

IMPROVEMENT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November, 2011(9:15am)

PRESENT: Commissioner Gareth Jones (Chair)

Commissioners Alex Aldridge; Byron Davies; Margaret Foster; Councillors W.J.Chorlton; K.P.Hughes; T.Lloyd Hughes; O.Glyn Jones; H.Eifion Jones; Tom Jones (as Chair of the Audit Committee); B.Owen; G.O.Parry, MBE; R.G.Parry, OBE; Eric Roberts (as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee); Chief Executive; Corporate Director (Environment and Technical Services); Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services); Interim S.151 Officer; Head of Service (Finance); Head of Service (Policy); Human Resources Service Manager.

IN ATTENDANCE: Interim Head of Service(Economic Development)
Business Planning and Programme Manager
Committee Services Manager
Mr.Doug Elliott (WLGA Advisor)
Mr.Huw Lloyd Jones (WAO)
Mr.Gareth Hall (Welsh Government)

APOLOGIES: Commissioner Mick Giannasi; Councillor Selwyn Williams.

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Mr.Huw Lloyd Jones (Wales Audit Office) and to Mr.Gareth Hall of the Welsh Government.

1. CHAIRMAN

Commissioner Gareth Jones in the Chair.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None to declare

3. APOLOGIES

As above

4.TERMS OF REFERENCE

Submitted and agreed upon, a copy of the proposed terms of reference for the Improvement Board.

Commissioner Byron Davies stated that one of the reasons behind establishing this Board was to get elected members more involved in the day to day business of the Authority. This particular forum would not be a formally constituted forum but a forum where

Commissioners could take individual or collective decisions and it would provide an opportunity to discuss matters as regards progressing the Improvement programme. Day to day issues would be dealt with at the Board of Commissioners' meetings.

5. ANGLESEY BENCHMARKING SYSTEM FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

(a)Submitted - A presentation by Mr.Andrew Stephens, Executive Director, Local Government Data Unit – Wales,on the role of Information, Intelligence and Improvement.

The proposed Anglesey Information base would provide this Authority, staff, partners and the general public with relevant and consistent data sets/key performance indicators for the County, promote effective information sharing and clearly illustrate and improve awareness of local needs and issues.

(b)Thereafter followed a short question and answer session.

Commissioner Byron Davies stated that by introducing such a system, Commissioners were trying to relieve the Regulators to a large extent of debating what the position was as regards Anglesey in terms of hard evidence. The Minister was rapidly moving towards evidence based information in terms of how Authorities were performing. By benchmarking, this Authority would be able to demonstrate through irrefutable evidence what was happening in terms of improvements. He hoped that Regulators such as the Wales Audit Office, Social Services, Estyn, etc, would all be able to derive good evidence in Anglesey which they could then form judgements upon.

The Chair thanked Mr.Stephens for his presentation and looked forward to working with the Wales Data Unit in future.

6. PROGRESS REPORT ON LARGE STRATEGIC PROJECTS (WYLFA B, ENERGY ISLAND, ENTERPRISE ZONE)

Submitted - The report of the Corporate Director (Environment and Technical Services) on progress made to date and on immediate priorities with regard to the Energy Island.

A further presentation was made by the Interim Head of Service (Economic Development) on the Enterprise Zone and its implications for Anglesey. As a result Officers would be working towards submitting a prospectus to the Welsh Government by the start of 2012 regarding its future direction as an Energy Enterprise Zone.

Mr.Gareth Hall stated that 5 Enterprise Zones had been announced and for Anglesey the focus would be on energy related matters. The specialist advice being sought which Dylan had referred to was to identify the right grouping of levers required in order to create sustainable growth in the Energy Sector.

The Improvement Board noted the contents of the report.

7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

7.1 Outstanding view on current position

Reported by the Business Planning and Programme Manager – That the performance report for Quarter 2 covered the period July to September 2011 and was designed to

provide a comprehensive picture of Quarter 2 performance against the Council's (i) strategic priorities; (ii) Improvement Objectives and (iii) the Corporate Governance Improvement objectives as highlighted in the Commissioners Quarter 1 report.

The reported position was based on performance against planned arrangements in Quarter 2 with a stronger Ffynnon based analysis of the targets set and incorporating risks and the measures instilled to mitigate those risks and provide corporate assurance of improved performance.

A discussion ensued as regards the RAG status of Item 5(the organisation, coherence and effectiveness of the Council's senior management team) and Item 10(relationship between members and political groups). Commissioners and Members were of the opinion that both should be changed to an amber status.

The Officer explained the rationale for the current RAG status.

The Improvement Board noted the contents of the report.

7.2 Submitted - The following Corporate Governance Improvement Priorities:-

(a) **Finance and ICT**

Reported by the Interim S.151 Officer – That a number of reports by external parties and regulators had highlighted a lack of capacity in corporate services. Reductions in staffing to meet efficiencies over the years had also resulted in a number of vacancies for substantive posts that had not been filled.

As such, there was a two stage process to building capacity into the corporate departments through securing additional resources in the short term to ensure progress on a timetable for delivery in 2011/12 on a one-off basis and build capacity into the base budget for 2012-13. Consideration would need to be given as to how the Authority appointed staff to vacant posts and ensure that further resources were available to train and support staff to ensure that the functions could be delivered in the medium term.

Currently, the Finance Department vacancies were covered by Interim staff which in the short term could help to move the Department forward but would not deliver a long term sustainable function to deliver to the standards and timetable required.

The report referred to proposals for addressing the following matters:-

- Vacancies
- Final Accounts
- Fixed Asset Accounting
- Corporate Governance Statement
- Budget Statement and Budgetary Process
- Service Delivery Plan
- ICT
- HR Resource Requirements

The Improvement Board noted that the above report would be submitted for consideration at the formal Board of Commissioners meeting later in the day.

(b) Corporate Risk Register

An initial draft corporate risk register was presented by the Interim S.151 Officer which outlined the main risks facing the Council which would assist Commissioners, elected members and senior management to make informed decisions and to prioritise actions into the future. The register would continue to be refreshed in the light of change and reviewed quarterly and Social Services (Children and Adults) would be incorporated.

The Improvement Board noted the contents of the report.

(c) Corporate Plan / Community Engagement Aspects

Reported by the Head of Service (Policy) – That this report was an update on this Council's corporate governance reform agenda with particular focus on the pre-planning community engagement exercise undertaken by the Council to shape its corporate priorities for the forthcoming Corporate Business Plan for 2012-15.

This report identified the processes undertaken by the Council to collate information and intelligence supplied by stakeholders in order to provide the organisation with the necessary data upon which to assist the decision making and drafting of a Corporate Business Plan moving forward. A new Plan would be developed amongst Officers, to be consulted on further in the new calendar year with the aim of securing agreement and adoption at the Council meeting on 8th March, 2012.

The Improvement Board noted the on-going Officer work related to the Corporate Pre-planning engagement schedule necessary to assist the drafting of a new Corporate Business Plan.

(ch) Human Resources

Reported by the Human Resources Services Manager – That there were some key risks that required to be managed to enable this Council to move forward and create the strategic vision that was required of the organisation for its people management.

One of the biggest challenges in the last 12 months had been to juggle a host of competing priorities from a wide variety of different stakeholders over and above what had already been identified in the HR Action Plan and the normal day to day HR work and the inherited backlog referred to in the Commissioner's report. Whilst HR had met the majority of these challenges within the timescale, this kind of momentum with the limited staff capacity was not sustainable in the long term.

Within the 10 Improvement themes there were some HR related threads such as improving performance management via the new corporate competency appraisal. These were specified in the recommended Action Plan for 2011-12, provided resources were allocated.

The lack of staff resource also reduced the opportunity to explore and develop joint working arrangements either on a collaborative basis or as part of a service level agreement. It was imperative that the Service be adequately resourced to enable the strategic elements to be progressed.

The Improvement Board noted the contents of the report which would be considered as part of the intention to strengthen corporate services.

8. EDUCATION SERVICE PERFORMANCE

The Improvement Board deferred consideration of the matter until the next meeting.

9. SOCIAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE

Reported by the Corporate Director (Housing and Social Services) – That an inspection by the CSSIW in March 2011 on the assessment and case management processes within Children Services found concerns about the assessment and care management of children in Anglesey, the quality and timeliness of assessments, communication with staff and partner agencies, lack of performance management culture and the absence of a quality assurance system. However, a number of positives had been cited in the report and they needed to be balanced against the challenges identified.

A Service Improvement Plan was being implemented assisted by 3 external experienced consultants. A Service Improvement Board had also been established to ensure effective oversight of the Improvement Programme and through challenge and support, enable it to deliver the improvement agenda to the required standards. The Board would monitor and challenge progress and achievements against the outcome/performance measures. The Board would report to the Director, Scrutiny Committee and to the Commissioners.

Key actions for Quarter 3 would be to maintain the sustainability of the changes and embedding those into the everyday practice and culture of the service. Corrective action would be taken on those workstreams that were out of target.

The Improvement Board noted the contents of the report.

10. RATIONALISING PLANS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Improvement Board deferred consideration until the next meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:20 am

**COMMISSIONER GARETH JONES
CHAIR**