

THE EXECUTIVE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 25 April 2023

- PRESENT:** Councillor Llinos Medi (Chair)
- Councillors Neville Evans, Carwyn E. Jones, Gary Pritchard, Nicola Roberts, Ieuan Williams.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer
Director of Education, Skills, and Young People
Head of Democracy
Head of Regulation and Economic Development
Regeneration Manager (DLI)
Visitor Economy and Coastal Area Manager (AG)
Legal Services Manager (RJ)
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Alun Roberts, Dafydd Rhys Thomas, Robin Williams, Mr Fôn Roberts (Director of Social Services)
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Glyn Haynes, John I. Jones, R. Llewelyn Jones, Dylan Rees, Ken Taylor, Mr. Gethin Jones (Communications Officer)

Prior to the commencing with the business of the meeting, the Chair informed the meeting that she had received a request from Councillor Dylan Rees, Chair of the Partnerships and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to vary the order of business so that item 5 on the agenda (Anglesey Town Centres Improvement Strategy) be taken last in order to allow him to provide Scrutiny's feedback on the item. Councillor Ieuan Williams proposed, seconded by Councillor Gary Pritchard, and agreed by the Executive, that the order of business be varied as requested.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

2 URGENT MATTERS CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR HIS APPOINTED OFFICER

None to report.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive held on 21 March, 2023 were presented for confirmation.

It was resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive held on 21 March, 2023 be confirmed as correct.

4 THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Head of Democracy incorporating the Executive's Forward Work Programme for the period from May to December, 2023 was presented for confirmation.

The Head of Democracy updated the Executive with regard to changes to the Forward Work Programme and the following were noted –

- Item 2 (Cost of Living Discretionary Scheme – update following the end of the scheme) as a new item scheduled for the Executive's 30 May, 2023 meeting.
- Item 13 (Modernising Learning Communities and Developing the Welsh Language Strategy) as a new item scheduled for the Executive's 18 July, 2023 meeting.
- Item 19 (Anglesey Town Centres Improvement Strategy – final draft) as a new item scheduled for the Executive's 26 September meeting.
- Corporate Parenting Strategy as an additional item not on the published work programme to be scheduled for the Executive's 30 May, 2023 meeting.
- The removal of the Social Services Progress Report from the work programme following agreement that it no longer needs to be presented to the Executive on a six-monthly basis.

It was resolved to confirm the Executive's updated Forward Work Programme for the period May to December, 2023 with the changes outlined at the meeting.

5 ANGLESEY TOWN CENTRES IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

The report of the Head of Regulation and Economic Development incorporating the draft Anglesey Town Centres Improvement Strategy was presented for the Executive's consideration.

The Chair and Portfolio Member for Economic Development presented the report as delivering on the new Council Plan objective of improving the vitality and viability of town centres and complying with relevant Welsh Government and Audit Wales recommendations to local authorities in respect of regenerating town centres. Subject to approval, a process of public and stakeholder consultation and engagement will take place to gather views and comments and to seek support for the proposed strategy following which it will be finalised and submitted to the Executive for adoption by the end of 2023. She stressed the importance of obtaining the public's views on their needs for town centres as well as those of existing businesses and also businesses that may have left town centres to understand their reasons for having done so and what might bring them back.

The Regeneration Manager informed the Executive that all local authorities in Wales have been requested to update Welsh Government's Public Accounts Committee on progress with town centre regeneration which is an issue of interest to many people. The strategy will also enable funding to be secured for regeneration purposes. Commonplace has been commissioned to help the Council design the consultation process which will be conducted online as well as locally within the community. The Design Commission for Wales is also providing advice and guidance to each local authority on the process after which the Council will be putting together the consultation documentation with Commonplace.

Councillor Dylan Rees, Chair of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee reported from the Committee's 19 April, 2023 meeting at which the Anglesey Town Centres Improvement Strategy had been discussed. The committee had sought clarification of the definition of town and town centre and any proposal to support and improve the island's villages. Members had enquired about alignment with place shaping work streams and plans to strengthen infrastructure at individual community level. The main benefits and risks of the proposed strategy were also discussed as were measures to mitigate risks. The committee had also sought clarification of the opportunities and challenges in being dependent upon competitive grant funding to deliver significant strategies and work programmes. Members asked about the availability of private investment to fund Anglesey town centre regeneration programmes and the degree to which it would be possible to seek approval for spend to save funding initiatives in order to increase internal staffing capacity. It was noted by the committee that significant decisions by stakeholders were often a catalyst for town centre regeneration. The committee enquired about the public consultation process in particular the timescales, communications strategy, and geographical areas to be included. The Committee had noted the content of the draft strategy and had recommended the strategy to the Executive for public consultation.

Councillor Gary Pritchard, Portfolio Member for Children, Youth and Housing Services highlighted that although the strategy is a county-wide strategy a one size fits all approach to the five towns will not be appropriate given their different characteristics as the Towns/Urban Centres Overview in the appendix to the report illustrates. It is important therefore that people across the Island respond to the consultation so that it is reflective of the differing needs of the towns and ensures that the finalised strategy is meaningful and relevant to each town.

It was resolved to approve the draft Anglesey Town Centres Improvement Strategy as a basis for public consultation.

6 DRAFT AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN

The report of the Head of Regulation and Economic Development incorporating the draft Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2023-2028) was presented for the Executive's consideration.

Councillor Neville Evans, Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime presented the report saying that all local authorities which administer AONBs are statutorily required to prepare and publish management plans for their area and to review these plans every five years with the process following set guidelines. The plan outlines the special qualities of the AONB which define its designation status and acknowledges the challenges which it faces particularly from over tourism and its impact on community resilience, declining biodiversity, and climate change. The Plan identifies five key themes which address these challenges and which will also enable the Council's vision for the AONB to be realised; section 3 of the Plan describes how this vision along with the 5 key themes will be delivered. The AONB has a growing status within Welsh Designated Landscapes and it draws in considerable revenue for the Council. The AONB Management Plan is also linked to the Destination Management Plan which is the subject of a separate item on today's agenda. The Plan will be subject to consultation with stakeholders and the public for a period of six weeks after which it will be presented to Scrutiny.

The Head of Regulation and Economic Development said that whilst the new Plan has been delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic the additional time has allowed the Service to ensure that the contents and priorities are appropriate and reflect current themes and

challenges. It is considered that there is a need to improve understanding of the AONB both internally within the Council and externally among the public in terms of its purpose and scope as well as the aims of the Plan in seeking to manage the designation. There is also a need to maximise the funding opportunities that are linked to the AONB designation in order to fulfil the priorities of the Service and the Council.

Councillor Gary Pritchard, Portfolio Member for Children, Youth and Housing Services speaking as one whose electoral ward was to a considerable extent contained within the AONB highlighted the importance of public and stakeholder feedback to the proposed consultation on the Plan and of engaging with as wide an audience as possible. The AONB is one of the main reasons why visitors come to the Island, and as one of its principal attractions it has to be protected from the pressures of increasing visitor numbers, ensuring that tourism on the Island remains vibrant, but sustainable.

The Chair agreed that it was important that the public respond to the consultation and she encouraged everyone to do so to inform future actions; also important is increasing awareness of the AONB and of the challenges involved in its management and protection ensuring that while it is accessible for the enjoyment of all, its character and special qualities are retained and conserved.

It was resolved to approve and support the draft Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2023-28) for public consultation.

7 DRAFT DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023-2028

The report of the Head of Regulation and Economic Development incorporating the draft Destination Management Plan 2023-2028 was presented for the Executive's consideration.

Councillor Neville Evans, Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism and Maritime presented the report which set out the Council's ambitions for destination management over the next 5 years taking account of the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Plan seeks to strike a balance between supporting the fundamental role which destination management plays in the economy of Anglesey and ensuring that the unique qualities of the Island are not adversely affected by unchecked tourism. It recognises that the tourism offer needs to deliver economic and social benefits for local people and their communities and that the Island's language, culture, environment, and heritage are key qualities that underpin the offer. The Plan draws together all responsibilities and priorities of Destination and will act as a template for a more collaborative and holistically minded approach to destination management creating new partnerships across the sector and communities. A drive to improve infrastructure such as toilets, car parking and access provision forms a key part of the strategy and as part of the new approach, the Plan highlights opportunities to deliver social and wellbeing benefits to communities as well as leading to a better understanding of the special characteristics of the Island. The DMP links in with the AONB Management Plan and is fully aligned with new Council Plan; it will be the subject of consultation with key stakeholders and their views will be drawn upon to help shape and develop a resulting action plan.

The Visitor Economy and Coastal Area Manager confirmed that the consultation process will focus on key stakeholders including local communities via the town and community councils. Recognising how important the tourism industry is to the future of the Island and its communities, the aim is to take a different approach to that in the past enabling businesses to use the new model to ensure not only Anglesey economy for the future but also the fundamentally important aspects such as landscape, environment and communities thereby making tourism work for everybody. As well as posing challenges, the

visitor economy offers opportunities to use Destination management work more expansively to link into other services such as Highways and Education so that it has greater and wider value than were it the preserve of a single service or discipline.

The Chief Executive also emphasised the importance of the Council as a whole taking ownership of the Plan meaning that internal procedures and co-operation are as important as those established externally and that delivery of the Destination Management Plan should not be too narrowly focused on the Economic Development Service as the issues extend beyond that service alone. An internal group chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive reflects the significance ascribed to this matter and work needs to be done to strengthen processes both within and without the Council and to refresh partnerships and formalise governance arrangements to show how seriously the Council considers Destination management and sustainable tourism. The increase in tourist numbers has also raised complex issues within some communities which the Council is trying to resolve within the parameters of current legislation.

The Executive's members in acknowledging the many benefits which tourism brings to Anglesey and its communities and its importance to the local economy recognised that those benefits must increasingly be balanced against the needs of the environment and net zero in order to ensure tourism that is responsible and sustainable. Members thanked Councillor Carwyn Jones as the former Portfolio Holder for his work during that time with tourism and destination and they urged the sector as well as the Island's communities to engage with the consultation on the draft Destination Management Plan.

The Chair confirmed that as with the AONB Management Plan, the Destination Management Plan will be submitted to Scrutiny following the consultation period so that Scrutiny can make its recommendations in full knowledge of stakeholders' perspective on the Plan.

It was resolved to approve and support the draft Destination Management Plan (2023-28) for consultation with key stakeholders.

**Councillor Llinos Medi
Chair**