

# **PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2020**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Chair)  
Councillor Glyn Haynes (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Trefor LI Hughes, Kenneth P Hughes,  
Vaughan Hughes, Robert LI Jones, Alun Roberts,  
Dafydd Roberts. Margaret M Roberts

Mrs Anest Frazer - The Church in Wales  
Mr Keith Roberts -The Roman Catholic Church

Councillor Llinos Medi Huws - Leader of the Council -  
Portfolio Holder (Social Services)  
Councillor R Meirion Jones - Portfolio Holder (Education,  
Libraries, Culture and Youth)  
Councillor Robert G Parry, OBE, FRAGS - Portfolio  
Holder (Highways, Property and Waste)

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer  
Director of Education, Skills and Young People  
Head of Highways, Waste and Property  
Chief Waste Management Officer (MPE)  
Head of Housing Services  
Head of Democratic Services  
Scrutiny Manager  
Scrutiny Officer  
Committee Officer (SC)

### **APOLOGIES:**

Councillor Nicola Roberts  
Mr Dyfed Wyn Jones (Parent Governor - Primary  
Schools Sector)  
Councillor Alun Mummery - Portfolio Holder (Housing and  
Supporting Communities)

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The Chair welcomed all those present to the Committee's first Zoom meeting. He thanked the Scrutiny Manager and Scrutiny Officer for their support and training on Zoom recently.

### **1. APOLOGIES**

As noted above.

## **2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

None received.

## **3. MINUTES**

The draft minutes of the previous meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee held on 21 September 2020 were confirmed as correct.

## **4. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP: ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

Submitted by the Head of Housing Services - a report by the Community Safety Senior Operational Officer for Anglesey and Gwynedd on the Community Safety Partnership's activities during 2019/20.

The Council Leader reported that the Partnership is a statutory partnership between Anglesey and Gwynedd. She reminded the Committee of the financial cutbacks the Partnership has encountered. She stated that the community safety structures are now set regionally, and efforts are being made to ensure that no duplication occurs. Workshops were held with housing officers to address this issue, and move forward within the Partnership.

The Head of Housing Services reported that a statutory partnership has existed between Anglesey and Gwynedd for 22 years. The Partnership's commitment and engagement is evident through full attendances at meetings. He stated that although the Partnership has lost several grants and local co-ordinator posts, the work continues to move forward.

The Partnership is working towards the following priorities:-

- Reducing victim based crimes;
- Reducing anti-social behaviour;
- Supporting vulnerable people to prevent them becoming victims of crime;
- Raising confidence to report incidents of domestic abuse;
- Raising confidence to report sexual abuse;
- Addressing substance misuse in the area;
- Reducing re-offending.

It was noted that the Home Office compares and measures crimes by demographic regions, and results are presented to the Partnership every quarter. During lockdown, figures were presented to the Partnership every 2-3 weeks in order to ensure the availability of current information.

It was further noted that crimes reported to the Police across North Wales were down 29%, and 24.6% in Anglesey and Gwynedd between March and May this year. Increases in crimes were reported during June and July, and by September, the number of offences committed were similar to previous years. Increases in crimes were recorded in stalking and harassment, and hate crime, the latter resulting in verbal abuse.

The Head of Housing Services reported that the Partnership is looking into preparing an awareness campaign for social media platforms. He stated that the main challenges we face today are changes in criminality in our communities. Crime is now far reaching and complex, and technology is enabling a level of exploitative crime. Increases in domestic abuse have been reported, as well as two homicides over the past year.

It was highlighted that the needs of homeless citizens were given priority during the lockdown period, resulting in an increase in the number of meetings held between the Housing Department and Social Services Department.

Discussion focused on the following:-

- A question was raised on how the statutory Partnership is supporting and contributing to the effectiveness of the Partnership? The Head of Housing Services responded that the Partnership's commitment is robust, and excellent joint working is taking place within the Partnership. This is evident in financial applications that the Council has submitted recently, as well as in responses received to anti-social matters.
- Concerns were raised as to whether progress has been made in combating County Lines? The Head of Housing Services responded that the Partnership is utilising structures that are in place, and sharing intelligence to prevent crimes. It was noted that weekly meetings are being held between the Partnership and the Police.
- Reference was made to the increasing problem of knife crimes. The Head of Housing Services reported that the Council is keen to work in partnership with the Police and utilise the powers of the Police and Crime Act 2006. It was noted that currently, there are no statistics available on knife crimes, but the general number of crimes are stable.
- Clarity was sought regarding the increase in crimes committed by phone and online fraud. The Head of Housing Services responded that the Partnership is using technology to draw attention to such crimes, and the ease of committing these crimes from afar. It was noted that the Council's Trading Standards have identified and raised awareness of cyber crime, which has been shared with the Partnership.
- A question was raised whether there has been a need to change the Partnership's priorities over recent months? The Head of Housing Services responded that when the priorities were set, no one knew the impact Covid-19 would have, and the Partnership has had to adapt its way of working. The Partnership has prioritised and dealt with situations as they arose during lockdown, and convened workshops to discuss important issues. The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Partnership has used data from the Police and information from behind closed doors eg; violence in the home. He stated that through the Partnership, resources from both authorities and the Police have been brought together to respond to the challenges that exist, because the need has increased. The focus has changed due to the nature of the crimes, and has been adapted due to Covid-19.
- Concerns were raised in relation to an increase in anti-social behaviour committed by younger, primary school age children since lockdown. It was

noted that people have become reluctant to report such crimes to the Police, due to the fear of reprisals. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded by stating that it is important to move forward and raise awareness in schools. It was noted that officers work with and target specific children, and teachers promote good behaviour.

- A question was raised as to whether tensions during lockdown with visitors to the area have been monitored and acted upon? The Head of Housing Services responded that in the early stages of lockdown, meetings were held between the Council and Police to deal with tensions, where a number of anti-social matters were raised and local Councils responded. He stated that the way forward is to recognise tensions early, and act upon each situation before it becomes an issue. By experiencing lockdown, there are now procedures in place to deal with problems as they arise, and arrangements are in place to hold regular meetings.
- Clarity was sought on the current situation regarding food banks. The Head of Housing Services responded that during lockdown there were four food banks in operation across the island, namely Holyhead, Llangefni, Amlwch and Menai Bridge. He stated that the food bank in Menai Bridge has now closed, and the remaining three food banks service the whole Island. It was noted that at present the situation is very stable, with sufficient food supplies and funds in reserve, should we encounter a second wave of Covid-19.
- A question was raised on the financial implications of Covid-19 on the Partnership. The Head of Housing Services responded that he did not have the financial details at hand, but would look into the situation.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- **To note the contents of the report and attachments.**
- **To support the priorities and future direction of the work.**
- **The Head of Housing Services to look into the Partnership's current financial situation and report back to the Committee in due course.**

#### **5. SCHOOLS' PROGRESS REVIEW PANEL**

Submitted - a report by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People on progress made to date in relation to the Schools' Progress Review Panel's work.

The Chair reported that this year has been a very challenging time for schools, as they have had to change the way they operate, and adapt to becoming Care Centres for vulnerable children. It was emphasised that no schools had closed during lockdown, and successful outcomes were achieved between the Learning Service, Headteachers of Anglesey schools, and the Primary and Secondary Schools' Headteachers Forum.

The Chair reported that the Panel's work of monitoring standards in individual schools and convening meetings was put on hold during lockdown. It was noted that the Panel's meetings reconvened on 24 September 2020

The Chair reported that it is evident that joint working between the Learning Service, GwE and schools has been successful. He referred to an excellent presentation by Ysgol Gynradd y Fali on Teams, which was well received. Ysgol Gynradd y Fali made use of Teams technology to convene face to face sessions during the national lockdown, in an effort to identify any possible concerns or safeguarding issues, and as a means of keeping in regular contact with the pupils, and support their wellbeing during the challenging period. Positive feedback was received from both parents and pupils, and the sessions provided an opportunity to socialise. It was further noted that since lockdown, there has been a general deterioration in language and numeracy skills, which could have an impact on the children in future.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People referred to this successful collaboration work as 'Tîm Môn', where all relevant parties pull together and share good practice in order to provide the very best standard of education for pupils.

In response to one of the Panel's key questions on areas to scrutinise, a member of the Committee questioned how the formula to fund secondary schools is decided? The Chief Executive responded that key aspects decide the formula for each school eg for a child in Key Stage 3, the school gets approximately £3,500 per child, and the formula increases in Key Stage 4. Funding for the 6<sup>th</sup> Form is provided by Welsh Government. It was noted that additional funding is available for children who have additional needs.

The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer reported that each school receives a copy of the formula annually. He stated that the formula has to be fair to each school, although some Headteachers might argue that elements of the formula are unfair to their individual schools, if funding does not meet their expectations. It was noted that it is not the formula that is the issue, but the amount of money that is available. On Anglesey, the formula shares the funds available between the five secondary schools.

Members raised the following points during discussion:-

- The support provided to schools by the Panel during Covid-19 has been praised by Headteachers.
- Most teachers carry out excellent work. Concerns were raised that some proficient teachers are less confident in applying remote learning than others, and may need assistance.
- It was highlighted that presently there are technical and ICT issues in schools, which need to be resolved.
- A member of the Panel referred to the integral role that children and pupils play within Tîm Môn, due to their support in assisting schools during these uncertain times through conforming to the new regulations
- A question was raised as to whether the Council could take advantage of resources from outside organisations for learning. It was noted that the Learning Service works closely with GwE, Estyn etc, who provide training and guidance.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People reported that each school has its strengths and room for improvement. He stated that the Learning Service has worked with leading schools in ICT to develop Model Môn across the Island. He further stated that they have prepared guidance and examples of good practice to assist other schools in raising standards in using technology. With regards to remote learning, there are digital champions in each catchment area. It was noted that the schools had initially changed the way they operated during lockdown, and concentrated on welfare and developing staff and pupils' skills in using digital platforms and technology in general. With regard to disadvantaged children, the Service has provided Chromebooks and devices to enable them to participate in remote learning, and is working together with the Children's Services and the Finance Department to achieve its objectives.

The Scrutiny Committee is satisfied with the Panel's Scrutiny work to date. The Panel has successfully concentrated on key areas of the Learning Service's response to Covid-19 and identified lessons learned in relation to the following:-

- The Learning Service and GwE have provided comprehensive training to schools;
- Remote learning arrangements have been implemented;
- Progress has been made in technology and the use of virtual lessons, and laptops have been shared with pupils;
- The Panel will be scrutinising GwE's Annual Report, as in previous years;
- It has become evident that some pupils have experienced a deterioration in their literacy and numeracy skills;
- The strengths of some teachers with regard to remote learning and technology has been highlighted.
- It was noted that the Panel's meetings are set to continue on a monthly basis.

The Panel is certain that robust measures are in place for responding to any future lockdown, which would involve school closures. Even though effective work has taken place, lessons have been learned through experience, which can be applied, as necessary.

#### **RESOLVED:-**

- **To note progress made in terms of the delivery of the Schools' Progress Review Panel's work programme which includes robust challenge of individual school performance.**
- **To note the work streams in place through the new arrangements and introduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.**
- **That the Committee is satisfied with the robustness of the Panel's monitoring to date.**

#### **6. GREEN GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION – CHARGING METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Submitted - a report by the Head of Highways, Waste and Property on the

introduction of a chargeable Green Garden Waste collection service from 1 April 2021.

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Waste and Property requested that the Committee considers the options presented and comments on the proposal to charge £35 per annum for the first green garden waste wheeled bin collection service, and £30 thereafter for each additional wheeled bin. He stated that the proposal is in-keeping with the Welsh Government's Waste Collection Blueprint, which recommends that Welsh local authorities should apply a charge for collecting green bin garden waste. It was noted that every County in North Wales is charging for the collection service. The Council has decided that there will be no charge for the service for cemeteries, places of worship or village/community halls. Payment for the service can be made by phone or online. The fee will be a contribution towards the cost of providing the service, and each bin will receive a sticker/address label displaying the current year on it.

The Head of Highways, Waste and Property reported that the Executive on 27 January 2020 agreed on the principle of charging for the green bin collection service. It was noted that not every household will want to sign up to the service, and this has been factored into the plan. With regard to staffing arrangements, two new temporary members of staff will be employed to administer the payments.

Members of the Committee raised the following matters:-

- Have any other North Wales authorities encountered any negative impact from charging to remove green garden waste, and, has fly tipping and people putting green waste in black bins increased due to the changes? The Chief Waste Management Officer responded that there is no evidence that fly tipping has increased, and people put black bins in green bins at present. He stated that the situation is difficult to monitor, without checking the contents of each individual bin.
- A request was made for phone payments to have a separate line for the Service, so that payments can be made directly. The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded that the public will be encouraged to pay online, as the technology is in place, and the system is currently in operation.
- Could the green bin collection payment system be based on Council Tax banding? The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded that the cost the Council would incur would be the same if a bin was full or half-full. If payments were based on Council Tax bandings, the online system would need to check the banding for each property, and this technology is not available in the Council.
- Would it be possible to pay monthly through direct debit for the service in order to be less of a financial burden on families? The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded by noting that this would cause complexities as the public could start paying for the service and then decide not to continue with the payments, when they would have already received the sticker on the bin. This would require Council staff to collect the sticker

which would not be cost effective, and would increase the administrative work required.

- A suggestion was put forward that the Council could get additional income from composting green waste. The Director of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer responded by noting that there are specific conditions within the European grant which do not allow the Council to sell the compost generated from the green waste to generate an income. The Chief Waste Management Officer noted that there is a cost incurred in disposing of green waste.
- A question was raised as to what happens to the sticker on the bin if you move house? It was noted that a new sticker and green bin would be issued, and the service would continue from the new address.

**RESOLVED:-**

- **To recommend that the Executive accepts a charge of £35 per annum for the first Green Garden Waste wheeled bin collection service and £30 per annum for additional wheeled bins.**
- **That the additional expenditure budget required is funded from the income generated by implementing the charge.**

**7. THE COMMITTEE'S FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2020/21**

Submitted - a report by the Scrutiny Manager.

**RESOLVED to note the Committee's Forward Work Programme (September 2020 – April 2021).**

The meeting concluded at 4.05 pm

**COUNCILLOR GWILYM JONES  
CHAIR**