

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE :	Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	20 April 2017
SUBJECT:	Review of Scrutiny of Partnerships
PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S):	Cllr Alwyn Rowlands, Portfolio Holder (Transformation, Performance, Corporate Plan and Human Resources)
HEAD OF SERVICE :	Annwen Morgan, Assistant Chief Executive
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1.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to:

- 1.1 Consider its effectiveness in monitoring key strategic partnerships during 2016/2017.
- 1.2 Suggest ways of strengthening its arrangements for the monitoring key strategic partnerships during 2017/2018.

2.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 Members are aware that the Council works in partnership with a significant number of other organisations. This report reviews the effectiveness of the Committee's approach to scrutinising partnerships during 2016-2017 and seeks suggestions on strengthening the monitoring arrangements going forward to 2017/2018. It is an opportunity for reflection and self-evaluation, to build on current arrangements and develop a constructive approach in the new municipal year.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Working in partnership has become an integral part of the authority's working practices. Whilst partnership working can bring significant benefits, can respond to

complex challenges and provide flexibility, innovation and additional resources to service delivery, it is however not easy and can carry significant risks (often associated with complexity and ambiguity) unless delivered effectively.

3.2 The 2014/15 Annual Governance Statement summarised our partnership governance arrangements as a significant governance issue:

“... The Council does not have a formal Partnership Framework in place to provide assurance that all partnerships have adequate governance, management and performance arrangements in place to meet their stated objectives and that they provide value for money in relation to the Council’s financial and other resources invested in them...”

3.3 The Wales Audit Office concluded in the Corporate Assessment Report in December, 2015 that the Council plays a prominent role in collaboration and contributes well to partnership working. Collaboration and partnership working at all levels is essential to enable the Council to achieve its ambitious work programme.

3.4 A report was completed by the Council’s Internal Audit Unit on the governance arrangements of our partnership working in December, 2015 which provided a driver to progress some key development areas. It enabled the Council to further develop its corporate approach to partnerships (strategic and operational, internal and external). The audit report made a number of recommendations which can be summarised as:

- Develop a partnerships policy document.
- Develop a partnerships toolkit to provide guidelines for establishing and developing partnerships.
- Compile a central, corporate register of partnerships.
- Develop monitoring arrangements for partnerships in order to keep track of outcomes and financial matters.
- Establishing the role of the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to reviewing partnership governance arrangements including the monitoring of risk registers.
- Conduct an annual review of the key partnerships.

3.5 The Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee has an important role in ensuring that there is an appropriate level of engagement with other organisations forming any partnership. The committee is well placed to ensure that the work and performance of partnerships is responsive to and consistent with the Council’s key priorities and the needs of local communities. In performing its role there are a number of possible areas it should consider, to include such matters as:

Scrutinising governance arrangements

- Who is responsible for the management of funds allocated to the partnership and what is the process for committing expenditure?

- Does the partnership have a clearly defined vision, aims and objectives and were these developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders?
- How does the partnership evaluate its activities and monitor its performance against its objectives?

Scrutinising the council's contribution

- What is the council's role within the partnership?
- How do partners view the council's contribution to the partnership?
- Does the partnership assist the Council in delivering against its key priorities?

Evaluating the overall effectiveness of the partnership

- Is the partnership achieving its objectives?
- Does the partnership complete key projects that it is responsible for on time and within budget?
- How do key stakeholders view the performance of the partnership?
- How does the work of the partnership contribute towards the Council's Corporate Plan?
- How is the partnership's performance measured?
- How do stakeholders view the performance / effectiveness of the partnership?

Ensuring public engagement and citizen focussed partnerships and strategies

- How well has the partnership sought to engage and reflect communities' views?
- How has the partnership reported overall strategies, objectives, or performance to the public?
- Are there any areas where the committee or individual Members can support the partnership through the undertaking of consultation and/or research?

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 On 14 March 2016 the Executive approved a Corporate Partnerships Policy document as a foundation for partnership work and also as a framework to guide partnership monitoring arrangements.

4.2 In the policy a partnership is defined as:

“A joint working arrangement where the partners are otherwise independent bodies, agree to co-operate to achieve a common goal of community cohesion and to achieve it, create an organisational structure or process and agreed programme”

The Partnerships Policy and toolkit is now available on the Council's website at:

www.anglesey.gov.uk/community/partnerships/

- 4.3 Members will also be aware that the County Council has also created a Corporate Partnerships Register. It includes the partnerships that are considered key in helping us to deliver the Corporate Plan and Transformation Programme priorities or those we need to engage with to influence national or regional thinking on the way public services are delivered.
- 4.4 The Partnerships Register is maintained by the Scrutiny Officer and is reviewed twice a year. The register is divided into two parts to include “Operational Partnerships” (OP) and “Key Strategic Partnerships” (KSP). A KSP is one which is statutory or includes a significant financial contribution by the Council or could result in a significant financial / service risk to the Council.
- 4.5 Information is provided by Heads of Service in order to update the register to reflect any new partnerships as soon as they are agreed so that the Register is kept as current as possible. The Register includes resources at the disposal of the partnership as well as other important information.
- 4.6 Due to the number of partnerships, it has been necessary to prioritise the scrutiny activity by the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. During 2016/2017 the committee has therefore focused on key strategic partnerships. The Committee monitored key strategic partnerships and the findings are summarised in **APPENDIX 1** to this report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is appropriate that the Committee focuses on key strategic partnerships but also the monitoring of any key operational service partnerships, as proposed by either the Senior Leadership Team or Heads of Service.
- 5.2 As the work of the Committee in scrutinising partnerships matures, greater focus should be given by the committee to addressing the governance arrangements and effectiveness of key partnerships.
- 5.3 It should be borne in mind that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee also has an important role in monitoring partnerships. An example is that of their ongoing work in monitoring the Children’s Services Improvement Plan. This work will involve monitoring steps to strengthen Anglesey’s voice on the Regional Children Safeguarding Board and to ensure that the Council and other organisations work proactively together to ensure improvements in the quality and timelines of child protection matters. The

committee also ensures that the voice of young people are heard especially as part of the budget setting and consultation process.

5.4 The Audit and Governance Committee has a role to ensure that arrangements are in place to adequately manage risks associated with partnership working. It is therefore important that the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's partnership monitoring work is aligned with that of the Audit and Governance Committee monitoring of risks associated with partnership working.

Appendix
1 - Schedule of Key Strategic Partnerships monitored during 201602017

Background Papers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Partnerships policy• Partnerships Toolkit

APPENDIX 1

(Schedule of Key Strategic Partnerships monitored during 2016/2017)

1. Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership (26/9/16)

The Community Safety Partnership is required to formally report to this Committee annually to present an overview of activities undertaken. This ensures that the Partnership delivers its obligations in accordance with Section 19 and 20 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2006. Councils have a statutory duty in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and subsequent amendments as a result of the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2002 and 2006, to work in partnership with the Police, the Health Service, the Probation Service and the Fire and Rescue Service to address the local community safety agenda. Various matters were raised by members and support was given to proceed with tackling the identified priorities

2. GwE - School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales (26/9/16)

A report submitted by the School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) in respect of Anglesey schools in the orange and red category schools during 2014/16. Members considered the following aspects:

- How the Authority monitors and challenges GwE's work?
- How the Authority knows whether it is offered value for money by GwE?
- How the Authority ensures that GwE's work is aligned to local plans and aims, and that key aspects that require attention are effectively targeted?
- What difference has GwE's support made to outcomes, achievement standards and quality of leadership in Anglesey's Amber/Red support category schools?
- In which schools are the most evident differences to be seen?
- Which aspects need to be prioritised going forward in order to ensure further improvements

Members had an opportunity to question the senior Challenge Adviser (GwE) in detail about current improvement actions. The committee supported the actions set out in the report to improve schools in the orange/red category. The School Progress Review Panel would also continue their task of monitoring individual school's performance.

3. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board-Joint working between the Health Board and the Council (22/11/17)

Representatives from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and council officers provided information highlighting the partnership working between the Council, BCUHB and the third sector to include : Joint Public Services Board (Gwynedd & Môn); Children and Young People's Partnership (Anglesey); Regional Partnership Board; Model Môn; Integrated Delivery Board (Anglesey); SPOA Project Board; Specialist Children's Services (SCS) Management Board; North

Wales Family Support Board; IFSS Local Management Board; Night owls and Community Weekend working team.

The Committee supported and encouraged future joint working initiatives. Emphasis on the importance of integrated work was given as well as questioning practical arrangements and outcomes of various schemes.

4. North Wales Authorities and Health Board - Population Need Assessment – (24/1/17)

The North Wales Population Assessment set out the current and future care and support needs of the population, together with the support needs of carers. The North Wales Region comprises the six North Wales Local Authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr University Board (BCUHB) and Public Health Wales. A single report had to be prepared for the North Wales Region and be approved by the six County Councils and the Board of the Local Health Service by the 1 April, 2017.

The committee, amongst other matters, queried the process followed to complete the assessment together with linkages to data held by councils in north wales. The committee approved the report and recommended that it should be submitted to the Executive and County Council for confirmation.

5. GwE - School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales (16/2/17)

GwE's senior challenge and support advisor submitted the schools standards progress report for key stages in the 2015/16 academic year. The information contained a comprehensive overview of the performance of the Island's schools.

The committee were able to raise various matters. Concern expressed that secondary schools are slightly in a lower position in most of the key indicators as the national increase in much higher and that there was a need to improve performance in key stage 4. It was agreed to accept the report and to continue with the work of the Schools Progress Review Panel.

6. North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Regional Skills Plan (16/2/17)

To update members on progress to date in delivering the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) Employment and Skills Plan. The NWEAB was established to better co-ordinate strategic economic development activity on a regional basis in response to the pressures on public finances. The regional co-ordination and delivery of employment and skills programmes is one of the key priority areas for the NWEAB. Ensuring a better alignment between skills supply and skills demand is fundamental to sustaining and growing the regional economy.

The Committee supported the Regional Skills and Employment Plan and need to supply of skills needed for future economic growth on Anglesey and North Wales. The Committee emphasised the importance for young people to be made aware of general business subjects in order to make best use of employment opportunities that are available.