

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the special meeting held on 9 July 2018

- PRESENT:** Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)
Councillor Robert Llewelyn Jones (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors John Griffith, Glyn Haynes, K P Hughes,
Vaughan Hughes, Alun Roberts, Dafydd Roberts,
Margaret Murley Roberts and Nicola Roberts.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Housing Services Manager (EL),
Scrutiny Officer (GR),
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** Mr Keith Roberts – the Roman Catholic Church
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mrs Sian Purcell – Chief Officer, Medrwn Môn.
- Councillor Alun Mummery – Portfolio Holder for Housing &
Supporting Communities (for item 4 only)
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1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MEDRWN MÔN

The Chair welcomed Mrs Sian Purcell the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to the meeting.

Submitted – an Annual Report by the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn.

The Chief Officer, Medrwn Môn reported that the aim of Medrwn Môn is to promote and support voluntary and community organisations by working with individuals, groups and communities on Anglesey and ensure they play a full and prominent role in developing the potential of the Island. Medrwn Môn is a registered charitable company with a membership of voluntary organisations and local community groups. It is part of a network of County Voluntary Councils operational throughout Wales. Funding towards core work comes from the Welsh Government via WCVA. She further noted that volunteers play an increasingly important part in local communities and Medrwn Môn promotes, supports and develops all types of

volunteering, supports volunteers and voluntary groups on a local level, acknowledging that their unique contribution gives benefits to those that use and receive the service, the local community and the volunteers themselves.

She noted that this Annual Report is for 2016/17 and the Annual Report for 2017/18 will be published in the autumn and was willing to attend this Committee annually in order to report on their work within local communities. She referred that Medrwn Môn runs Community Voices which is a programme that is funded by the Big Lottery Fund. In addition, Community Voices ensures effective ways to enable individuals and organisations to voice their opinions and ensure that their voices are heard during the planning and designing states of services, making sure that services providers get to hear exactly what the community needs. The 'Building Communities' model, which has been adopted to facilitate the process using the different consultation methods to create a picture of the community's assets that range from local services; buildings and green spaces; people, information and skills; to local networks and community activities.

The Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn referred to the 'Seiriol Alliance' which received £10k devolved spending from the County Council as a pilot project and with Medrwn Môn's support and advice, has allocated the finance between 3 Community Councils on the basis that they engage their communities in deciding how the money is spent. She noted that an Intermediate Care Fund funding was devolved to Medrwn Môn to engage residents in Llanfairpwll in a process of identifying the need for a Community Hub in the area. Using the Building Communities Toolkit developed through the Community Voices project, Medrwn Môn held several mapping sessions in the area as well as open events and focus group sessions. The best venue for the project was the Memorial Hall in Llanfairpwll and the Community Voices project has been working with the local Community Council to identify how the capital funding could be spent. Building works started at the beginning of the summer and the activities identified in the consultation process are now available through the newly established Llanfairpwll Community Hub which was launched in November 2016. Bryngwran and Llanfaelog are a further 2 hubs receiving support from Medrwn Môn. Both hubs worked with Community Voice to create a way of capturing information about local assets as well as information as regards to what the local community and its people need within these hubs. She noted that 7 hubs within local communities on the Island are current established and supported by Medrwn Môn.

She further referred to the Môn Community Link scheme which Medrwn Môn acts as a single access point for people to gain information on third sector organisations. Community Link accepts direct contact from individuals, but also accepts referrals from partners at the County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. She said that a 'Social Prescribing' scheme will be established this year with Medrwn Môn being able to accept referrals from GP's to a range of local services provided by community sector organisations. The scheme is to support individuals to take greater control of their own health. The funding for the scheme will be sourced from the polling of funding from Besti Cadwaladr University Health Board, GP clusters and the Integrated Care Fund.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main matters :-

- Clarification was sought as to the additional funding received by Medrwn Môn to employ staff to carry out specific projects. The Chief Officer responded that Medrwn Môn has 9 permanent staff and 5 Local Assets Co-Ordinators are to be employed for a period of 2 years. She further said that funding has been received through the 'Children In Need' project to fund the Youth Council with a secondment employee fulfilling the role as Project Co-Ordinator for a period of 3 years;
- Clarification was sought as to the funding Medrwn Môn receives. The Chief Officer responded in 2018/19 Medrwn Môn are receiving £36,000 through the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) towards the Môn Community Link work and £74,000 through the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) towards the work of the Local Asset Co-ordinators (LACs) – both of these projects are part of a wider project working on Social Prescribing in partnership with the GP Clusters and Betsi Cadwaladr. Medrwn Môn further received £8500 towards core funding. The Committee further questioned whether the County Council is afforded Medrwn Môn's Statement of Accounts. She said that as Medrwn Môn is a registered charitable company the accounts is submitted to Companies House and is available 'on-line' for public inspection. She agreed that Medrwn Môn's Statements of Accounts can be made available to the Scrutiny Committee;
- Reference was made to the 'Seiriol Alliance' model and questions were raised as to whether a similar projects are to be extended to other areas within the Island. The Chief Officer responded that it is anticipated that such a project at the Seiriol ward may be extended to other areas and she referred to the 'Place Shaping' strategy lead by the Local Authority. She further said that the 'Seiriol Alliance' took time to develop but lessons have been learnt and it is hoped that similar schemes should progressed sooner;
- Clarification was sought as to whether further community hubs will be available at other locations on the Island as statutory services are becoming more reliant on voluntary bodies. The Chief Officer responded that there is a potential to develop further hubs within local communities and she referred to the facilities at the Coffee House, Llanfaethlu, Siop Mechell, Llanfechell and 'Tro Da' scheme in Benllech and noted that there are also official hubs which have been adopted within the County Council's arrangements which promotes communities to come together to afford better facilities within their areas;
- Clarification was sought as to whether there is a lack of volunteers within some communities. The Chief Officer responded that it seems that the same people volunteer within the local communities. She further said that Medrwn Môn has been targeting people outside schools and leisure centres to promote the community activities/projects within their areas and encouraging new people to become volunteers within their communities. Members questioned whether Medrwn Môn can support Community Councils to promote local activities. The Chief Officer responded that Medrwn Môn is unable to work directly with Community Councils due to government structure which prohibits public services been directly supporting such a body. However, she said that Medrwn Môn can afford guidance as regard to funding avenues. She further noted that a representative from Medrwn Môn is a member of the Town and Community Councils Forum;

- Comments were made that Medrwn Môn's website was out of date and needed updating. The Chief Officer responded that she appreciated the comments and noted that Medrwn Môn's website will be updated within the next few months;
- Clarification was sought to how Medrwn Môn compares with similar voluntary body within the other local authorities in Wales. The Chief Officer responded that due to the good partnership working with the County Council the Medrwn Môn model is unique and highly regarded by the other local authorities in Wales and by the Welsh Audit Office.

It was RESOLVED :-

- **To note the report and to request Medrwn Môn to attend the Scrutiny Committee annually in order to report on their work on the Island so that the partnership with the Council can be scrutinised;**
- **That the Statement of Accounts be attached to the Annual Report by Medrwn Môn.**

4 ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY

Submitted – a report by the Head of Housing Services in relation to the above.

The Housing Services Manager reported that there is no corporate Anti-Poverty Strategy currently within the Council. This document has been recognised as a priority for the work programme of the Housing Services Strategic Unit for 2017/18 which has been driven by the 2017/2022 Corporate Plan. She noted that one of the strongest messages regarding poverty in Wales currently is that there are more people of working age in poverty compared to 10 years ago. She further said that the terms 'poverty' does not necessarily mean a person with no money, it can equate to people feeling that they are unable to take part in activities within a community level and maybe a lack of ability to source goods or unable to have access to essential services. The County Council has a role to promote strategies that people are able to access to services available and also to guide people to services that the Council does not afford. The Anti-Poverty Strategy has been subject to internal discussion within the Council to raise awareness and setting a baseline of activities within services and with partners and developing a method of measuring the effect of services on dealing with poverty within local communities on the Island. A period of public consultation took place in May 2018 through social media and the Council's corporate website, but the Housing Services Manager noted that no representations were received by the public but a good response was received by the partnerships who work with the Council and wish to be part of the strategy.

The Housing Services Manager reiterated that the Anti-Poverty Strategy is a corporate document across all services of the Council and should be part of the Annual Delivery Plan.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main matters :-

- Comments were made that Citizens' Advice Bureau on Anglesey referred that over £1.2m benefits available to the people of Anglesey were not claimed.

Questions were raised as to how services can make sure that these people who are eligible for such benefits to be able to apply and be made aware of their entitlements. The Housing Services Manager responded that Social Inclusion Officers have been appointed within the Housing Services and one Officer will work within the private sector to raise awareness of benefit entitlements. She said that people not claiming benefit entitlements is a national issue as is parents not claiming free school meals for their children which they are entitled to. Comments were further made by the Committee that people are not guided towards their eligibility to available benefits and therefore they miss out on those benefits they eligible for;

- Clarification was sought as to which partnership working the authority has consulted in regard to this Strategy. The Housing Services Manager gave an example of the organisation that the Housing Service work closely with i.e. Medrwn Môn, CAB and Housing Associations. She further said that other services have partnerships with different organisations which they work with. Questions were further raised as to how the authority will monitor the progress of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The Officer responded that it will be a challenge as regard to this Strategy as it will be a document that every service will need to address and she considered that it should be adopted within each services' Service Delivery Plan;
- Reference was made to the appendix 1 within the report which referred to percentage of children in poverty on Anglesey. Questions were raised as to how this authority's child poverty ratio compares with other local authorities in Wales. The Housing Services Manager responded that in some areas the level of child poverty is higher than other areas in Wales. Comments were made that the lack of social housing and rented accommodation can be a factor and could escalate when the Wylfa Newydd project starts and housing accommodation may be an dire issue on the Island.
- Reference was made to the comments within the report as regard to the 'Strengthening families and communities'. These services provide support families and provide early year's assistance, timely access to services such as mental health'. It was considered prejudicial in it suggestion that people in poverty need mental health services more than any other person and that the report needed to be changed to 'timely access to services such as health'. Reference was also made that poverty does not necessary mean that people are poor and on benefits; other poverty can be gauge in other aspect i.e. people working on small wages, people with health problems and disabilities and people who are educationally poor.

Members considered that every department within the Council needs to adopt this important document and that training be afforded to all front line staff;

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Supporting Communities expressed that this is an important document and agreed that the Anti-Poverty Strategy needs to be incorporated and prioritised into each service within the Council.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive that it approves the Anti-Poverty Strategy and that each service prioritises the strategy in their daily work and that it is an objective for each services to include within their Service Delivery Plan.

5 WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – a report by the Scrutiny Officer on the Committee's Work Programme to June 2019.

Members considered that :-

- the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to attend a future meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to give an overview of his role and responsibilities and to report on the Police and Crime Plan 2017 – 2021.
- Medrwn Môn be invited to the Scrutiny Committee annually in order to report on their work on the Island so that the partnership with the Council can be scrutinised.

It was RESOLVED to note the Work Programme to June 2019 and to invite the North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner to a future meeting of the Committee and that Medrwn Môn shall attend the Committee to present their Annual Report.

ACTION : As noted above.

**COUNCILLOR G O JONES
CHAIR**