

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 17 January 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Non Dafydd, Euryrn Morris, Trefor LI Hughes MBE, Derek Owen, Pip O'Neill, Margaret M Roberts, Ken Taylor.

Portfolio Members

Councillor Llinos Medi (Leader of the Council); Councillor Carwyn Jones (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure & Tourism); Councillor Gary Pritchard (Portfolio Member for Children's Services – Social Services and Youth Services); Councillor Alun Roberts (Portfolio Member for Adult's Services – Social Services); Councillor Nicola Roberts (Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change); Councillor Dafydd R Thomas (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property); Councillor Ieuan Williams (Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language).

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive,
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer,
Director of Social Services,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People,
Head of Adults' Services,
Service Manager (Safeguarding) (AH) (item 4 only),
Scrutiny Manager (AD),
Committee Officer (MEH).

APOLOGIES: Councillors Jeff Evans, John I Jones.

Councillor Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance, Corporate Business and Customer Experience).

Head of Housing Services.

ALSO PRESENT: Ms Sandra Thomas - Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager (for item 5)

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Euryrn Morris declared a personal interest in respect of Item 4 – Corporate Safeguarding – Annual Report (November) 2021/2022 and Item 6 – Progress Report Quarter 2 – 2022/2023 : North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 23 November, 2022 were confirmed as correct.

4 CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING - ANNUAL REPORT - NOVEMBER 2021/2022

Submitted – the Corporate Safeguarding Annual Report – November 2021/2022.

The Director of Social Services highlighted that this Annual Report is a corporate arrangements safeguarding report which describes the progress made and how embedded safeguarding is within all aspects of council services, functions and duties. He reported that the Authority has established a Strategic and Operational Corporate Safeguarding Boards which has a robust agenda in place which includes important data which is shared with the Boards. He noted that each service has an identified Safeguarding Champion which is a source of advice on all safeguarding matters for other staff within their service and ensuring compliance with the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.

The Service Manager (Safeguarding) reported that the governance structures are in place to ensure that the legal duties are carried out, and that the Authority's approach to safeguarding is delivered. The Local Authority must ensure that all employees and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding and are aware that this includes reporting concerns about children and adults they encounter. She further said that this year the Prevent and Channel has been included within the Council's Constitution. A list of Statutory and Appropriate Officers sets out who leads on Prevent and Channel was included in the report. She noted that Wales National Safeguarding Training Standards is structured into groups, defining the responsibilities associated with different employee, executive or leadership roles. A key action, reflected in the action plan, is to map the workforce to the various groups and to plan training delivery. This is an opportunity to map the workforce training requirements in terms of Prevent and Modern Slavery at the same time. The Service Manager referred to the effective support and interventions as noted in the report for the responding to safeguarding concerns about those whose work, either in paid or voluntary capacity, which brings them in contact with children or adults at risk. A list of allegations made against council employees/volunteers who work with children or adults with care and support needs were listed within the report.

Reference was made to the effective practice in Councils as regards to procurement provision when commissioning services. The Authority has published an Advice Note on Safeguarding and Procurement and Contract Management which helps services to ensure that services delivered by partners are safe and promote safeguarding. Each service are responsible for their own Procurement

and Contract Management arrangements and decision on how to apply the provisions of the Advice Note lies with each individual service.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main points:-

- Questions raised as how the Council ensures that safe practice in commissioning services is ensured and that all providers who act on behalf of the Council exercise their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. The Director of Social Services responded that the required arrangements are put in place as regards to ensuring that all providers exercise their safeguarding responsibilities. The Service Manager also responded that the Advice Note on Safeguarding and Procurement and Contract Management helps to ensure services are delivered by partners are safe and promote safeguarding. When contracts are set, monitoring and reviewing processes are undertaken to ensure robust safeguarding procedures are in place;
- Questions raised as to what extent is there evidence that robust corporate procedures are in place and that they are implemented consistently. The Director of Social Services responded that there is an Operation Plan in place as is set out in the attachment to the report. He noted that any issues arise when departments needs support with regard to safeguarding issues, the matters can be brought to the attention of the Operational Corporate Safeguarding Board to strengthen the corporate arrangements and to support staff who work with children and adults;
- Reference was made as to whether there are resources in place for delivering the Work Plan. The Director of Social Services responded that the resource is the workforce that deal with safeguarding issues. He noted that the expertise varies from each department with the Social Services and Education Service having more expertise in safeguarding due to the nature of their work. However, he emphasised that each individual within the Council has safeguarding responsibilities;
- Questions raised as to the progress being made against the work plan. The Director of Social Services responded that the Work Plan is reviewed on a regular basis and he reports to the Corporate Safeguarding Board on any issues that are not moving forward as expected;
- Reference was made to the list of allegations against council employees/ volunteers who work with children and adults with care and support needs as noted in the report. Questions were raised as to how the Authority is addressing these allegations and whether lessons have been learnt as to the recruitment procedure. The Service Manager responded that there was no problems highlighted with the recruitment process with regards to the allegations made against certain individuals highlighted within the report. She noted that training and supporting individuals in their roles needs to be more robust and these issues are reported to the Regional Safeguarding Board. The Committee referred that there also needs to be support the individuals when allegations against them are not substantiated. The Service Manager responded that Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 highlights different investigations in terms of child protection and adults at risk. She noted that it is challenging period for the individuals that have allegations against them together with the people that have made the allegations; the investigation process need to be addressed as soon as is practical. The Director of Social

Services said that there are clear procedures in place with the Authority's employees having access to the Counselling process through MEDRA. He noted that each specific case must be reviewed and monitored and to look upon the case from both perspective and how those individuals can be supported.

It was RESOLVED to accept the report and the Work Plan for Corporate Safeguarding arrangements.

ACTION : As noted above.

5 DRAFT WELL-BEING PLAN - GWYNEDD & YNYS MÔN PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD : 2023/2028

Submitted – the Draft Well-Being Plan – Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Public Services Board for 2023/2028.

The Leader of the Council said that this is the second joint Well-Being Plan and the statutory consultation process has started at the beginning of the year until 6 March, 2023. Following this, the Board will consider the responses to the consultation before creating a final Well-being Plan.

The Chief Executive reported the Well-Being Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Public Services Boards to publish a Well-being Plan which outlines how it is intended to improve the well-being of the area's residents. The Public Services Board are eager to make a meaningful contribution to the partnership landscape without duplicating the work of other partnerships and therefore the draft Well-being Plan seeks to clearly highlight whether the Public Services Board has a role in leading or delivering the well-being priorities. He noted that the Act highlights seven national well-being goals and five ways of working in order to give public bodies a common purpose. Working in partnership is imperative to achieve these goals and to make a difference to the well-being of the residents of both Gwynedd and Ynys Môn.

The Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Public Services Board Programme Manager reported that both this Scrutiny Committee and the relevant Scrutiny Committee in Gwynedd Council are statutory consultees in respect of the Draft Well-Being Plan. She noted that the first stage of the work of creating the Well-being Plan was to undertake an assessment of local well-being and carry out research to understand and learn more about those areas. The statutory three month consultation period will end on 6 March and the Board aim is to widen the scope of consultees in respect of the Draft Plan with an invitation to representatives from the 6th forms from the Secondary Schools in Gwynedd and Anglesey and students from Coleg Menai to challenge the Boards aims and objectives.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main points:-

- Questions raised as to which way communities could assist to deliver the plan's priorities and to develop them further in the future. The Leader of the Council responded that the local communities have been involved through Medrwn Môn

who has a representative on the Public Services Board. The local communities have been part of the consultation process and Medrwn Môn have also been part of those sessions within the communities. Questions were further raised as to whether the Town and Community Councils have been consulted as regards to the Well-Being Plan. The Programme Manager responded representatives from the Board have attended Town and Community Councils Liaison Forms on Gwynedd and Anglesey and have also been invited to attend meetings of the Town and Community Councils;

- Questions raised as to whether it is considered that the well-being objectives and the priorities identified to realise the objectives will improve the social, environmental, cultural and economic well-being of both counties. The Leader of the Council responded that the aim of the Public Services Board is not to duplicate work that is currently undertaken by other organisations. She noted that it is important that the local communities need to see that there is progress within the objectives of the Public Services Board and has added value to their communities. The Chief Executive said that the Council's Place Shaping arrangements, which is a way of working with communities, allows them to achieve their own specific priorities locally;
- Reference was made to well-being objective as regards to support communities to move towards zero net carbon. Questions were raised whether assurance can be given that there will be no duplication of work when other organisations such as the Fire & Rescue Service has the same objective of zero net carbon by 2030. The Programme Manager responded that the Fire & Rescue Service is a statutory member of the Public Services Board and they will be able to support and share good practice with other organisations within the Board;
- Questions were raised as to whether there are any priorities missing, especially given the findings of the Well-Being Assessments at the beginning of the year. The Leader of the Council responded that the economy has not been focused specifically within the priorities as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board has been established to focus on the economy of North Wales;
- Questions were raised as to how information is shared between the partner organisations within the Public Services Board and how has the work of the Board benefited the residents of Gwynedd and Anglesey over the last five years. The Programme Manager responded that discussion has undertaken during the workshops held last year and the Board will be measuring its success and gathering good practice across Wales. She noted that social media is used to promote the work of the Board and partner organisations also promote the priorities within the Well-Being Plan.

It was RESOLVED to note the draft Well-Being Plan which is to be published in May 2023.

ACTION : As noted above.

6 PROGRESS REPORT Q2 - 2022/2023: NORTH WALES ECONOMIC AMBITION BOARD

Submitted – the North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Progress Report Quarter 2 – 2023/2023.

The Chief Executive said that the Progress Report for Quarter 2 is submitted for information and provides an overview of progress on the Growth Deal Programmes and projects. The Quarter 2 report shows projects reporting against the revised portfolio delivery profile approved by the Ambition Board in September 2022. Three projects are reporting as Red in the report due to either risks to the project scope, or significant delays to project timescales:-

- Low Carbon Energy Centre of Excellence (Bangor University) – project under review due to change request for capital and revenue projections. The Portfolio Management Office is working with the project sponsor to explore options to accelerate delivery;
- Glynllifon Rural Economy Hub – planning permission to be secured and potential funding gap due to escalating capital build costs;
- Llysfasi Net Zero Farm – project has now been withdrawn and funding is now available to be reallocated and the process of expressions of interest for new projects will be invited.

The Leader of the Council said that some of the Growth Bids have been withdrawn due to detailed planning work undertaken and affordability due to the economic climate.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main points:-

- Questions were raised as to whether the listed Growth Deals will not proceed is due to the increasing costs. The Leader of the Council responded that Business Cases as regards to each projects are lengthy and complicated and there are risks that the projects will not be achievable. She noted that the economic climate has changed over the last two years and a number of regions have submitted a request to the Government to revisit the Growth Deals as some projects are facing financial challenges. She referred to the Morlais project that has been reviewed so as to best use of European funding towards the project. The Chief Executive said that the rise in inflation has been a factor with increasing costs to projects;
- Reference was made to the Egnio Trawsfynydd project that has been announced recently and questions were raised as to whether this project will be part of the Growth Bid in North Wales. The Chief Executive responded that the Trawsfynydd project is part of the Growth Deal and capital funding is included and ring fenced towards the project. However, the funding towards the Trawsfynydd project is profiled towards the future when the developer is ready to develop the site;
- Comments were made as to the requirements of submitting the Progress Reports to the Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. The Leader of the Council responded that the Governance Arrangements requires that the Quarterly Reports are submitted for scrutiny and to change this requirement would need to be discussed regionally and by both UK and Welsh Governments. The Chief Executive said that assurances are needed by both governments that there is a scrutiny process to challenge the Growth Deal and especially due to the new governance arrangements as regards to the CJC's.

It was RESOLVED:-

- To note the progress made during the Quarter 2 – 2022/2023;
- That the process of submitting the quarterly report be discussed at the Chairs and Vice-Chairs Scrutiny Committee meetings.

ACTION : As noted above.

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager setting out the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's indicative Forward Work Programme for 2022/23 was presented for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED**:-

- To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2022/23.
- To note the progress thus far in implementing the Forward Work Programme.

The meeting concluded at 3.40 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**