

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 16 September 2025

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Douglas M Fowlie, Euryrn Morris, Pip O'Neill, Derek Owen, Margaret Murley Roberts, Ken Taylor and Sonia Williams
- Mr John Tierney – The Roman Catholic Church
- Ms Kathryn Seeney – Parent Governor – Primary Schools Sector
Ms Christina Williams – Parent Governor – Secondary Schools Sector and ALN
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People,
Head of Democracy,
Scrutiny Manager (AD),
Committee Officer (MEH),
Webcasting Committee Services Officer (FT).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors Non Dafydd, John Ifan Jones and Liz Wood
- Councillor Dyfed W Jones – Portfolio Member for Children, Young People & Families;
Councillor Dafydd Roberts – Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language;
Councillor Robin Williams – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing Services.
- Mrs Wenda Owen – The Church in Wales
- ALSO PRESENT:** **Portfolio Members**
- Councillor Gary Pritchard – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development;
Councillor Neville Evans – Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism & Maritime;
Councillor Alun Roberts – Portfolio Member for Adults' Services and Community Safety;
Councillor Nicola Roberts – Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection & Climate Change.
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The Chair welcomed Ms Kathryn Seeney – Parent Governor – Primary Schools Sector and Ms Christina Williams – Parent Governor – Secondary Schools Sector and ALN to the meeting. The Committee voted to accept the appointment of both Parent Governors on the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Douglas M Fowlie declared a personal interest in item 5 – Joint Working with Grwp Llandrillo Menai as a member of his family is employed by Grwp Llandrillo Menai.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 July, 2025 were confirmed as correct.

4 JOINT WORKING WITH BANGOR UNIVERSITY

The Chair welcomed the Vice-Chancellor Edmund Burke, Professor Paul Spencer, Professor Enlli Thomas and Mr Chris Drew to the meeting.

A brief presentation was afforded to the meeting by the representatives from Bangor University outlining the work of the University together with the joint working arrangements with the local authority in delivering innovative projects on the Island. A copy of the presentation was attached to the agenda of this meeting.

Following the presentation the following were points of discussion by the Committee:

- Questions were raised as to how the current financial constraints are affecting the range of courses being offered at Bangor University, and to what extent are reductions to courses being considered and especially those courses within Social Services. The Vice-Chancellor responded that whilst significant budgetary saving has been undertaken, there has been no closure of any Schools or Departments within the University. Courses within the Schools of Medicine and Health and Science and Engineering are mainly unaffected. There has been a reduction of courses available within the Schools of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities and Modern Languages (reduction in the studies of some languages have been made due to the number of students wishing to take these courses). Professor Enlli Thomas assured that there has been no reduction in the bilingual courses that are been offered by the University and there is a commitment to ensure that bilingual courses continue to be afforded.
- Reference was made to the need for a bilingual Occupational Therapy and Educational Psychology courses as there is shortage of qualified bilingual staff applying for posts within local authorities. Professor Enlli Thomas referred to the shortage of qualified bilingual Occupational Therapy and Educational

Psychology professionals and whilst there would be a need for financial investment to sustain these courses, the University is willing to undertake discussions with local authorities in the region.

- Whilst welcoming the Medical and Dental Hygiene School at Bangor University, questions were raised as to whether the students trained stay within the local area. Mr Chris Drew responded that of half the students, 20 in total, 10 attained employments with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and 10 within the NHS in Wales. He noted that a Foundation Course has been established to introduce a pathway for students from Wales the opportunity to join the medical programme. Dental sector is more difficult to keep students to work within the NHS due to the private sector been able to afford benefits for dentists. The Vice-Chancellor said that efforts are been made to have a Dentistry School to the region.
- Questions were raised as to the percentage of students from North Wales study at Bangor University. The Vice-Chancellor responded that there has been an increase in students for North Wales choosing to study at Bangor University which resulted from representatives from the University attending local schools and Colleges to highlight the benefits of studying at Bangor University. Nearly 1,500 students are from North Wales and 781 from North East Wales.
- Questions were raised as to how the University aligns the Research strengths with the skills needed by young people and local employers. Professor Paul Spencer responded that discussion is undertaken with large employers as regards to the required supply gain and through the Regional Skills Partnership and the Marine industry. Work is also undertaken with local authorities as regards to potential large developments in the region.
- Questions were raised as to how the University and Grwp Llandrillo Menai can work together to address the regional skills gaps especially in the health, social care and legal sectors. The Vice-Chancellor responded that significant work has been undertaken by the University with local schools, Grwp Llandrillo Menai, Wrexham University and Coleg Cambria to discuss the pathway for students towards the local skills requirements of employers. Funding will need to be sourced to enable the development of the student pathways.
- Reference was made that AI could transform how local government works in Wales, but it is imperative that the Welsh language is part of the AI technology. Professor Paul Spencer responded that research will be undertaken as to how the AI technology can be afforded bilingually. He noted that discussions are undertaken will Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and NRW as regards to the digital provision. It is hoped that the AI technology can be incorporated into the courses available in the University and to also work closely with companies within Msparc.
- Reference was made to the University having to make budgetary savings with the loss of 200 staff been made redundant. Questions were raised as to whether the progression of AI technology will enable, in the future, to employ support staff due to the development of AI. Professor Paul Spencer responded that the AI technology will transform services in the future, but it is imperative that data that is imputed into the AI system does not contravene personal data legislation and governance, and structure must be put in place. The Chief Executive said that the Authority is investigating the future of AI into the services provided by the Council and to invest in the areas that will have a long-term impact and benefit. Whilst accepting the benefits, there are risks as

regards to cyber security with the loss of personal data. He welcomed discussions with the University as regards to the future use of AI.

- Questions were raised as to whether the University has a recruitment policy and the percentage of Welsh speaker working for the University. Professor Enlli Thomas responded that 43% of employees are fluent Welsh speakers and an additional 20% have Welsh language skills and are learning Welsh. The University has a recruitment policy with three different structures outlining the language capability for each role. She noted that the recruitment policy is being reviewed to strengthen the policy regarding Welsh language skills.
- Questions were raised as to how the loss of European funding has impacted on the University. The Vice-Chancellor responded that the University has lost £10m European structural funding. Professor Paul Spencer said that most of the European structural fund was to support building refurbishment and equipment upgrade at Msparc in Gaerwen. He noted that it has become more competitive to source funding for Universities through Government funding.
- Questions were raised as to how the University is aligning its courses to support skills and qualifications needed for Freeport related roles. Professor Paul Spencer responded that it is dependent on the type of businesses that will be attracted into the Freeport. Digital skills development and energy sector skills courses are available in the University. Work will be undertaken with the local Colleges who will be able to afford apprenticeships scheme for local young people. The Chief Executive said that there will be Engineering and Technical job opportunities. He noted that if the Memo of Understanding is signed for the Freeport status a total of £25m will be afforded and will be used to build on the Msparc and Peboc Sites and improvements to the road structure in the north of the Island. Further questions were raised as to whether AI will affect the employment opportunities connected with the Freeport. The Chief Executive responded that Data Centres will be built across Britain and there will be a technology park on the former Anglesey Aluminium site in Holyhead.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chancellor and the representatives from the University for attending the meeting.

It was RESOLVED to note the content of the comments received during the discussion.

5 JOINT WORKING WITH GRWP LLANDRILLO MENAI

The Chair welcomed Mr Aled Jones-Griffith, Chief Executive of Grwp Llandrillo Menai to the meeting.

A brief presentation was afforded to the meeting by Mr Aled Jones-Griffith, Chief Executive of Grwp Llandrillo Menai outlining the work of the undertaken by the college together with the joint working arrangements with the local authority in delivering innovative projects on the Island. A copy of the presentation was attached to the agenda of this meeting.

Following the presentation the following were points of discussion by the Committee:

- Reference was made that there is a lack of trade people in the construction industry. Questions were raised as to the total of young people attending construction courses in the College and whether there are girls' interested in such courses. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that there has been a decrease in students undertaking construction courses in the College as there is a challenge in attaining apprenticeships for these young people. He noted that attracting girls to the industry is a challenging. A STEM course was offered alongside a construction course a few years ago with the support of the local authority. He further noted that he would afford the figures on the people taking construction courses to members in due course. Further questions were raised as to whether Grwp Llandrillo Menai attend secondary schools to outline the construction course that are available. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that discussions are undertaken with the local authority and the Anglesey and Gwynedd Educational Consortia as regards to 14 to 16 provisions. He referred to the Vocational Certificate that will be available in 2027 that will afford students to study vocational subjects alongside GCSEs. He noted that the facilities are available in the College without the secondary schools having to invest in such provision.
- Questions were raised as to the vision of Grwp Llandrillo Menai to the post-16 education on Anglesey. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that discussions have been ongoing with the local authority to ensure access to vocational, A level and apprenticeship courses available in the College. He noted that there are different models as regards to post-16 education across the Country with several options available. Several 'A' level courses are available at the Llangefni campus for students with mostly afforded in the Welsh language. Further questions were raised as to the percentage of young people taking 'A' level course at Coleg Menai and whether the College could take over the post-16 education on Anglesey. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that 30 students are studying AS courses and 20 students studying A level course at Coleg Menai this year. He said that there is availability at Coleg Menai, Llangefni for a post-16 education facility on the campus and Grwp Menai Llandrillo would be willing to discuss any options if there was to be further provisions on the Island. The College could offer vocational studies alongside A level courses to students.
- Reference was made to the Wylfa site and the potential for job opportunities if an announcement is made that there will be a nuclear provision on the site. It was noted that Rolls-Royce, the preferred partner for potential SMR's on the site, have said that they will be training potential workers in house rather than be trained in the local Colleges. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that discussions have been undertaken with Rolls-Royce emphasising the need for training opportunities to be afforded locally through Bangor University and Grwp Llandrillo Menai.
- Reference was made that training in the Welsh language for young people for potential future local employment opportunities. It was noted that this will support local young people to stay on the Island. Questions were raised as to how long it takes to train people for these potential posts. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that it takes around 3 years to train people and businesses such as Roll-Royce have also got their own training programmes.
- Questions were raised as to how many students study Marine Engineering and Marine Technology. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that he would afford the information to the Members in due course. Further questions were raised as to

the transport of students to attend courses across the Grwp Llandrillo Menai campus. Mr Jones-Griffith responded that there is post-16 transport available for students to attend courses. He noted that Welsh Government have announced that young people between 16 and 21 years of age can travel for £1 per journey across Wales to attend college courses from September 2025. The Chair thanked Mr Aled Jones-Griffith, Chief Executive of Grwp Llandrillo Menai for attending the meeting.

It was RESOLVED to note the content of the comments received during the discussion.

6 MEMBERSHIP OF SCRUTINY PANELS

Submitted – a report by the Scrutiny Manager.

The Head of Democratic Services reported that the Group Leaders have agreed that the 3 Scrutiny Panels should be politically balanced. The Terms of Reference of the 3 Scrutiny Panels have also been reviewed and were attached to the report. He further said that both Scrutiny Committees need to nominate 1 Member to serve on the Welsh Language and Equality Steering Group.

It was RESOLVED :-

- **To agree a revised process for membership of the 3 Scrutiny Panels based on the current political balance of the Council;**
- **To agree the Terms of Reference for each of the 3 Scrutiny Panels;**
- **That Councillor Non Dafydd be nominated by the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee to serve on the Welsh Language and Equality Steering Group.**

7 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 for 2025/2026, which was presented for consideration.

It was RESOLVED to agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2025/2026, including the amendments noted.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**