

# **PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 9 April 2025**

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

Councillors Non Dafydd, Jeff M Evans, John Ifan Jones, Euryan Morris, Pip O'Neill, Derek Owen, Margaret Murley Roberts, Ken Taylor and Sonia Williams

### **Portfolio Member**

Councillor Gary Pritchard – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development

Councillor Robin Williams – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing Services

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,  
Head of Regulation and Economic Development,  
Chief Economic Development Manager (TJ) (for item 5 only),  
Scrutiny Manager (AGD),  
Scrutiny Officer (EA),  
Committee Officer (MEH),  
Webcasting Committee Services Officer (FT).

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Nicola Roberts – Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection & Climate Change;

Mr John Tierney – The Roman Catholic Church  
Deputy Chief Executive

**ALSO PRESENT:** Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager (ST) (for item 4 only)

### **Portfolio Members**

Councillor Neville Evans – Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism Maritime;

Councillor Alun Roberts – Portfolio Member for Adults' Services, Equalities & Community Safety;

Councillor Dafydd Roberts – Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language;

Councillor Dafydd R Thomas – Portfolio Member for Highways, Property & Waste.

The start of the meeting was delayed until 2.15 p.m., due to technical difficulties.

## **1 APOLOGIES**

As noted above.

## **2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Euryrn Morris declared a personal interest in Item 4 – Gwynedd & Anglesey Public Services Board – Governance arrangements & scrutinise progress against the 2023-2028 Well-being Plan as he is employed by Gwynedd Council on secondment to the Ambition Board.

## **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 March, 2025 were confirmed as correct.

### **Arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March, 2025 :- Item 4 – Annual Equality Report 2024**

**Action 1** – Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group to consider a campaign to raise awareness to strengthen the baseline staff data, using insights from the Annual Conversation to monitor trends.

**The Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group will meet during April/May, 2025.**

**Action 2** – To reconsider introducing new Equality Training for staff and Elected Members, following the approval of the Annual Equality Report 2024.

**Action completed – mandatory training on equalities will be afforded to Elected Members and e-modules will be available for staff.**

**Action 3** – To explore ways of improving Elected Members' understanding of the corporate induction process for new staff in collaboration with HR.

**Action in progress – meeting arranged between Officers of the Policy and Welsh Language and the Training Team.**

**Action 4** – To reconsider the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group's title and scope.

**Action in progress – the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group to meet during April/May 2025.**

## **4 GWYNEDD & ANGLESEY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD - GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS & SCRUTINISE PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2023-2028 WELL-BEING PLAN**

The report of the Chief Executive was presented for consideration by the Committee.

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing Services said that the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act also established the Public Services Boards across Wales with members consisting of public bodies and the third sector. Gwynedd and Anglesey's public organisations have come together to collaborate as one Board. The Public Services Board works collaboratively as partner organisations to ensure that strategic plans are aligned with, and support achievement of local well-being objectives. He noted that the main challenges for the Board are to establish where it can add the most value and make a difference together with the limited resources and capacity available. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan 2023-2028 was published in May 2023 which highlighted the three specific Well-being objectives as noted within the report. The Welsh language is a permanent priority for the Board and will be promoted in all aspects of the work of the Board. He further referred that a ceremony was conducted in March 2025 for the signing of the Healthy Travel Charter by both Councils with the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Mr Ken Skates MS in attendance.

The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager said following comments received by this Committee previously, additional details are included within the report as to the projects undertaken by the Board and the organisations that are implementing the projects together with the outcomes and the further plans to be undertaken in the future. The methodology of Whole System Health Weight has been adopted as a way of working through the work of the Board which could influence the flow of healthy and affordable food choices and create opportunities to allow people to exercise and keep fit. She further said that the Welsh language is also a permanent priority for the Board as reported by the Deputy Leader.

The following were points of discussion by the Committee :-

- Questions were raised as to how the Board prioritises areas where it can add the most value considering the limited resources and capacity. The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing Services responded that the lack of resources and capacity is a challenge in each partner organisation and to both County Council's. He noted that there is a desire within the Board to accomplish the priority areas identified. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager said that this is the second Well-being Plan of the Public Services Board and lessons have been learnt to enable partner organisations to work more efficient and share resources. She noted that additional regional work is now been undertaken to benefit from the resources available.
- Reference was made that the North Wales Ambition Board is currently consulting of the Active Travel Charter. Questions were raised as to whether the Public Services Board should collaborate closely with the Ambition Board as they have more resources to complete the work. The Chief Executive responded that the Health Travel Charter that has been considered and signed to facilitate active travel and well-being for employees across the partner organisations. The North

Wales Ambition Board is currently consulting on the Regional Transport Plan for Wales. He noted that when the Ambition Board and the Partnership Board was established it was a priority that the duplication of work needed to be avoided whilst there is collaboration between the Boards as the Leaders of both Gwynedd and Anglesey are members of the Ambition Board and the Public Services Board.

- Reference was made to the Bilingual Workforce Project which is to address as to why public organisations are struggling to recruit staff to Welsh speaking posts. Questions were raised that the Public Services Board should be collaborating with the North Wales Ambition Board as they have a Regional Skills Partnership. The Chief Executive referred to the list of organisations that are part of the membership of the Public Services Board as noted in 1.3 of the report and said that some of these organisations have a wider North Wales remit. He noted that the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board can discuss the issues with specific Anglesey/Gwynedd context, rather than regional issues (i.e. North Wales).
- Questions were raised as to what extent has the poverty situation affected progress in implementing the well-being plan. The Chief Executive responded that the poverty plan is to minimise the impact of poverty. He said that whilst resources are limited the Authority is working with local partner organisations and the third sector to try to reduce the impact of poverty. He noted that sharing good practice and learning from expertise i.e. Bevan Foundation, to ensure that local interpretation of poverty is accurate was important. He further said that the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board can ensure that the limited resources available is used efficiently and to make informed decisions. Reference was made that small local agencies could provide important intelligence on people who are in poverty. The Chief Executive responded that as the Public Services Board has a statutory membership, consideration could be given to establishing a network of smaller agencies working in the community (subject to resource availability) who play a role in achieving the Boards objectives.
- Questions were raised as to what lessons has the Public Services Board learned from past experiences and how have they shaped its structure to avoid duplication of work undertaken by the partner organisations. The Chief Executive responded that duplication of work undertaken by partner organisations is unlikely due to the lack of capacity and resources with the Board. He noted that working within the Board is an opportunity to influence other partner organisation and to share good practices. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager gave examples of the work undertaken by the Board in respect of Health Weight and Poverty as was highlighted within the report. She noted that sharing good practices is important and to avoid duplication of work by other organisations. Further questions were raised as to the increase of 'take-aways' on the high streets and questions were raised whether the Health Authority is responding to planning process when such facilities are opening as regards to healthy weight issues. The Chief Executive said that the Health Board now responding to the planning process. He noted that the Authority has a strategic plan through MônActif which priorities being healthy and active.
- Questions were raised as to how the welfare objective of the Public Services Board can make sure that children and young people reach their potential. The

Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager responded that partner organisations agreed that the 'children and young people objective' was a priority to enable work to be undertaken in specific areas such as the effect of trauma in early years of a child and on their achievements and the future of children and young people. She noted that each member of the Board is receiving training on Trauma Informed to enable them to recognise the effects of trauma on children and young people. Regional work is also undertaken to highlight the opportunities available to enable young people to be able to work within their local communities and not having to move away to gain employment.

- Reference was made to the 'local engagement' objective and especially the needs of the local community through access and transport improvements in Bro Aberffraw. Comments were made that more Officers from the Authority and other organisations need to attend community engagement meeting especially in the village of Newborough. Reference was made that the projects in the Bro Aberffraw will continue until February, 2026 as is noted in the report. Questions were raised as to the future projects for the area following February 2026. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager said that 'local engagement' project prioritises the effects of people living and working in the Bro Aberffraw Ward. She noted that it is hoped that the measures that will be introduced during the short and long term will address the traffic issues in the areas due to the influx of people visiting the area. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager further referred to the plans for the Bro Aberffraw Ward following February 2026 and noted that a review will be needed as to how effective the Bro Aberffraw Group have operated. She said that the Public Service Board now operates on a Task and Finish basis to address specific projects and outputs.
- Reference was made that with the introduction of the new Corporate Joint Committee (CJC's), questions were raised as to the role the Public Services Board will entail and could this lead to duplication. The Chief Executive responded that the governance structures of the CJC's is operational with clear priority areas. He noted that the geographic areas within North Wales are different, and that the priorities of the PSB are not currently included within the remit/governance of the CJC's.
- Questions were raised as to which projects have not been completed. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board Programme Manager responded that the Trauma Informed Board has seen a slippage due to difficulties having all the partner organisations together to attend training, however dates have been agreed for the Authority's Social Services Department to conduct training in the near future. She further said that the Board's Poverty project has also slipped and holding workshops with the Bevan Institute. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Developments said that this Authority is committed to be a Trauma Informed Authority across all services of the Council and the communities of Anglesey. He noted that been part of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Boards allows for a commitment from all partner organisations to be Trauma Informed.

**It was RESOLVED to accept the governance arrangements of the Public Services Board and to note the progress against the 2023-2028 Well-being Plan published in July 2023.**

## 5 YNYS MÔN FREE PORT - UPDATE

The report of the Head of Regulation and Economic Development was presented for consideration by the Committee.

The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development said that both UK and Welsh Governments invited bidders to submit proposals for Freeports in Wales in 2022. Freeports are designated areas where a range of economic incentives are available to boost the local economy and encourage growth and investment. The Anglesey Freeport has been developed fully aligned to the vision, objectives and values of the Council Plan 2023-2028, with particular focus on collaboration, the Welsh language, championing the Island and promoting opportunities that will deliver jobs and growth to the economy. The Freeport presents an opportunity to attract new private sector investments which is especially important given the context in that a number of major job losses have impacted the Island over the last 10 years. He stated that there are other designated sites on the Island that can benefit from the Freeport status .

The following were points of discussion by the Committee :-

- Questions were raised as to the potential employment and training opportunities that will arise from the Freeport and whether the Island's infrastructure can support the influx of workers. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that the Authority has been realistic and not to raised expectations from the start as to the potential employment opportunities that will result from the Freeport; it is envisaged that around 3,000/4,000 employment opportunities will materialise from the Freeport project over the years. He noted that the employment and training opportunities will be dependent on the companies that choose to locate their businesses in the designated areas on the Island. Grwp Llandrillo Menai, Msparc and Bangor University, the Regional Skills Partnership and the Ambition Board are involved in discussions of the potential of the Freeport and will be ready to afford training opportunities when information is available as to what businesses will be locating into the designated area.
- Questions were raised as to whether the proposed £600k annual budget will be sufficient to meeting Anglesey Freeport's operational needs. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that it is considered that the £600k annual budget will be sufficient as the Freeport is relatively small compared to other Freeports and funding will materialise from the companies that will establish within the designated areas.
- Reference was made that attracting an influx of workers into a rural Welsh speaking area could have an effect on the Welsh language. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development said that securing employment opportunities will secure the Island's future with affording young people work that will protect the Welsh language. Future generations of families relocating to the Island will afford their children to be educated in Welsh in the local schools and will secure the Welsh language within the local communities. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development said that the one of the three strategic objectives within the Freeport project is the commitment to the Welsh language and culture and recognition has been given to the language by both

Governments as well as the partner organisations and will be reflected within the legal agreements with the businesses that will locate in the designated areas.

- Questions were raised as to whether the three posts identified for the delivery company will be sufficient to carry out the extensive work required as to the delivery of the Freeport. The Chief Executive responded that the three posts within the Company will take away pressure on the staff of the Economic Development Department and they will take over the compliance work and reporting to both Governments.
- Reference was made that the project estimates 3,500 new employment opportunities that could be created across North Wales. Questions were raised whether arrangement will be in place to maximise local/regional employment opportunities. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development reiterated that the figure of 3,500 employment opportunities is an estimated figure and is dependent on the companies that will locate on the Island as part of the Freeport status. He said that every effort will be made that employment opportunities will be for the people of Anglesey.
- Questions were raised as to where there will be a boundary across the Island as regards to the Freeport. Further comments were made that the workers' rights need to be protected. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that confirmation for the relaxation of the rules in the North of the Island is awaited from the Governments. He referred to the workers' rights and noted that the Freeports in Wales are different to Freeports in England due to Welsh Government intervention. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development said that the whole of the Island is included in the Freeport status in line with national guidance.
- Questions were raised as to whether the Police and other enforcement agencies are involved in discussions regarding the Freeport status as problems can arise due to illegal activities. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development responded that the Authority is the accountable body and when clarity as to the nature of the businesses that will locate in the designated areas the required support and enforcement requirements will be put in place.
- Questions were raised whether the planning applications for development on the designated site will be through the Authority's planning process. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development responded that the planning process will be undertaken through the Authority's planning processes. Reference was made that Candidate Sites will be invited through the Planning Policy process in preparation for the new Local Development Plan for Anglesey. Questions raised whether the developments with the designated sites will also need to be put forward as Candidate Sites. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development responded that all the designated sites are designated as employment sites. The Chief Executive said that work has progressed on three sites, namely the 2Sisters site in Llangefni, former Anglesey Aluminium site and outline planning for the second Msparc building.
- Reference was made that there will be a requirement of skilled workers to take advantage of the employment opportunities that will materialize from the Freeport. Questions were raised as to whether there are adequate training opportunities available for young people of the Island and also to make them aware of the opportunities that will come from the Freeport in the future. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development said that Grwp Llandrillo Menai and Bangor University through Msparc and the Regional Skills

Partnership are crucial in promoting the skills required when it is clear which employment opportunities that will be available.

- Questions were raised as to whether the Authority will have an influence as to the businesses that will be locating in the designated sites. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development responded that the objectives and aims of the Freeport will be reflected in the agreement with the Freeport membership and the landowners.
- Questions were raised as to what extent does the recent tariff increases from the USA impact on the Freeport's objective to boost international trade. The Chief Economic Development Manager responded that work is currently been undertaken to address the possible impact of the tariff increases and he said that he would report back to this Committee in due course.

**It was RESOLVED to :-**

- **Recognise the role of the Council in the development of the Anglesey Freeport, including the submission of the Outline and Full Business Cases;**
- **Recognise the robust governance arrangements and transition from Shadow Board to Full Board;**
- **Note the next steps in the confirmation of the Freeport, including the need to approve a Memorandum of Understanding with both UK and Welsh Governments prior to the Freeport becoming operational (MoU).**

## **6 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2025/2026**

The report of the Scrutiny Manager setting out the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's indicative Forward Work Programme 2025/2026 was presented for consideration.

**It was RESOLVED to agree the current version of the forward work programme for 2025/2026.**

The meeting concluded at 4.10 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES  
CHAIR**