

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	Executive Committee
Date:	15 July 2019
Subject:	ARFOR PROGRAMME
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr. Carwyn Jones (Economy)
Chief Executive:	Dr Gwynne Jones
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Local Members:	Relevant to all wards

#### A – Recommendation/s and reason/s

##### Recommendation:

To agree to support and implement the Arfor Programme on Anglesey, and to authorise the Head of Service (Regulation and Economic Development) to :-

- a) receive the Arfor funding from the Welsh Government through Gwynedd Council and use it on eligible activities;
- b) work in partnership with Gwynedd Council or other councils in the Arfor area to implement the programme;
- c) work in partnership with Menter Mon in order to implement the Arfor programme;
- d) implement a programme of grants from the Arfor fund to eligible schemes;

The above will be subject to the written agreement of the Head of Finance in terms of finance, and the Council's Solicitor in terms of any legal agreements.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Welsh Government has agreed £ 2M to fund the Arfor Innovation Fund in the period 2019/20 - 2020/21. The programme area is the four counties where the Welsh language is strongest: Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion, Carmarthen. The Government 's Economy Department is providing the funding, and the grant offer sets out specific purposes, objectives and outputs.

### **Arfor Purpose**

To pilot different approaches and projects that promote entrepreneurship and business growth with a focus on promoting the use of Welsh. Existing schemes should not be duplicated and new and innovative approaches must be created and supported.

### **Arfor Aims**

- a) Promote entrepreneurship and support business growth in areas with a high % of Welsh speakers
- b) Produce more better paid jobs to keep young people and encourage people who have left to return
- c) Promote the use of Welsh and bilingualism in business, creating a lively sense of place
- d) Encourage businesses and people moving into rural areas to appreciate and use the Welsh language.

### **Arfor Outputs**

Create new businesses and jobs  
Support existing businesses and jobs  
Private sector investment  
Businesses / communities / individuals increasing their use of Welsh

### **Governance**

Gwynedd Council leads on managing the programme. A Management Board has been established which includes the leaders of the four County Councils, and officials from the Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association. An Officer Group also meets more regularly. It was agreed that the County Councils will report to suitable local partnerships, such as the local Language Forum and / or Local Action Group (which manages the LEADER funding of relevant counties).

### **Delivering the Programme**

Some elements of the programme will be implemented jointly through Gwynedd Council, and others locally through the individual County Councils

### **Joint Plans between the 4 Counties**

- Gwynedd Council will organize / co-ordinate these three: -
- Manage, administer and promote the Arfor programme (£ 75k)
  - Create a Strategic Plan and Evaluation of the programme (£ 60k)
  - Balchder Busnes – promote the ethos of using Welsh in business (£ 40k)

## **County Plans**

The 4 County Councils are developing plans for using a budget of up to £456k each over two years. It is possible that this level of local funding will be reduced if there is agreement for more joint regional schemes. £10k is available towards administration costs. In accordance with the main purpose of the fund, each county intends to provide business grants that support the language as their main scheme, with some other smaller schemes also. Each county will have slightly different plans, and evaluation of these will take place. Anglesey's £ 10k contribution to Balchder Busnes will come from the county fund.

## **Anglesey's Arfor Plans**

Here are the Arfor plans that are being put forward for Anglesey: -

**Llwyddo'n Lleol** - a scheme to promote local careers and give young people work experience in businesses over the summer in Anglesey and Gwynedd (a joint scheme between the two counties, to be managed through Gwynedd Council) – provisional funding allocation of £ 50k, figure to be reviewed.

**Business and Language Reviews** - measure the performance of businesses and their use of the Welsh language, and create a combined business / language plan to develop and improve on this - funding allocation under discussion..

**Small Business Welsh Language Grant** - in order to implement language and business elements arising from the above eg signs, menu, materials, improving the standard of customer provision, staff skills, events etc. Small grant of up to £ 4k based on a rate of up to 80% - provisional funding allocation of £ 120k, figure to be reviewed.

**Arfor Project Grant** - to support significant new projects that will contribute to the Arfor programme objectives and outputs. This fund will be available to the private sector, business groups, and social enterprises, but applications will be competitive. There will be an external review of schemes submitted as part of the assessment process. Town / community councils will be able to lead on behalf of a local business group. More substantial grant of up to £ 30k based on a 50-80% rate – provisional funding allocation of £ 220k, figure to be reviewed.

## **Governance of Anglesey Schemes**

An Arfor grants panel will be created to manage a budget and consider and decide on applications to the fund, and monitor arrangements. Programme progress reports will take place regularly, and will be circulated as appropriate. The £10k available will contribute to some of the Council's costs to manage the scheme eg Regeneration and Finance staff time. EU State Aid 'de minimus' limits will apply to business grants.

## **Timing and Publicity**

A joint press / social media release announcing the schemes will be issued after funding agreements have been finalised.

### **Partnership with Gwynedd Council or Other County Councils**

There will be a need to enter into an agreement with Gwynedd Council in terms of claiming Arfor funding, and in terms of joint schemes where Gwynedd leads eg Llwyddo'n Lleol. It is also possible to reach agreement on aspects where other county councils are leading.

### **Partnership with Menter Mon**

Menter Mon is responsible for Menter Iaith Mon and employs a number of language promotion officers, including language in business staff, but they do not currently have a language in business grant. Menter Mon is also responsible for a business support hub based in MSParc which helps to develop business projects on Anglesey. It is intended to work in partnership with Menter Mon in order to add value and avoid duplication. This could mean paying fees to Menter Mon for staff time and other costs to support the programme.

### **The Future**

It is hoped that developing a Strategic Plan and evaluating the various pilots will lead to the creation of a new long-term programme to support the four Arfor counties and potentially other areas where Welsh remains a community language

### **B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them?**

Llwyddo'n Lleol – rather than managing ourselves it is intended to have a joint arrangement with Gwynedd Council as this is more cost effective  
Language and business schemes - the format of the schemes follows discussions with language and business support officers – different grant ceilings and eligibility criteria could apply, and these will be reviewed as the scheme progresses  
Role of Menter Mon / Menter Iaith Mon – the County Council could employ extra staff to undertake more of a role, but and it is intended to collaborate with Menter Mon in order to avoid creating confusion for businesses, add value, and avoid duplication

### **C – Why is this decision for the Executive?**

In order to have formal support to implement a major programme, which involves formal collaboration with other councils and organizations, and establishing a new grants scheme.

### **CH – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?**

Yes - supporting the local economy and the Welsh language are among the Council's strategic priorities, and Arfor will contribute to the aims of the Council Plan 2017-22

### **D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?**

Yes – the Arfor Programme will bring substantial additional funding to be spent by the Council. There is no need for a core financial contribution from the Council, but some Regeneration and Finance officer time will be required in order to implement the programme.

DD – Who did you consult?		What did they say?
1	<b>Chief Executive / Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)</b> (mandatory)	Agreed on 08.07.2019 for report to go to Executive
2	<b>Finance / Section 151</b> (mandatory)	This looks fine. Mention that the Business Grants will need to be delivered under 'de minimus' State Aid requirements.
3	<b>Legal / Monitoring Officer</b> (mandatory)	No comments on report
4	<b>Human Resources (HR)</b>	
5	<b>Property</b>	
6	<b>Information Communication Technology (ICT)</b>	
7	<b>Scrutiny</b>	
8	<b>Local Members</b>	
9	<b>Any external bodies / other/s</b>	Gwynedd Council – happy to lead on managing the Llwyddo'n Lleol project across Anglesey and Gwynedd Menter Mon - happy to work together in respect of their existing language in business work and enterprise hub

#### E – Risks and any mitigation measures (if relevant)

1	<b>Economic</b>	Consideration when assessing plans
2	<b>Anti-poverty</b>	Consideration when assessing plans
3	<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Not applicable
4	<b>Environmental</b>	Consideration when assessing plans
5	<b>Equalities</b>	Consideration when assessing plans
6	<b>Outcome Agreements</b>	Not applicable
7	<b>Other</b>	

#### F - Appendices:

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#### FF - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):

Arfor Grant Offer Letter from the Welsh Government to Gwynedd Council  
Arfor Grant Offer Letter from Gwynedd Council to Anglesey CC

