

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2020

- PRESENT:** Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)
Councillor Glyn Haynes (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors T LI Hughes MBE, K P Hughes, Vaughan Hughes, R LI Jones, Alun Roberts, Dafydd Roberts, Margaret M Roberts and Nicola Roberts.
- Councillor Llinos M Huws – Leader of the Council,
Councillor R Merion Jones – Portfolio Holder (Education, Libraries, Culture & Youth),
Councillor Alun Mummery – Portfolio Holder (Housing & Supporting Communities),
Councillor Bob Parry OBE FRAGS – Portfolio Holder (Highways, Property and Maritime),
Councillor Dafydd R Thomas – Portfolio Holder (Council Business),
Councillor Robin Williams – Portfolio Holder (Resources)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People,
Interim Director of Social Services,
Head of Housing Services,
Head of Democratic Services,
Scrutiny Manager (AD),
Scrutiny Officer (SR),
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** None
- ALSO PRESENT:** Programme Manager, Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board – for Item 4.
Chief Officer – Medrwn Môn – for Item 5
-

1 APOLOGIES

None received.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Alun Roberts declared a personal interest in Item 5 on the basis of voluntary work he had undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown period.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 11 March, 2020 were confirmed as correct.

4 ANNUAL REPORT - PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD 2019/20

Submitted – a report by the Programme Manager, Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board.

The Programme Manager, Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board reported that the report is structured to refer to the progress of the work of the established Sub-Groups of the Public Services Board. The Board has four Sub-Groups as follows:-

- **Climate Change Sub-Group**

The Sub-Group has been established to encourage collaboration between the public bodies and local communities on how to deal with the threat to communities from future changes to the climate. It was noted that a series of workshops had been arranged but due to the Covid-19 pandemic these have not been able to take place. The Sub-Groups identified that regional work is being undertaken as regards to climate change and the sub-group is conscious that duplication of work needs to be avoided and an opportunity to learn from each other.

- **The Welsh language Sub-Group**

The Sub-Group has mainly focused on collaboration to increase the use of the Welsh language within public bodies in Gwynedd and Anglesey. This specifically relates to the Welsh language as a language of choice for internal communication in public bodies, and for communication with the public. The established project 'Arfer' which was led by Bangor University as regards to understanding the habits of speakers who are not as confident or comfortable in using Welsh at work. The Public Services Board across the region received a grant from Welsh Government annually. Discussions were held regarding using the grant to fund a study that would explore how to use the public organisations' reception areas to encourage and promote the use of the Welsh language by more people. Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic the grant has been withdrawn.

- **Homes for Local People Sub-Group**

The work of the Sub-Group has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic and its next proposed steps will be to fully evaluate the financial viability of the developments in relation to these sites, before confirming how best to finance the developments and the initial timetable for commencing work. The Sub-Group has been discussing its plans with the Welsh Government to ensure that its work is in accordance with the Government's vision for innovative and affordable

housing. A progress report will be submitted to the next meeting of the Public Service Board.

- **Health and Care Sub-Group**

The Sub-Group's responsibility is to oversee the work streams/projects of: Adults, Children, Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Community Transformation. These work streams are in accordance with the Regional Partnership Board's priority areas for integration. It was reported that a meeting of the Sub-Group was held on 7th July. The purpose of the meeting was to revise the terms of reference of the group, following the Covid-19 outbreak and it was agreed that the sub-group's priorities in the recovery from the pandemic have changed as a result. A workshop was held by the Health and Care Sub-Group on 16th September to address the West Winter Plan and the work streams arising from the regional Health and Care Group.

The Committee considered the report and made the following points:-

- Questions were raised as to what extent the work streams of the Public Services Boards has contributed to the wellbeing of residents of Ynys Môn and what impact has the work had on local communities. The Programme Manager responded that the progress of the Sub-Groups have varied but to date the Sub-Groups have contributed to the wellbeing of residents within the local communities. Some of the current outputs might be soft but they are required in order to set the foundations for contributing in the long term to the well-being of our residents. The Chief Executive said that the work undertaken within the Welsh language Sub-Group has focused on linguistic behaviour of staff not wishing or lacking confident in using the Welsh language within the workplace and a project has been undertaken within the Social Services Department to address this matter;
- Questions were raised as to what lessons the Board has learnt as a result of progress thus far and how does the Board intent to use any lessons in the future. The Programme Manager responded that the Public Services Board are continuously learning from lesson. A workshop was held last week which enabled the public bodies to report on the lessons learnt from the following the pandemic. The Chief Executive said that the workshop held last week also considered a situational analysis that had been sent to partner organisations which came back with 40 matters that are important to our communities. The Public Services Board was required to discuss each matter and determine if the Public Services Board had a role to play in response to them. She noted that it was important to be aware that duplication of services by the local authorities and the Public Services Board needed to be avoided and to gauge the additional support the Board may be able to afford to local communities;
- Clarification was sought as to how effective the Board's monitoring arrangements are in ensuring that objectives are implemented within timescales. The Programme Manager responded that the Chairs of the Sub-Groups report on a quarterly basis to the Board. The Board is therefore able to monitor the work of the Sub-Groups in accordance with the objectives within the timescales. She further said that the main barrier with reference to progress was lack of resources;

- Reference was made to the possible second wave of the pandemic and the alarming Ministerial Health expert's prediction that the UK could see a possible 50,000 Covid-19 per day within the next 4 to 6 weeks. Questions were raised to the role of the Public Services Board if the prediction was to materialise. The Leader of the Council responded that as was mentioned previously a workshop was held last week and the response to the questionnaire was discussed as to the role of the Board to the requirements of local communities if a second wave of the pandemic was to materialise;
- The Committee expressed that they would have liked to have seen a list of achievements within the Annual Report as regard to the work of the Sub-Groups;
- Questions were raised as to what will be the Board's priorities for 2021/2022. The Programme Manager responded that the Board's objectives and priority areas remain relevant;
- A Member expressed that Welsh Government has established Public Services Boards and he was of the opinion that the priorities set out within the remit of such Boards should be a function of each local authority. The Leader of the Council responded that she accepted that the Public Services Boards are currently establishing themselves but due to the existence of such Boards the Well-being of Future Generations Act places pressure of Health Authorities to work regionally and closer to local authorities. She also expressed that the Board has enabled partner organisations to identify potential development land in their ownership for social housing. The Chief Executive expressed that due to the regional work within the Board the Welsh language (through the 'Adfer' programme in conjunction with Bangor University) and housing priorities within local communities would not have had due attention. She said that such achievement would be included in the next report of the Public Services Board.

It was RESOLVED to note the progress of the Public Services Board.

5 COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

Submitted – a report by the Chief Executive in relation to the Council's response to date to the Covid-19 pandemic in accordance with its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 in relation to emergency preparation and response co-ordination at local level.

The Chief Executive reported that the response to the pandemic is still ongoing and uncertain and challenging times for all concerned will be experienced. Although the Council has been primarily focused on responding to the Covid-19 emergency it has in recent weeks planned for a programme of recovery and a gradual opening of public services. The Chief Executive referred to the excellent work undertaken by the staff, elected members and partner's organisation within the communities.

The Deputy Chief Executive gave a detailed report in respect of the Council's response to the pandemic and the joint working with the third sector. He refer specifically to :-

- **Governance Arrangements** – emergency planning governance arrangements were put in place nationally, regionally and locally to lead the response to the pandemic. On a regional level, this has been lead and co-ordinated by the Local Resilience Forum (where the public sector works collaboratively) through

the emergency Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG). The Council has fully contributed to work of specific thematic sub-groups reporting to the SCG on Health and Social Care, Excess deaths, Media and PPE.

- **Key Risk Areas** – a specific emergency risk register was created at the outset and has been reviewed and updated weekly. The key risks have been prioritised in terms of time and effort and these have included care homes, contact tracing and testing, personal protective equipment, dealing with outbreaks, supporting vulnerable families, the impact on the Council's finances and the impact on the Council's workforce.
- **Outputs of the Community Workstream (including inputs from Medrwn Môn and Menter Môn)**

All services within the County Council have worked well together to meet the needs of the residents of Anglesey during the pandemic; however, the needs of residents have varied throughout the pandemic. The co-working between key services has been outstanding during this period and this has included creative and different service delivery. On Anglesey, a partnership was established to provide support for vulnerable persons in the communities within the first weeks of the pandemic.

The Council set up a dedicated emergency response phone line and was open 7 days a week. Information, advice and assistance within the local communities was available via a Single Point of Access in the community facilitated by Medrwn Môn and support from Local Asset Co-ordinators (community agents who connect individuals to community assets and services). During the lockdown period two pop up foodbanks were established on the Island, one in Llangefni and the other in Menai Bridge through the food work stream which included Housing Services, Anglesey Food Bank and CAB. The additional foodbanks worked in conjunction with the established foodbanks operating at Holyhead and Amlwch. During the lockdown period and up to the 28th of July a total of 742 food packages were distributed from the 4 foodbanks operating on the Island. Menter Môn in conjunction with Dylan's Restaurant established the Negas project which distributed food packages to individuals during the period. Also, Medrwn Môn run a Voluntary Sector Point of Access and Social Prescribing Programme called Môn Community Link which was used to co-ordinate the community support element of the response.

The outcome of the partnership working between the Isle of Anglesey County Council and Medrwn Môn can be viewed at 5.1.3 of the report.

- **Collaboration in terms of Testing and Test, Trace, Protect Strategy (TTP)**

The Council recognised it had a key role to play in mobilising local tier activity in line with National Guidance. The Authority reviewed the Strategy and liaised with other local authorities, Public Health Wales and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to establish a Contact Tracing pilot project on the Island to inform the development of the Regional TTP approach. An employed team is now in place to ensure the Contact Tracing process is effectively delivered until March 2021. It was noted that the 2Sisters outbreak at its Llangefni Poultry factory was effectively managed and it did not spread into the community.

- **Lessons Learned and Way Forward**

In dealing with any emergency and ensuring the Council develops further there need to reflect and learn and capture key information to inform future planning. An initial reflection and learning exercise was undertaken in late June 2020. This took the form of a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) which was completed individually by members of the management team within the service areas and collated into a single submission by the Heads of Service/Directors.

The Chair welcomed the Chief Officer of Medrwn Môn to the meeting and she was asked to comment as regards to the joint working with the Authority during the pandemic.

The Chief Officer, Medrwn Môn said that the excellent partnership working with the Authority over the years has benefited the work undertaken during these uncertain time due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She outlined the joint working as regards to the Place Shaping, Community Links and the Good Turns Scheme within the local communities and the work in partnership with Menter Môn.

The Committee considered the report and made the following points:-

- Questions were raised whether the Council has prioritised and managed its resources effectively in response to the emergency. The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Authority needed to address the emergency response and to continue to be able to afford essential services to the residents of the Island. He noted that at the beginning of the pandemic undertaken to secure PPE was paramount for the staff of the authority and the volunteers who were supporting the Council. Work was also undertaken with local businesses to enable support with essential provisions to enable the work with the third sector in their work within the local communities. He further said that the Council established its own Track and Trace Programme which has now been afforded nationally. He was of the view that the Council has prioritised and managed its resources effectively;
- Questions raised whether the Council would have responded differently to support the communities and local business during the emergency situation. The Leader of the Council responded that it was important to communicate nationally and to learn lessons from each local authority. The Chief Executive said that it was important to monitor the data from Public Health Wales and to challenge the data received nationally and to challenge data which has been delayed;
- Reference was made to community tensions as regards to tourist visiting the Island. Clarification was sought as to the joint working with the Police to alleviate these community tensions. The Deputy Chief Executive responded that there is a 3 tier process as regards to address the emergency. The Police Service chairs the Response Group and work has been undertaken regionally within the group. Work has been undertaken to share information as regards to policing the Island through the local Police Station in Llangefni and the Public Protection Department has also work closely with the police in visiting businesses on the Island to make sure that they conform to pandemic rules within their premises;

- Reference was made that at the beginning of the pandemic that the local health board was under pressure to assure relevant number of beds available to address the pandemic. It was expressed that a number of people were discharged from local hospitals back into residential homes without been tested for the virus between March and April. The Leader of the Council said that the concerns as regards to people been discharged from hospitals was raised at the WLGA Leaders Group and political pressure was put to change the policy of testing people before discharging from hospital back into residential and care homes. She noted that the Social Services Department established a procedure to meet with the residential and care homes regularly and a Team was established to support the Homes to enable appropriate regular testing. The Interim Director of Social Services said that data from the Homes was received in the beginning on a weekly basis to ascertain where people were moving from the hospital to the Homes;
- Questions were raised as to what process is in place to safeguard the most vulnerable persons within the Island who did not take advantage of the food banks and help with collecting prescriptions. The Interim Director of Social Services expressed that not all the people who received shielding letters were people who had previously required support from the Social Services Department and a procedure needed to be put in place, with the support of Medrwn Môn, to contact all the people on the Island who had received a shielding letter to ascertain their needs. Reference was made that the furlough scheme will also be coming into an end in October and there is a possibility of more people needing support for services afforded by the Council. The Chief Executive responded that around 29% of the population of Anglesey are on the governments furlough scheme and it is of deep concern as to what the Government intends to support these people when the scheme comes to an end. The Deputy Chief Executive expressed that it is of concern that people might face deprivation not only to individuals put to the whole family including children. The Authority through its services can support these people but it is a matter for Welsh Government and Central Government to put in place another scheme to support people who have been on the furlough scheme or to invest in other schemes available;
- Questions raised as to the robustness of the Council in planning for Recovery, The Deputy Chief Executive responded that during the summer work to prepare Recovery Plans was put in place but since the last two weeks it is likely that a second wave of the pandemic is faced. He further said that a mature draft of the Economic Recovery Plan and a Tourism Recovery Plan has been produced. Current efforts are focussed on the emergency and business as usual.

The Committee wished to thank the Council's Officers on the way that they have dealt with the pandemic and praise also for the organisational response in terms of the support provided to businesses and communities. The Committee also wished to thank the Leader of the Council for her hard work.

It was RESOLVED:-

- **To note the Council's response to the pandemic thus far;**

- To agree its priorities for scrutinising areas of Council's response to the emergency during 2020/21 and beyond;
- To recommend to the Executive that the Programme Boards submit regular progress reports to both scrutiny committees on recovery planning and delivery for the next norm.

6 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Submitted – the report of the Scrutiny Officer.

It was RESOLVED to note the Work Programme from October – December, 2020.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR GWILYM O JONES
CHAIR**