

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the special meeting held on 24 October 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)

Councillors K P Hughes, Vaughan Hughes, R LI Jones and Margaret Murley Roberts.

Mr Dafydd Gruffydd – Menter Môn.

Councillor Richard A Dew – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Public Protection (for items 3 and 4).

Members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee invited to attend in respect of Item 3

Councillor John Griffith.

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive,
Director of Place and Community Wellbeing (in respect of Item 3 & 4),
Chief Planning Officer (DFJ) (in respect of Item 3),
Planning Policy Manager – Joint Planning Policy Unit (in respect of Item 3),
Head of Democratic Services,
Energy Island Programme Senior Delivery Officer (DLH) (in respect of Item 4),
Scrutiny Manager (AD),
Committee Officer (MEH).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Glyn Haynes, Alun Roberts, Nicola Roberts.

Leader of the Council – Councillor Llinos M Huws,
Portfolio Holder (Corporate) – Councillor Dafydd R Thomas.

Councillor Robin Williams (invited to attend in respect of Item 3).

Mrs Anest G Frazer – The Church in Wales,
Mr Keith Roberts – The Roman Catholic Church,
Mr Dyfed Jones – Parent Governor (Primary Schools Sector).

ALSO PRESENT: None

The Chair congratulated Mrs Annwen Morgan on her appointment as Chief Executive. The Chair also congratulated Mr Dylan Williams on his appointment as Deputy Chief Executive.

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor K P Hughes declared a personal interest in respect of Item 3 – Joint Local Development Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2019 and took no part during discussion and voting thereon.

3 JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2019

Submitted – a report by the Director of Place and Community Well-being in respect of the Annual Monitoring Report 2019 – Joint Local Development Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Public Protection reported that the Annual Monitoring Report records the findings of work that monitors the implementation of a plan's strategy and policies between 1 April and 31 March of the previous year. Usually, the first annual monitoring report needs to be published by 31st October in the year following adoption of the local development plan. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan was adopted at the end of July 2017. Therefore, in order to include a complete financial year, this is the first opportunity to submit an Annual Monitoring Report to the Welsh Government.

The Chief Planning Officer referred that the Annual Monitoring Report must include a monitoring framework which is a key feedback link within the cyclical process of drawing up sustainable policies. The key findings of the Annual Monitoring Report as follows:-

- 55% of the housing units permitted during the Annual Monitoring Report period are within the Sub-regional Centre and Urban Services Centres. 23% of units have been permitted within the Local Service Centres with a further 22% permitted in Villages, Clusters and Open Countryside which is in line with the Plan's housing distribution strategy;
- 543 new housing units received planning permission during the Annual Monitoring Report period i.e. sites that did not have permission on the day the Plan was adopted;
- 202 affordable houses were given planning permission during the Annual Monitoring Report period;
- In the Annual Monitoring Report period (2017-2019), 348 housing units have been completed on sites allocated for housing;
- 254 affordable units were completed in 2017-19. Significant increase in the number of affordable housing units completed in 2018/19 (193 units) compared to previous years;
- The Council has received 62 appeals during the Monitoring Period and 74% of these were dismissed. The appeals that were allowed did not undermine the key policies of the Plan.

The Officer noted that it is accepted that the conclusion of the Annual Monitoring Report is positive and that the planning policies are been implemented. He said that given the key findings of this first Annual Monitoring Report there is no evidence that indicate that the Plan requires an early review.

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

- Questions raised as to the definition as regards to price of affordable dwellings. The Planning Policy Manager – Joint Planning Policy Unit responded that when consideration is given to pricing affordable dwellings (as part of new developments) a formula is used to gauge the salary percentage of residents within the area. She noted that there is a Supplementary Planning Guidance which gives in depth details of affordable dwellings within different areas. A S106 agreement is attached to any planning approval where appropriate that the dwellings must be kept as affordable dwellings. Reference was made that some developers stipulate that development are not viable unless they are able to reduce the affordable dwelling proportion of the development. The Chief Planning Officer responded that the requests to reduce the affordable element of any development are assessed and the evidence submitted alongside these requests are scrutinized;
- Clarification was sought as to whether arrangements are in place to ensure that the Annual Monitoring Report is sufficiently robust and compliant with statutory regulations. The Planning Policy Manager responded that Welsh Government sets out a statutory framework across Wales in respect of the Annual Monitoring Report and each Local Development Plan must adhere to the framework. Members of the Committee considered that an ‘easier to read’ version of the document was necessary next year;
- Reference was made that there was no mention of climate change within the Annual Monitoring Report. The Director of Place and Community Well-being responded that the Monitoring Report has been set out in compliance with the statutory framework. He noted that this Committee may request the Officers to include carbon emissions issues within the next Annual Monitoring Report. He further noted that Officers within the Council are currently working on a de-carbonization and energy strategy for the Council which will decrease the carbon footprint and to make sure that this Authority plays a leading role for legislative de-carbonization target set out by the government for 2030 and 2050.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive:-

- **That the Annual Monitoring Report for 2019 lays a foundation for the remaining period of the Joint Local Development Plan;**
- **To confirm that the Joint Local Development Plan is performing appropriately to date;**
- **To note that no individual planning policy is failing to achieve its objective;**
- **That Officers be invited to consider a way of providing a visual, easy read version of the next Annual Monitoring Report (for the period April 2019 to March 2020).**

ACTION: As noted above.

4 DRAFT RESPONSE TO WELSH GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

Submitted – a report by the Director of Place and Community Wellbeing in relation to a Draft Response to Welsh Government's National Development Framework Consultation.

The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing reported that National Development Framework (NDF) is a new development plan which will set the direction for development in Wales from 2020 to 2040. It sets a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, decarbonisation, developing resilient ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities. The NDF is a spatial plan, which means it sets a direction for where investment in infrastructure and development should be located for the benefit of Wales and its people. The NDF is the highest tier of development plan and is focused on issues and challenges at a national scale. Its strategic nature means it does not allocate development to all parts of Wales, nor does it include policies on all land uses. He said that responding to the NDF is critically important to ensure that planning policy at the highest tier is fit for purpose and that there is clear alignment between the Isle of Anglesey County Council's aspirations from the local level through to the national level that will provide the direction of travel for future investment in infrastructure and development.

He further said that this is an opportunity for this Council to influence the contents of the NDF which will shape nation's development for the next 20 years. He referred that the planning system as regards to Developments of National Significance (DNF) is decided by Welsh Government and not through the local planning authority. He gave an example that consultation has undertaken as regards to the Traffwl Solar Farm. The proposed solar farm is a 289 acre site on farmland in 7 areas south of the A55. This proposal will be decided by Welsh Government. He noted that the NDF would have a higher influence on any decision rather than the Authority's Local Development Plan policies.

The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing further said that the County Council supports the principle of creating a NDF for Wales, however, the Council does have serious concerns and reservations in relation to a number of themes and policies in the draft NDF. He said that the Council needs to express strongly that some of the projects within the NDF will not comply with the Island's landscape. The NDF proposes that the centre of the Island as being suitable for wind and solar farms and according to the Welsh Government, the presumption in favour of large on-shore wind and solar energy developments in priority areas. He said that as Officers they do not consider that such a development of wind turbines of 250 metres is deemed suitable for the Island. The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing further said that Council is surprised that Holyhead has not been recognised or defined as a Regional Growth Area for Wales and especially given that the NDF specifically identifies the importance of the Port of Holyhead to serve Wales, the wider UK and Ireland.

The NDF refers that there will be a new level of planning policies i.e. National Planning Policies, Regional Planning Policies and Local Planning Policies. The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing questioned as to whether there is a need for such three tier policies as local government resources is already pressured and this Authority has agreed a Joint Planning Policy with Gwynedd Council.

The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing highlighted that some Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP's) projects have been omitted from the NDF:-

- Low carbon energy projects
- Insufficient reference to rural areas
- Designated policy for the Welsh Language
- Lack of reference to the third bridge
- Affordable housing
- Importance of the Airfield at Valley for the connection between North and South Wales

He noted that Officer's within the Council are highlighting the concerns of the Authority within project groups regionally and the Chief Executive is raising issues of concerns within the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

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

- Questions were raised as to how the proposed National Development Framework will impact on the Council's strategic work programme and community wellbeing. The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing responded that the NDF is a draft document at present and the final version will be published in September 2020; thereafter the Council will need to address the policy framework, over the next 20 years, in shaping the future growth and development of the Island for the benefit of the residents and the next generation. A robust review will also need to be undertaken of the Joint Local Development Plan to make sure that both documents comply with each other;
- Reference was made that a large proportion of the Island has been identified within the NDF as being suitable for wind and solar farms. Questions were raised as to the possible effects on both RAF Valley and the airfield at Mona. The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing responded that discussion will need to be undertaken with the MOD as regards to the effects of such proposal within the NDF;
- Questions were raised whether the Council's draft response to the NDF was robust enough and fit for purpose. The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing responded that the closing date for response to the NDF has been extended to the 15th November and any issues or concerns that Elected Members may have as regards to any heading within the Authority's response can be carried out before formal issue of response to the framework;
- Reference was made that it would be appropriate to invite the Welsh Language Commissioner to this Scrutiny Committee as regard to the need for a designed policy for the Welsh language within the National Framework. The Chief

Executive responded that an invitation can be extended to the Welsh Language Commissioner either to this meeting or to a Members Briefing Session;

- Reference was made to the disappointment that Holyhead has not been recognised or defined as a Regional Growth Area for Wales. The Director of Place and Community Wellbeing said that it is important that Holyhead is defined as a Regional Growth Area as funding towards project within the town would be made easier i.e., towards Health Centre, schools. He noted that without the Regional Growth Area status it would be difficult to attract public sector funding towards project within the town of Holyhead.

It was RESOLVED:-

- **to recommend to the Executive that the Council's draft response to the Welsh Government's National Development Framework be approved;**
- **to invite the Welsh Language Commissioner either to this Scrutiny Committee or to the monthly Members Briefing Session as regard to the need for a designed policy for the Welsh language within the National Framework.**

ACTION: As noted above.

5 SCRUTINY OF PARTNERSHIPS

Submitted – a report by the Chief Executive on the Scrutiny of Partnerships.

The Chief Executive reported that working in partnership has become an important part of the Authority's working practices, providing additional resilience to the Authority's service delivery capacity.

The Scrutiny Manager reported that the County Council has extensive experience of working in partnership, be it on a local, regional or national level. With increasing pressure on public resources, the Council has clear guidelines in place for determining when to establish partnerships, which service(s) and the outcomes expected of them and for the sound management of the relationship in order to :-

- Enable us to deliver on our Council Plan and strategic priorities. Also, to improve the experience and outcomes for individuals who use our services;
- Evidence value for money or cost efficiency in our future investments and ensure clear and measurable outcomes;
- Respond to partnership risks and ensure that areas for development are addressed;
- Have clarity around accountability and monitoring arrangements;
- Identify any scope to rationalize partnerships and ensure a clear procedure for bringing any arrangements to an end.

This area of work focuses on partnerships where the Council chooses to work with other organisations in the private, public and voluntary sector. The Scrutiny Manager further said that the Corporate Partnership Register has been compiled of all key partnerships which is reviewed on a regular basis. She further said that the task of scrutinising partnerships needs to continue to be done in a managed way,

focusing on the key strategic partnerships which enable the Council to deliver on its objectives and priorities. She noted that the Forward Work Programme of this Committee needs to prioritise an appropriate balance of statutory partnerships, key partners the Council works with and other bodies.

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

- A Member referred that the scrutiny of partnership needs to be schedule over a period of 18 months and that Elected Member representation on partnerships organisations should afford an annual report on the outcome of the work of the partnership they are a member. The Chief Executive responded that she welcomed the suggestion that annual reports by Elected Members on partnership organisation as financial allocation is afforded to these organisations by this Council. She further said that such annual reports will afford details of how the partnership organisation is making worthwhile contribution to the local communities and whether it is best value of resources afforded by the Council.

It was RESOLVED :-

- **To support the Scrutiny of key partnerships undertaken during 2018/19;**
- **To support the partnerships the Scrutiny Committee intends to prioritise in the Committee's work programme over the next 18 months;**
- **That annual reports be afforded by Elected Members on partnership organisations that they are representing the Authority on such organisations.**

ACTION: As noted above.

The meeting concluded at 3.35 pm

**COUNCILLOR GWILYM O JONES
CHAIR**