

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2013

- PRESENT:** Councillor Derlwyn Rees Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Alun Wyn Mummery (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors John Griffith, W T Hughes, Carwyn Jones,
Richard Owain Jones and Dylan Rees
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Head of Service (Economic Development) (DW),
Scrutiny Officer (GWR),
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Jeffrey M.Evans and Councillor Dafydd Rhys Thomas
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Gerallt Llewelyn Jones – Managing Director Menter Môn.
-

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies as noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillors John Griffiths, W.T. Hughes and R.O. Jones declared an interest that they are members of the Planning and Order Committee and would not express an opinion regarding developments referred to within the reports to the Committee.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July, 2013 were confirmed.

ARISING THEREON

The Scrutiny Officer noted that representatives from the Anglesey and Gwynedd Partnership Unit will attend the November meeting of this Committee to respond to issues raised at the meeting held on 25 July, 2013.

4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON ANGLESEY : OVERVIEW, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Submitted – a report by the Head of Service (Economic Development) in relation to the above.

It was reported that the Isle of Anglesey has suffered from a declining economy and pockets of significant socio-economic deprivation. The role of the County Council, in partnership with the community and key stakeholders to ensure potential opportunities are capitalised upon whilst responding effectively to the challenges. The objectives of the Council will primarily be delivered through the Enterprise Island Framework, the Authorities vision for a strong and vibrant economy to create jobs and prosperity for local residents and communities.

The Enterprise Island Framework has been established to enable interactions, alignment and co-ordination through three distinct programme areas : Energy Island Programme, Destination Management Plan and broader Regeneration Programme. In delivering the Enterprise Island Framework the Economic Development Unit has a facilitatory and leadership role to develop the transformational opportunities, whilst ensuring residents are well informed, consulted and given the opportunity to shape the Island's social and economic future where appropriate. This relationship is key to maintaining and developing the County Council's reputation with potential developers and local communities.

The Head of Service outlined the potential of the new nuclear build at Wylfa, Rhiannon Offshore Wind Farm and Penrhos Leisure Village with the potential of the creation of 2,500 net additional jobs by 2025, alongside 6,000 construction jobs and a major contribution to GVA. This could represent a contribution of £2.34 billion to Anglesey and the sub-regional economy in the period up to 2025. The proposed projects for Anglesey and North Wales will be substantial and as a result of the opportunities associated with the Enterprise Island Framework, underpinned by the Energy Island Programme, Enterprise Zone status, Welsh Government Programmes, current and future European funding streams and anticipated substantial private sector investment.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Councillor Aled M. Jones stated that the substantial potential developments on the Island would create immense inward investment. The Economic Development Unit is working hard to ensure that local businesses and residents of the Island could benefit from such developments.

He also referred to the recent announcement that the land owned by the Isle of Anglesey County Council on the A55 expressway near Gaerwen has been chosen as the preferred site for a proposed new Menai Science Park. The development could be a major new project for the Island. The County Council's Economic Development Unit will therefore continue to work closely with Bangor University and Welsh Government to progress the project further. The aim is to ensure that the Menai Science Park complements the Welsh Government's aim of establishing the Island as a centre for excellence for low carbon energy through Enterprise Zone status and Anglesey's own Energy Island vision.

Issues raised by Members :-

- Members questioned whether the whole of the Island could benefit from the potential large developments. The Portfolio Holder responded that the Island could benefit from the inward investment and it is anticipated that the communities would gain from the developments. He stressed that Members

should view these immense projects as a whole Island gain and not one particular side of the Island. The Head of Service reiterated the comments of the Portfolio Holder and stressed that these projects should be viewed as a whole Island prospective.

- Members also enquired if the skills of local people are sufficient to be able to compete for employment in respect of the potential large developments on the Island. The Head of Service responded that skills development had been incorporated into the negotiations with the companies and large investments, resulting in direct support into the creation of new apprenticeship schemes. It was further reported that an Officer has been employed on behalf of the 6 North Wales Local Authorities as part of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to move the skills agenda forward. It was suggested that the Officer be invited to a future meeting of this Committee.
- Questions raised regarding the impact on Tourism in respect of wind turbines, pylons and construction of potential large developments on the Island. The Head of Services responded each issue must be considered on its own merit. The need to protect the Island's visitor economy facilities during potential major project construction periods was emphasised.

Following further discussions it was **RESOLVED**

- **To note the contents of the report and recognise the importance of the unprecedented economic transformation opportunity presented and the County Council's and Economic Development Units role in delivering the Enterprise Island vision;**
- **To recognise the key role of the County Council and the Economic Development Unit in ensuring local people, communities and businesses capitalise fully on the future opportunities;**
- **To recognise the need to safeguard resources and capacity within the Economic Development Unit to support the delivery of the Enterprise Island vision;**
- **To recognise the need for the County Council's financial resources as match funding to secure future EU and other resources to progress Enterprise Island.**
- **To invite the Skills Development Officer, employed on behalf of the 6 North Wales Local Authorities as part of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to move the skills agenda forward.**

5 MENTER MÔN

The Chair welcomed Mr. Gerallt Llewelyn Jones, Managing Director of Menter Môn to give a presentation to the Committee.

Mr. Jones gave a background to Menter Môn and the Annog Ltd., companies. He referred to the audited accounts of both companies for 2012. Menter Môn has the difficult task of ensuring that it serves three important stakeholders: the communities it serves (the beneficiaries of its work); the funders who invest in its work and the Directors who depend upon on day to day governance.

The 5 year group business model for the 2010/2014 Business Plan has the following components :-

- Applying for and securing continued grant funded activity in order to achieve primary aim of developing the Island's economy, particularly its rural area;
- Operating social enterprise businesses via. Annog Ltd., which create jobs, benefit the economy and prepare for the future;
- Geographical extension of the business model to other county areas;
- Improving the accommodation, liquid asset and earning capacity of Menter Môn;
- Developing purchased properties so that the group and the local economy can benefit from their subsequent operation i.e. to make acquired assets work for the benefit of all.

Mr. Jones outlined the prospects for Menter Môn 2015/2020 Business Plan and how the County Council and Menter Môn can work together into the future, especially the EU Rural Development Plan and EU Structural Funds. He noted that since its inception the Company has diversified, grown and established a business model aimed at further strengthening its foundation but is dependent upon its ability to secure external grants. He also referred to the match funding grant awarded to Menter Môn by the Isle of Angelsey Charitable Trust which multiplied to £2m in the Rural Development Plan grant for rural communities.

The Chair considered that this Committee should be allowed to visit some of the rural communities which has benefited from RDP grants and the difference it has made to these communities.

Details of Menter Môn's 2015/2020 Business Plan was reported to the Committee and how the County Council and Menter Môn can co-operate in the future :-

- EU Rural Development Plan – close co-operation with the County Council in ensuring the Island achieves maximum benefit from the programme. Menter Môn is eager to ensure that the AERP and the authority is fully involved in the LEADER programme.
- EU Structural Funds – pursuing co-operative innovations with the County Council in pursuit of new methods of acquiring benefit to the Island in terms of :-
 - Ensuring that Community benefit changes people's lives and prospects as well as improving infrastructure;
 - Funding and producing community based economic development from renewable energy, using local authority capital raising powers and local authority owned land;

- Transfer of appropriate non-statutory services to an altruistic company such as Menter Môn;
- The provision of affordable housing on the Island through a further tranche of asset transfers;
- Exploring the establishment of Community Land Trusts;
- Working with Scottish Power on the demand side of energy efficiency and carbon savings;
- Contributing to the supply chain business benefits of the Energy Island Programme;
- Improving the links between research at Bangor University and growth business start-ups on Anglesey;
- Ensuring that the improvements in digital communications due on the Island are matched by an investment in ensuring that inhabitants and businesses make the best economic use of them.

Mr. Jones stated that as the County Council is able to borrow money at a lower interest rate and thereafter could help an organisation like Menter Môn to move forward important projects on the Island.

The Chair stated that as Menter Môn is a close partnership organisation with the County Council, he suggested that Mr. Gerallt Ll. Jones should be a co-opted Member of this Committee.

Following a question and answer session it was **RESOLVED to thank Mr. Gerallt Ll. Jones, Managing Director of Menter Môn for his informative presentation.**

ACTION :

- **To support Menter Môn to start negotiations with the County Council and the Economic Development Unit to discuss possible funding for projects contained within the report.**
- **That arrangements be made to visit projects completed within the rural community who have benefited from the RDP grant funding.**
- **That Mr. Gerallt Ll. Jones, Managing Director of Menter Môn be appointed as a Co-Opted Member of this Committee with no voting rights.**

6 WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted – a draft Work Programme by the Scrutiny Officer.

Members requested that representatives from the following organisations be invited to attend this Committee :-

Welsh Ambulance Service - March 2013

Mr. Iwan Williams, Skills Development – March 2013

Members also requested that a letter be sent to the Driving Standards Agency to question why it take longer for theory/car test appointments in the Welsh language to take place.

RESOLVED to accept the report.

7 CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR UPDATE AND ANY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair gave a detailed reported on a Conference at Venue Cymru, Llandudno he attended on 13th September, 2013.

The Seminar incorporated Local Service Boards and Active Listening Skills within the Wales Scrutiny Support Programme which was given by Ms. Rebecca Knight. The Chair stated that Ms. Knight had agreed to give a Seminar to the Scrutiny Committees at a date to be agreed.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of this Committee is to be held on 28 November, 2013 at 2.00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 4.20 pm

**COUNCILLOR D.R. HUGHES
CHAIR**