

## IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 31st January, 2013 (11:30 am)

- PRESENT:** Commissioner Alex Aldridge (Chair)  
Commissioner Mick Giannasi  
Commissioner Byron Davies  
Chief Executive
- Executive : Councillors K.P.Hughes; R.LI.Hughes;  
G.O.Parry, MBE.
- Scrutiny Chairs : Councillors Keith Evans; Selwyn Williams.  
Deputy Chief Executive; Director of Sustainable Development;  
Director of Lifelong Learning; Head of Function (Resources);  
Children Service Improvement Programme Manager (JD)
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Committee Services Manager
- ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Steve Pomeroy and Ms Lisa Hughes (Welsh Government)  
Mr. Mark Roberts (Local Authority Inspector, CSSIW); Messrs.  
Andy Bruce and Huw Lloyd Jones (Wales Audit Office);  
Ms. Tanis Cannick (Project Manager for the Anglesey Education  
Recovery Board).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors W.J. Chorlton, Bryan Owen, R.G. Parry, OBE;  
Director of Community.

In view of the workload and staff absences within the Translation Section, the Board agreed to dispense with the need for a Translator at the meeting.

The Chief Executive explained that the intention following the last Board meeting was to convene this meeting in a less formal location. However, following a review of the terms of reference, the number of invitees was in excess of 28 persons and this warranted the meeting being convened at the Council Chamber. It was also necessary in view of the requirements for translation and recording purposes.

### 1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None to declare.

### 2. APOLOGIES

As above.

### 3. MINUTES

Submitted and confirmed as a true record, the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Sustainability Board held on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012.

#### **4. TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT) EVALUATION OF PROGRESS REPORT**

Reported by the Deputy Chief Executive – That the New Anglesey Roadmap was agreed and endorsed by Council in September 2012 and the Executive on 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2013 and was the framework under which the Council was driving the transformation agenda forward.

In order to focus between now and May 2013, Welsh Government Commissioners had requested that we focus improvement activity in two 90 day cycles. Work had been undertaken by the SLT in conjunction with the Commissioners and Hay to map out a number of key components to get the transformation started and these were outlined in two 90 day cycles of work that the SLT had set out and agreed.

Overall, solid progress was being made in all areas. There had been a good response to the Programme Manager post and the SLT were confident that an appointment would be made shortly. Plans were in place to start to communicate the Plan to the staff and in that respect all members of the SLT and Heads of Service would be involved in that dissemination. It was planned that all the key strategies and plans would be aligned for approval by the new Council in the Autumn of 2013.

The Deputy Chief Executive was afforded the opportunity of providing a summary for each of the 16 theme areas that needed to be progressed as part of the two 90 day cycles of work. For each of those 16 areas of work, there was a summary which identified progress made to date and some of the areas which would be worked upon next.

Councillor R.LI.Hughes mentioned that he had attended a community council meeting last night where one of the queries raised with him had been the necessity for the transformation agenda Programme Manager post. He felt that it was important that the public were made aware of what the Authority was trying to achieve in this respect.

The Chief Executive in response stated that it would be advantageous to communicate the intentions of the Plan to Council staff because they would have an influence upon local community perceptions. If the Authority managed the corporate agenda robustly and effectively, then at the end of the day there would be efficiency savings and better value for money in terms of service delivery to the taxpayers of Anglesey.

The Chair requested Commissioner Mick Giannasi to liaise with the Deputy Chief Executive as regards communicating the Commissioners sound reasoning for promoting inward investment.

Mr.Steve Pomeroy stated that the Welsh Government were hopeful of providing an article in the Minister's name to the local newspapers mid February explaining (inter-alia) why such expenditure was necessary.

The Chair stated that the members of the Board would be appreciative of that effort by the Minister.

The Chief Executive stated that there was a need to ensure that the Authority's Corporate Plan and its mid term financial plan complemented each other. In the past they had been approached from different perspectives. They now needed to be far more integrated.

Mr.Huw Lloyd Jones welcomed the Chief Executive's comments but had slight reservations, in that as Auditors, one of their duties under the legislation was to comment on progress in relation to improvement objectives. There was a danger that there were two parallel streams, namely the Corporate Plan drawn up by the Authority last May and the Transformation Plan. Bringing those two elements together would address those concerns. The WAO would be

reporting on the Authority's Forward Working Plan in June but come next October, the Authority would be producing a self-assessment of how it performed against its improvement objectives set last May. That was where the disconnect could emerge if not addressed.

Commissioner Byron Davies stated that self-assessment was a major exercise and Commissioners were discussing how that could be emphasised more. He would appreciate WAO discussing a methodology with the Chief Executive so that both parties were aware of each others requirements.

The Chief Executive went on to state that the SLT were extremely keen to engage with regulators and other key partners in an informal way on a regular basis. Hopefully, there could be monthly / six weekly meetings with WAO colleagues to track progress. Officers took notice of the advice and guidance provided at these informal meetings to ensure that the Authority did not find itself in serious difficulty in going off track.

Commissioner Byron Davies referred to the People Strategy Theme within the Plan and specifically the Job Evaluation process. Excellent progress was being made but he warned officers not to be too hard on themselves in this respect as most Authorities had struggled with it. He considered there was real engagement and traction by the Authority and concluding job evaluation would make a massive difference.

The Chair asked those present today to note that there was a clear and unequivocal demonstration by the administration to move ahead in terms of collaboration.

Commissioner Byron Davies referred to the 2013-14 Council budget and stated that he had seen what was being done as regards the budget process and in reality it was as good as anywhere. The engagement process had been excellent and the WAO must be thanked for the work they had done to assist in that process. Similarly, the Anglesey Asset Strategy was very innovative in its approach and if the surplus property issue could be addressed on the Island then he was sure that the Recovery Board would be pleased. The Authority would also be further forward in this respect than most other authorities in the UK.

The Chief Executive mentioned under the Collaborative Theme, that this Authority was involved in a myriad of low level unstructured collaborative arrangements. These needed to be prioritised as they were soaking up officer time and some were questionable in terms of attaining value for money to the Authority. It would be more productive to concentrate on bigger projects.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi concluded, by stating that it had been important today for the Deputy Chief Executive to go through the report in depth. At the last meeting Commissioners had requested detail and evidence of delivery against the Plan. The report before the Board today provided a shared understanding of the scope, scale and complexity of the Plan being embarked upon. This was the first 180 day segment of a 3 year development plan now owned by the SLT and the Executive. Commissioners over the next 3-4 meetings would try and get this to a manageable process.

Having now seen the big picture, Commissioners would now move to a highlight report, exception basis reporting process. They had requested by the next meeting a two page summary of what had been delivered in the previous month against the Plan, what had slipped, why, how it was being addressed, risk factors and mitigation. After the next two meetings there would be the all important self-assessment of where the Council currently was in terms of its future sustainability. The SLT would need to demonstrate to the Commissioners and Regulators the progress made, where they were positioned and then the final report by Commissioners would be about commenting upon the Authority's own self-assessment.

*The Improvement and Sustainability Board endorsed the progress being made in developing the Transformation Agenda and supported the direction of travel set out in the attached progress report.*

## **5. (a)UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANGLESEY EDUCATION RECOVERY BOARD**

Submitted – A report by the Project Manager of the Anglesey Education Recovery Board providing an update of developments in respect of the school improvement agenda since the first meeting of the Board on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

The Project Manager stated that Mr.Mel Ainscow and Mr.Steve Vincent of the Recovery Board would welcome the opportunity of attending the next meeting of this Board on 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2013 to answer questions on any issues that required clarification. She stated that the Recovery Board was of the view that Anglesey had the potential to become an excellent Education Authority.

The Chair thanked the Project Manager for the update and extended a welcome to Messrs Ainscow and Vincent to attend the next meeting.

Commissioner Mick Giannasi mentioned that rapid progress had been made since the last meeting of this Board, in that Commissioners had held discussions with Mr.Mel Ainscow and a further meeting was scheduled for 20<sup>th</sup> February in order to brief him upon the wider issues around the transformation plan. They had also discussed with him how a more detailed update progress report was to be incorporated in the Commissioners report and be part of the overall publication to the Minister. Mr.Mel Ainscow had particularly recognised the importance of working together and specifically around such issues as asset management and estate issues, IT and community and customer focus.

Commissioner Byron Davies hoped that the Project Manager would take back this Board's comments to her colleagues on the Education Recovery Board.

*The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.*

## **(b)UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN CHILDRENS' SERVICES**

Submitted – A progress report by the Director of Community against the Service Delivery Plan. This Plan had been agreed, monitored and challenged by the Service Improvement Board on a monthly basis with reports also going to the Housing and Social Services Scrutiny Committee. Appendix 1 of the report provided agenda issues for 2013 and Appendix 2 provided key performance indicators for the period April – December 2012.

Progress to date had been significant, and that within a context of a significant increase in referrals, the LAC population and numbers on the CP Register. This progress had been expressed in the CSSIW Annual Review Letter and in the IST Final Report.

One of the most significant changes had been in staffing which had been a fundamental area of concern for CSSIW. Since the Autumn, 12 new staff had been recruited and there had been a 55% reduction in agency staff over the year with a planned further reduction during 2013-14 to 0% if remaining issues over the ability to recruit senior manager positions were resolved.

Remaining areas of concern were referred to at Para 3.1 of the report together with the remedial action in that respect.

In conclusion, considerable progress had been made over the last year in improving the Service, such that in several areas, the Authority was able to achieve the best results in Wales, and in most areas was now performing at, or well above, the all-Wales median – no mean achievement when it was starting from a position of being amongst the poorest performers in Wales only a year ago. The programme of improvement had moved from immediate recovery and stabilisation, to one of sustaining and embedding those improvements. The challenge for Children Services was to continue the improvement across all areas and make that a sustained and on-going process.

Councillor K.P.Hughes, Portfolio Holder, stated that he was a great believer in systems and processes being in place that could identify any slippage or concerns quickly. He was fairly happy that those were now in place and he had been assured that individual staff knew exactly what their role was, what was expected of them and what their contribution was to the whole team. There was always room for improvement and he would be keen to ensure that continued.

Mr.Mark Roberts, CSSIW stated that CSSIW had seen an improvement in performance and in performance indicators. The Independent Support Team's report at the end of October identified progress and the corporate initiatives discussed earlier at today's meeting addressed many of the issues previously identified. There were still challenges to the Service and there were engagement meetings planned over the next few months to discuss any remaining issues of concern.

*The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.*

## **6. ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL MINISTERIAL INTERVENTION TIMELINE (31<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY – 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY, 2013)**

Submitted for information – correspondence received from the Local Government Finance and Public Service Performance Division of the Welsh Government.

Reported – That the new direction issued to this Council in October 2012 ended the existing intervention and resulted in the powers held by the Minister's Commissioners returning back to the Council with immediate effect. However, Commissioners maintain their power to confirm or override any Council decision that went against the advice of statutory officers.

The current direction was due to run until the end of May 2013 and the Minister confirmed to the Assembly at the end of September that if the Council continued to improve then he would be minded to draw the intervention to a complete end. However, the Minister would still need to be convinced whether there was a strong case to do so. Although any decision to end the intervention would not be completely irrevocable, it would have to be based on the clearest possible evidence that the Council had overcome its problems and was capable of sustaining itself. Welsh Government would therefore be monitoring progress particularly closely in the coming months, including the setting of the Council budget for 2013-14.

The report provisionally set out a number of key action/stages for January to May 2013 that ideally should be achieved/demonstrated by the Council in order to bring the intervention to an end. Those highlights which the Council were responsible for should be monitored and evaluated by Commissioners. In the timeline, there were also a number of reports due to be published during this period which would assist the Minister in his decision.

The Chief Executive took the opportunity to mention that the Welsh Government Housing Minister, Huw Lewis, would be visiting Anglesey tomorrow to congratulate the Authority in becoming the first local authority in North Wales to successfully achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) and only the second to do so in Wales.

Mr. Steve Pomeroy stated that this was a tremendous achievement for the Authority.

The Chair, on behalf of the Commissioners, extended congratulations to the Authority in improving the housing stock of 4,000 County Council owned properties on Anglesey to an acceptable level by December 2012.

*The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.*

## **7. UPDATE REPORT ON PROGRESS ON THE 10 THEMES ISSUED BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONERS**

Reported for information – That in line with the Corporate Planning and Performance Management Framework, this Quarter 3 report outlined the progress made in the Council's performance against planned arrangements across key areas of delivery as outlined in the Corporate Business Plan 2012-15.

The details within the report were presented in accordance with the agreed RAG rating formulation so as to give a clear indication of the current state of play with regard to performance.

*The Improvement and Sustainability Board noted the contents of the report.*

The meeting concluded at 1:20 p.m.

**COMMISSIONER ALEX ALDRIDGE  
(CHAIR)**