

## Discussion Paper

### Education and Children Scrutiny Panel Members School Visits Programme

#### Context:

Scrutiny Panel Members have undertaken numerous 'school visits' in an effective and informative manner for a number of years. The historical nature of these visits has understandably tended to focus on premises issues, appropriate to the evolving Modernising Education Programme at that time. As we are aware, our work with schools is designed to support and challenge across a wide range of school activities. We therefore have the opportunity now to realign the programme's focus and facilitate broader and deeper discussion on aspects chosen as greater priorities e.g. leadership, teaching, learning and outcomes. This does not intend to preclude or ignore any elements of premises related issues which may arise and require our attention.

#### Proposal for discussion:

The proposal is based on a desire to move the 'visit agenda' towards a model which will provide Members with a comprehensive, informed view of a school's current context including its performance, strengths, areas for improvement and future aspirations. To enable this, we could focus the discussion on teasing out answers to the following set of 'initial key questions' ...

#### 1. Purpose and format of visits and choice of schools?

##### A suggested format:

Our visits could provide us with the opportunity to look in greater detail at the following areas (with some aspects dependent upon the school's size etc):

- i) Overview of the school's current context (to include guided 'Members' Learning Walk')  
(duration - 45 minutes?)
- ii) Overview of current performance (outcomes & categorisation)  
(duration - 30 minutes?)
- iii) Discussion and analysis of strengths & best practice, areas for improvement & current priorities with Senior School leaders, ERW / LA officers (to include summary of School Development Plan, Self-evaluation Report and most recent ERW Support Visit Reports)  
(duration 45 minutes?)
- iv) 'Review and Conclusion' session between Members  
(duration 30 - 45 minutes?)

#### GARETH MORGANS B Ed. M. Sc

Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Plant  
Adran Addysg a Phlant, Adeilad 2, Parc Dewi Sant,  
Heol Ffynnon Job, Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin. SA31 3HB  
Director of Education and Children's Services  
Department for Education and Children,  
Building 2, St. David's Park, Jobs Well Road,  
Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire. SA31 3HB

*Mae Cyngor Sir Caerfyrddin yn croesawu  
gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg  
Carmarthenshire County Council welcomes  
correspondence in Welsh or English*



**BUDDSODDWYR** | **INVESTORS**  
**MEWN POBL** | **IN PEOPLE**

**2. Frequency of visits and number of schools?**

One designated ‘School Visit Day’ per term to include 2 schools (one school visited in the morning session and one school visited in the afternoon session).

**3. Length of visits?**

Based on acceptance of the above model (Point 1), each visit would provide up to a maximum of three hours of activity within the school.

**4. Number of members involved per visit?**

With our current Panel membership, an option for our consideration is to undertake the visits in ‘Groups.’ This would enable us to work together in a focused manner during visits, providing greater opportunities for a more detailed and engaging experience for Members. This could be undertaken as the following options describe:

<p align="center"><b>Option 1 (Utilising 1 ‘Members School Visit Group’)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Option 2 (Utilising 2 ‘Members School Visit Groups’)</b></p>
<p>MSVG 1 – Spring Term 2018 (2 schools)                      MSVG 2 – Summer Term 2018 (2 schools)                      MSVG 3 – Autumn Term 2018 (2 schools)</p> <p><b>Draft Timetable:</b>                      9.00 – Arrival / Learning Walk ‘<b>School 1</b>’                      9.45 – Overview of current performance                      10.15 – Strengths / Best Practice and Areas/Priorities for Improvement                      11.00 – 11.15 Break                      11.15 – Review and Conclusion                      11.45 /12.00 – Depart / Lunch</p> <p>1.00 – Arrival / Learning Walk ‘<b>School 2</b>’                      1.45 – Overview of current performance                      2.15 – Strengths / Best Practice and Areas/Priorities for Improvement                      3.00 – 3.15 Break                      3.15 – Review and Conclusion                      3.45 /4.00 – Depart</p>	<p>As Option but two groups are used – one morning session / one afternoon session as follows;</p> <p>Spring Term 2018:                      a.m. – MSVG 1                      p.m. – MSVG 2</p> <p>Summer Term 2018:                      a.m. – MSVG 3                      p.m. – MSVG 1</p> <p>Autumn Term 2018:                      a.m. – MSVG 2                      p.m. – MSVG 3</p> <p>*The same timetable would be used as described in Option 1</p>

<p>Members School Visit Group 1</p>	<p>Chair or Vice-Chair                      Councillor Liam Bowen                      Councillor Jean Lewis                      Councillor Bill Thomas                      Councillor Ieuan Wyn Davies                      Mrs Vera Kenny                      1 x Parent Governor</p>
-------------------------------------	--

Members School Visit Group 2	Chair or Vice-Chair Councillor Kim Broom Councillor Dorian Williams Councillor Gary Jones Councillor Shahana Najmi Mrs Jean Voyle Williams 1 x Parent Governor
Members School Visit Group 3	Chair of Vice-Chair Councillor Betsan Jones Councillor Emlyn Schiavone Councillor Dot Jones Councillor John Jenkins 1 x Parent Governor

### **Choice of schools:**

There are many factors for us to consider with regard to our 'choice of schools' e.g.

- Ensuring a range of different phases to provide Members with primary, Secondary and Special school experiences
- Focusing on schools working to specific agendas or priorities such as:
  - a) schools in need of improving National Categorisation categories
  - b) schools sharing / leading best practice
  - c) schools working within specific networks (to include formal/informal Federations, Action Research projects etc)

### **5. Next steps?**

- EC Scrutiny Panel to agree and finalise the School Visit programme / format
- Officers to plan dates accordingly for Members
- Officers to provide options of 'named schools' following discussion and agreement with Scrutiny Panel
- Officers to contact schools and provide 'School Visit' guidance / arrangements