for 2022/23, it is recommended that the Committee considers scrutinising the item in 2023/24 rather than the current year. It would enable the Committee to give due attention to the issues on the work programme and to scrutinise progress when timely. Attention can be given to the timing of scrutiny of this item in the 2023/24 annual workshop.

North Wales Economic Ambition Board

Likewise, this item was prioritised in the annual workshop but not programmed for a specific meeting. Committee members receive quarterly updates of the Board's work, and there is an understanding across the North authorities and the Ambition Board that formal scrutiny is required in a committee at least once a year. If the Committee Members decide to re-programme the 'Gwynedd Schools Balances' item, adding this item to the 23 March 2023 meeting would be an option.

6. Two issues highlighted by a number of members as issues to be scrutinised during the annual workshop in addition to what is stated on the draft forward programme were 'Categorising Schools according to Welsh Medium Provision' and 'County increase in numbers for Special Schools'.
7. It is fair to say that there was a difference of opinion at the annual workshop in terms of prioritising and placing the 'Categorising Schools according to Welsh Medium Provision' item on the forward programme, or waiting until an information session already organised for members had been held before reaching a conclusion in terms of prioritising it. Now, the training session has been held and information presented to Councillors, with an explanation offered regarding not scrutinising the new categorization as there was no significant change from the previous categories. It is recommended that it would be sensible to consider scrutinising core information and programs to promote the Welsh language after they have been developed, and considering this again in the 2023/24 annual workshop.
8. Regarding 'County increase in numbers for Special Schools', it was concluded that the Education Department should be asked to provide information to the members of the committee in the first place about the situation of special schools as well as information about the provision of Additional Learning Needs in the mainstream. This information has now been shared with committee members.

9. The concerns of the committee members regarding the workload of the Committee and the need to prioritise issues are acknowledged. There was a discussion about the workload at the meeting of the Scrutiny Forum (meeting of chairs and vice-chairs of scrutiny) on 25 July 2022. Following the decision of the Full Council on 23 June 2022 to add the role of scrutinising corporate issues to the remit of this committee, they felt the need to give an opportunity to implement the arrangement. There is an intention to review the arrangement in 18 months. If it would become clear that the arrangement was not working sooner than the 18 months then it would be possible to review earlier but it is necessary to give an opportunity to implement and review in a timely manner.
10. The scrutiny forward programme is a live programme which will be reviewed regularly during the year to ensure that the correct matters are addressed. Consideration will be given to prioritise matters that will arise during the year e.g. matters from performance challenge meetings and items on the Cabinet's forward programme.
11. **The Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee is asked:**
 - (i) **to consider the timing of the scrutiny of the items highlighted in the report;**
 - (ii) **to adopt the work programme for 2022/23.**

Based on the recommendations of the Chair and Vice-Chair in the report:

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT FORWARD PROGRAMME
2022/23

20/10/2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum for Wales: Relationships and Sexuality Education Code • New Curriculum for Wales • Ffordd Gwynedd
08/12/2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and GwE Annual Reports • Free School meals • Keeping the Benefit Local
02/02/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-16 Education • Education Strategy • Gwynedd's Economy Plan • Principles of Sustainable Tourism (Visitor Economy Plan)
23/03/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and the Welsh language: A new vision for the Immersion Education System towards 2032 and beyond • Workforce Planning • North Wales Economic Ambition Board (an understanding of scrutiny at least once a year) - <i>added since the workshop</i>

Items to be programmed in 2023/24:

Regeneration Framework

Gwynedd Schools' Balances