



CONCISE VERSION

SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT
2021-22



THE PURPOSE OF SCRUTINY

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

SCRUTINY WORKSHOPS

In May, there was an opportunity for the relevant scrutiny committee members to come together remotely to prioritise matters for scrutiny during 2021-22.

The following factors were considered when prioritising:

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

Before the Scrutiny Committees adopted their work programmes at their first meetings, the Scrutiny Forum took an overview of the scrutiny forward work programme as a whole. The forward work programme is a live programme and it was amended during 2021-22 when matters arose that required prioritising. The amendments were reported to the committees' formal meetings for approval.

SCRUTINY FORUM

The Chairs and Vice-chairs of the Scrutiny Committees and the Governance and Audit Committee make up the membership of the Scrutiny Forum. The Forum takes an overview of all the Council's scrutiny work with members challenging each other to ensure that the right matters are prioritised.

The full version elaborates on the Forum's work during 2021-22.

SCRUTINY ITEMS

In 2021-22, 48 items were scrutinised at formal scrutiny meetings, including the following:

Education and the Welsh language: A new vision for the Immersion Education System towards 2032 and beyond

Harassment in schools

Autism Strategy

Housing Action Plan

Transport - Social Value

Climate Change

Working in future and the mental well-being support

CALL-IN

As part of the scrutiny system, members have the right to call-in decisions to be scrutinised. In 2021/22 two decisions were called in to scrutiny, namely:

- ❖ **The Cabinet's decision to ratify the proposal to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022.**

After scrutinising the decision at a meeting of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 21 October 2021, the Committee decided to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration. On the grounds that a sufficient response had not been received to the second reason for calling in, relating to the future of Housing and Employment that would come into force in the Village.

The Cabinet decided not to amend the original decision. Although the Cabinet did not amend its original decision, this scrutiny work highlighted matters that were a cause for concern on the impact on future generations before making the final decision.

- ❖ **The Cabinet's decision to designate St. David's Day 2022 as an additional holiday for Council staff who work in accordance with local government workers' conditions of service**

The above-mentioned decision was scrutinised by the Governance and Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 February 2022.

During the discussion, some members noted that they supported celebrating St. David's Day but there was a need to make it a national holiday for everyone, that the response of the public had been relatively negative and that the timing of the decision was causing concern. Other members stated observations that supported the Cabinet's decision, such as being proud that Gwynedd was leading the way and that other employers support the decision and were following the example. At the end of the discussion, it was decided to accept the Cabinet's decision.

All information about scrutiny work in 2021-22 is available in the full version on the Council website - <https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/scrutiny>

IMPACT OF SCRUTINY

"I think that scrutiny is very important...this committee has been an important part of what the Housing and Property Department is trying to do. Thank you for being so constructive and positive and part of the solution."

Cabinet Member

Quality Assurance - Adults Services

As part of the 2022/23 budget, permanent funding was approved to fund an increase in the hours of the Independent Reviewing and Protection Officer post from 0.7 FTE to 1 FTE. In addition to one-off funding of £48,930 for the 2022/23 financial year to increase staffing capacity to carry out audits on care providers in the County.

The scrutiny work succeeded to elevate the concern about the lack of capacity and the risks to the Council.

"We would not be in this position today without your intervention as a Scrutiny Committee...your work has enabled this to happen and there is now potential to move forward and achieve a great deal on behalf of the residents of Gwynedd."

Head of Adults, Health and Well-being

Post-16 Transport

In the 2022/23 budget, permanent funding of £218,070 was included to enable removing the need to charge a fee on 16+ year olds to travel to school or college.

It was acknowledged that the cost of the Post-16 Travel Ticket was a barrier that prevented some young people from benefiting from further education. Removing the fee would ensure seamless access.

The Communities Scrutiny Committee identified a matter that needed addressing, and the work of the scrutiny committee during 2013 and 2014 provided evidence of the need for change. There were improvements in the subsequent years with scrutiny members persevering in terms of the need for further changes. Removing the fee realises the Committee's aspiration to ensure that every young person receives equal opportunities.

Facts about Scrutiny in Gwynedd in 2021/22

47 members have participated in the important scrutiny work during the year.

48 items have been scrutinised at formal meetings.

4 meetings of the Scrutiny Forum have been held during the year.

Scrutiny members have **attended** performance challenging meetings.

Information sessions held for Care Scrutiny Committee members on the following fields:

- ❖ Mental Well-being
- ❖ Presentation by the Chief Executive of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

Meetings have been held between the Chairs and Vice-chairs and relevant Cabinet Members and Heads of Department.

Scrutiny work supported by the Democracy and Language Manager, Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor and Scrutiny Advisor.