

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 17 March 2026

PRESENT:

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

Councillors Non Dafydd, Douglas M Fowlie, John Ifan Jones,
Pip O'Neill, Derek Owen, Ken Taylor and Sonia Williams

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

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

Co-opted Members

Mr John Tierney (The Catholic Church),
Mrs Christina Williams (Parent Governor – Secondary School
Sector and ALN).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People (for item 8),
Director of Social Services (for item 8),
Head of Regulation and Economic Development (for items 4 & 5),
Head of Democracy,
Chief Economic Development Officer (TJ) (for items 4 & 5),
Programme Manager (Economic Development) (EM) (for item 5),
Project Manager (MF) (for items 4 & 5)
Committee Officer (MEH),
Support Assistant – Democratic Services – Webcasting (CH).

APOLOGIES:

Councillors Euryrn Morris, Margaret Murley Roberts and Liz Wood

Councillor Robin Williams – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member
for Finance, Corporate Business and Customer Experience.

Mrs Kathryn Seeney (Parent Governor – Primary Schools Sector).

ALSO PRESENT:

Portfolio Members

Councillor Neville Evans – Portfolio Member for Adults' Services,
Councillor Dyfed W Jones – Portfolio Member for Children, Young
People and Families Services,
Councillor Alun Roberts – Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism,
Maritime and Property,
Councillor Ieuan Williams – Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Sonia Williams declared a personal interest in Item 5 – UK Government Funding – Holyhead : A culture and heritage driven transformation and following legal advice she was able to take part and vote in respect of this item.

Mrs Christina Williams, Co-opted Member, Parent Governor – Secondary Schools Sector and ALN, declared a personal interest in Item 8 – Internalising the ALN and Inclusion Service on Anglesey, and following legal advice she was able to take part and vote in respect of this item.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 January, 2026 were confirmed as correct.

Action point 2 arising from the meeting held on 14 October, 2026 :-

Provide an update to Committee Members following a meeting with the Health Board on 7 November in relation to the proposed reductions in Occupational Therapy services across the Island due to funding limitations by the Senior Community Safety Operational Officer for Gwynedd and Môn.

A response has been received from the Health Board as regards to Safety Partnership as follows:-

'The roles of the Mental Health Team were funded through 'i-CAN' temporarily with cluster funding in the short term. The funding has now come to an end, which had led to decrease in the Occupational Therapy in GP surgeries. Work is currently undertaken to create a long-term model which is sustainable, and to re-refer patients to Community Mental Health Teams or Third Sector provision to reduce the effect on patients.'

4 YNYS MÔN FREE PORT – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

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

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development said that the vision of the Ynys Môn Freeport is to become a global hub for innovation, low carbon energy, and international trade.

In considering the report, the Committee discussed the following main matters:-

- Reference was made as to the funding grant of £1m revenue and £25m capital seed funding noted in the report. Questions were raised as to whether this funding is to be shared between all the sites on Island or whether it is specifically for the previous Anglesey Aluminium site in Holyhead. Further questions were raised whether the funding is adequate to address all the sites and whether additional funding will be available. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that the funding outlined in the report will be for all the identified sites on Anglesey. He noted that once the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed the first phase of funding will be released and funding will be for the Peboc Site in Llangefni and the additional building at Msparc Gaerwen. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development said that the Freeport status allows for securing tax-free site designation which means the sites are recognised in law as geographical areas where businesses can benefit from tax relief. It will also give opportunity to earmark funding towards projects which will maintain and develop the economy.
- Reference was made that there are three aims as part of the Freeport status as is noted in the report and one of the aims is to increase employment opportunities for local people. Questions were raised as to whether young people within the Secondary Schools are being informed on the skills required for potential businesses locating on the Island as teaching subjects that are not part of the curriculum will take time to undertake. The Leader responded that once the MOU is signed it will release the flow of funding. He further said that there is an element of caution before raising expectations for the types of employment opportunities as it is wholly depended on which businesses that intend in locating within the Freeport status before guidance can be given as to the employment opportunities that will be available. He expressed that there has been frustration as to the time taken for the Freeport status to be confirmed as the process of applying for the status has started since September 2022. The Chief Executive said that a Skills Plan has been prepared which has been presented with the Business Case which will need to be updated. He noted that there will be a requirement for the experience of Coleg Menai to visit schools to inform young people of the potential employment opportunities available. He said that as regards to the Skills Plan there are five sectors where the Business Case highlights employment within the energy environment, construction, advanced manufacturing, digital, finance and professional skills. He further said that there is private investment already undertaken with the site clearance at the 2Sisters site in Llangefni and the Anglesey Aluminium site in Holyhead. The Chief Executive suggested that an invitation be given, in around six months, to representatives from Coleg Menai and Head Teachers following the development of the second Skills Plan.
- Questions were raised as to whether there will be problems associated with Land and Lakes being co-owners of the Parc Cybi land. The Chief Executive responded that Land and Lakes purchased two parcels of land from Rio Tinto PLC which included the Penrhos Nature Reserve which is now in private ownership. The parcel of land at the Parc Cybi site is part of the Freeport designation. Discussions are currently undertaken with the private sector as to the potential development of the Parc Cybi land. Further questions were raised as regards to the Octel Site which has a total of 61 acres. The Head of

Regulation and Economic Development responded that the former Octel Site is owned by Carbon3.ai and initial discussions are taking place for the development of a Data Centre on the site.

- Questions were raised as to whether the sites included in the Freeport can be privately sold. The Chief Executive said that as the sites are in private ownership they can be put on the open market. The Freeport constraints does not dictate what the landowner is able to do with the land. The designation adds value to the land and is more likely to attract inward investment. He further said that Anglesey is the only 12 inward investments areas in the UK due to work undertaken with the private sector. The Chief Economic Development Officer said that the Authority has not directly approach businesses as the sites are in private ownership. He noted that the Authority only owns a small parcel of land in Tregarnedd within the Bryn Cefni Sites. The land will be put on the open market for businesses to move into once the Freeport status has been agreed.
- Clarification was sought as to whether there is limitation on the designated 3 Freeport tax free sites on the Island. The Head of Regulation and Economic Development responded that any Freeport may have one custom site and up to 3 tax free sites. He noted the custom site in Holyhead is a tax-free site which has a double designation. 600 hectares can be included within the tax-free sites.
- Clarification was sought as to the main risks associated with the Freeport. The Leader responded that most of the risks identified within the report will be addressed when the MOU is signed. The management of expectations as the amount of employment opportunities and the benefit for Anglesey is a risk. The Chief Executive said that he considered that the main risk is that businesses will not locate on the Island and when significant investment is undertaken but it does not address the core principles of the Freeport status. He further said that the risks with the war in the Middle East can also affect the potential investments of companies that have decided to invest within the Freeport on Anglesey.

It was RESOLVED:-

- **To recognise the role of the Council in the development of the Anglesey Freeport, including the submission of the Business Case;**
- **To recognise the robust governance arrangements and transition from Shadow Board to Full Board;**
- **To note the next steps in the establishment and confirmation of the Freeport.**

5 UPDATE ON UK GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

It was agreed that the following items be considered as one item.

- **Update on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Anglesey 2022/2026**
- **UK Government Funding – Holyhead: A culture and heritage driven transformation**

The reports of the Head of Regulation and Economic Development was presented for the Committee's consideration.

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development said that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) was administered by Gwynedd Council as the Regional Lead Authority and the Delivery Partners monitored and regularly reviewed progress, expenditure and compliance. He noted that grant funding has supported projects across the Island which was highlighted within the report.

He further referred to the UK Government Funding : Holyhead and noted that the Council were successful in securing funding from UK Government under the LUF Programme which will come to an end in May 2026. He noted that there has been significant improvement to the town of Holyhead which supported projects that is highlighted within the report.

In considering the report, the Committee discussed the following main matters:-

- Concerns were expressed that the SPF grant will change in Wales from May 2026 with 70% capital and 30% revenue. The Leader responded that numerous meetings have been undertaken as to the concerns of the future of the SPF grant funding. He noted that the UK Government expects local authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to be able to administer projects whilst changes to the formula of funding. The matter has been raised in the Welsh Affairs Committee in Westminster and in the Senedd as to the frustration to the difference in funding that is to occur in England. He further said that the 22 Local Authorities in Wales have put pressure on both Governments that the aims of the SPF grant funding are unpractical to achieve at the same aims as the previous funding. The changes to the formula of funding will inevitably result in the loss of employment associated with the SPF grant funding. Members considered that a letter should be sent to the UK Government expressing deep concerns to the formula of funding in Wales. Further questions were raised whether there is any clarity as to when the grant funding will be available and whether the Authority will need to seek the assistance of other bodies rather than the current partner organisations i.e. Menter Môn and MônCF. The Chief Economic Development Officer responded that the grant funding for 2026/2027 will be £3.1m in revenue and £1.1m in capital. He noted that constant monitoring is undertaken with the partner organisations who administer the projects and feedback is received as to the number and nature of employment opportunities that have been created due to the grant funding which will be reported back to the UK Government. Further questions were raised whether the grant funding will be required to be returned if the businesses cease to exist. The Chief Economic Development Officer responded that the original application for the SPF funding highlighted the estimated number of jobs the projects would attract. The Leader said that there is a suggestion by the Welsh Government that the grant funding should be shared regionally through the CJC's. He noted that Wales will receive £86m less grant funding as the funding has been earmarked for the Trailblazer Community Grants

which this Authority does not qualify for such funding. The Chief Executive said that lobbying of both Government has been undertaken that the funding formula is unfair in Wales. He noted that the lack of funding will inevitably put pressure on statutory services.

- Questions were raised as to what assurance can be that the projects within the LUF funding will be completed. The Chief Economic Development Officer responded that the LUF funding will come to an end in 2026. There are a few projects that has received significant investment by Welsh Government will be completed i.e. HSBC site and the former Crown Restaurant project. He noted that work will commence to attract capital funding but will be dependent on external funding. The Leader said that the projects within the LUF funding will be completed and it hoped that the improvements to the building in the town of Holyhead will create employment opportunities within the businesses that will be located in the town.
- Reference was made that following the conclusion of the SPF Programme in September 2026, the SPF Team of the Authority plans to undertake a high-level evaluation to capture the impact of the SPF funding across Anglesey and to provide an accurate reflection of the positive difference the investment had made to communities on the Island. Questions were raised as to whether the SPF Team can give information as to the difference the investment has made to each Ward on Anglesey. The Chief Economic Development Officer responded that details of specific ward can be afforded to elected members.

The following recommendations as regard to both items were as follows:-

- **Update on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Anglesey 2022/2026**

It was **RESOLVED** to:-

- **note the successful delivery of Anglesey's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the positive outputs achieved between 2022 to 2026;**
- **note the implementation of Anglesey's UK Shared Prosperity Fund in line with UK Government guidance;**
- **recognise the on-going role of the Council in managing the delivery of the funding on the Island, as well as supporting local delivery partners.**
- **That a letter be sent to the UK Government on behalf of the Council, outlining its concerns and to request that they reconsider the recent changes to the Local Growth Funding as regards to capital and revenue funding grant formula in Wales which will have an impact on revenue funded post and services on Anglesey.**
- **That a letter be sent to Welsh Government on behalf of the Committee, highlighting concerns as regards to clarity and implications of the CJC's future decision-making role in relation to the Local Growth Funding.**

- **UK Government Funding – Holyhead: A culture and heritage driven transformation**

It was RESOLVED to:-

- **note progress in the delivery of the UK Government funded Programme for Holyhead;**
- **note the role of the Council in supporting the Programme’s Delivery Partners and the successes achieved to date;**
- **note the delivery of the outcomes and outputs agreed with UK Government;**
- **note the completion of projects to date and the expected completion dates of the remaining projects.**

6 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26

The report of the Scrutiny Officer setting out the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee’s indicative Forward Work Programme for 2026/2027 was presented for consideration.

Councillor Douglas Fowlie referred to the Committee’s Forward Work Programme and ascertained whether the invitation to the representatives from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board could be brought forward within the Work Programme due to reported problems within the Health Board with people waiting for hours to be seen in the Accident and Emergency Department.

The Chair said that the matter, in the first instance, will be considered in the Chairs and Vice-Chairs Forum.

It was RESOLVED to agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2026/2027.

7 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was RESOLVED to adopt the following:-

“Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item on the grounds that it may involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act and in the attached Public Interest Test.”

8 INTERNALISING THE ALN AND INCLUSION SERVICE ON ANGLESEY

The report of the Director of Education, Skills and Young People was presented for the Committee’s consideration.

The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language said that since Gwynedd Council’s notification in June 2025 their intention to dissolve the Gwynedd and Anglesey ALN and Inclusion Partnership this Authority has

considered a series of options to create an effective, efficient, fit for purpose service that will satisfy the needs of Anglesey's children and young people. He said that the Committee should consider the structure of the new service in the first instance.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People reported that strategic collaboration is essential to work with the most effective and efficient approach through co-planning, reduce duplication, simplify processes and use resources more efficiently. Establishing these core arrangements will create clear opportunities to include health partners in the work following the service's implementation, strengthening multiagency pathways and extending the preventative provision across the Island by strengthening the collaboration between the Learning Service and the Children and Families Service. By ensuring robust organisation and processes from the start, there will be means to create a service that is more proactive, sustainable and rooted in the needs of Anglesey's children, families and schools.

Members of the Committee expressed strongly that the children and young people should be at the forefront of the new ALN and Inclusion Service on Anglesey and the need for early diagnosis of the children and young people needs is paramount.

It was RESOLVED recommend to the Executive that the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee agrees with the recommendations contained in the report and for the Council to progress and prose the staffing structure to internalise the ALN and Inclusion Service on Anglesey.

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**