

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 18 October 2022

PRESENT:

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

Councillors Non Dafydd, Paul Ellis, Jeff Evans, John I Jones, Pip O'Neill and Derek Owen, Margaret M Roberts.

Mr John Tierney (The Roman Catholic Church)

Portfolio Members

Councillor Carwyn Jones (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism); Gary Pritchard (Portfolio Member for Children's Services – Social Services and Youth Services); Councillor Alun Roberts (Portfolio Member for Adults' Services – Social Services); Nicola Roberts (Portfolio Member for Planning, Public Protection and Climate Change); Dafydd R Thomas (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property); Ieuan Williams (Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language); Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance, Corporate Business and Customer Experience).

IN ATTENDANCE:

Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People,
Regeneration Manager (DL) (item 5 only),
Executive Manager (Leadership Team) (item 6 only),
Scrutiny Manager (AGD),
Committee Officer (MEH).

APOLOGIES:

Councillor Euryng Morris.
Councillor Llinos Medi (Leader of the Council).
Head of Regulation & Economic Development.

ALSO PRESENT:

Ms Carol Dove & Mr Jon Zalot (North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service (item 6 only).

Mr Rhys Davies and Mrs Gill Murgatroyd (Standards Committee) (observers).

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Committee held on 26 September, 2022 were confirmed as correct.

4 ESTYN POST-INSPECTION OF THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY - ACTION PLAN

Submitted – a report by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People in relation to the above.

The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language said that in June this year, Isle of Anglesey Education Authority was reviewed by Estyn and the report was issued on the 22 July, 2022. The inspection looked at outcomes, teaching and learning, leadership and management, and identified successes and any area for improvement. He said that the report was a very positive report and noted that the robust quality and effectiveness of the Learning Services leaders within the Authority contribute effectively towards ensuring high quality education services. It was identified that a 'Team Môn' ethos and mind set has been developed, where everyone's co-operation and contribution are valued, nurtured and used for the benefit of the island's children and young people. There were two areas of good practice identified and the Learning Services is preparing case studies on this coherent work and two areas requiring improvement as was noted in the report.

The Director of Education, Skills and Young People reported that the Estyn report on the Local Authority's Learning Service is a very positive report. The report highlighted that the robust quality and effectiveness of the Learning Service has contributed to the high quality education service on the island. The team has set high expectations, lead teams effectively and co-operated well to drive strategic priorities. The Team, including elected members, are prepared to make difficult and timely decisions by changing and refining plans and priorities as circumstances required. He noted that continued reference within the report to effective working and also working in partnership with other services within the Authority and with schools. He further referred to the reference as regards to well-being within the report with specific reference made to supporting and promoting the well-being of learners and the workplace especially during the pandemic and the ethos of working in a preventative manner is crucial to the work of the Authority.

The Chair of the Education Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Gwilym O Jones said that the Education Scrutiny Panel held on 22 September, 2022 received a presentation by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People on the Estyn Post-Inspection of the Education Authority together with Draft Action Plan. At the meeting the Director of Education, Skills and Young People highlighted the main messages and recommendations within the report. He further said that the Panel has raised that there were two recommendations within the report that are areas requiring improvements: Strengthen processes for evaluating the effect of the Learning

Services' work and Develop and strengthen formal scrutiny arrangements. The Scrutiny Panel will self-evaluate its scrutiny input to evidence the added value to the education system as part of the work programme; it is considered that this will be discussed in February 2023. The Chair of the Education Scrutiny Panel said that whilst the Panel welcomed the Estyn Post-Inspection report it was noted that the Panel will monitor the achievements against the Draft Action Plan.

The Committee welcomed the positive Estyn report and raised the following main points:-

- Questions were raised as to what extent the action plan responds fully to the recommendations from the recent inspection of the Education Authority by Estyn. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that although it is not a statutory requirement by Estyn, the recommendations from the report have been collated into a Post-Inspection Action Plan. The Scrutiny Manager also referred that the forward work programme of the Education Scrutiny Committee will focus on the requirements of Estyn to address issues raised during the recent inspection. The Education Scrutiny Committee will thereafter report back to this Committee on the work undertaken.
- Questions were raised as to whether there are omissions or areas that require further consideration following the Estyn report; reference was made to the early-years, nursery provision within the schools. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that the recommendations highlighted within the report will be addressed by the service. He referred to the early-years, pre-school provision within schools and noted that a team within the education service is working to improve the provision offered.
- Questions were raised as to how achievable the timescale put forward by the Education Service will address the recommendations within the Estyn report. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that work has been undertaken already to address the recommendations of the Estyn report through the Education Scrutiny Panel.

It was RESOLVED that the Estyn Post-inspection Action Plan responds to the recommendations of the Estyn inspection.

ACTION: As noted above.

5 ARFOR PROGRAMME

Submitted – a report by the Head of Regulation and Economic Development in relation to the above.

The Portfolio Member for Economic Development, Leisure and Tourism gave a detailed overview of the Arfor 1 Programme which was a £2m revenue funding provided by Welsh Government in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 to Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire County Councils. On Anglesey, £468k of Arfor revenue funding was afforded to Business Grants, Language in Business Grants, 'Llwyddo'n Lleol 2050 and Funded a Welsh language promotion booklet and one specific to businesses together with promotion the creation of a new Welsh language section on the Council's website. Anglesey further received £160k from

Welsh Government at the end of 2020/2021 to provide a number of ARFOR capital grants. Gwynedd Council led the wider programme, however, elements of the work on Anglesey were administered by Menter Môn. Details of the projects that received funding was noted within the report. The Portfolio Member referred to the ARFOR 2 programme proposal which Welsh Government has now announced; a further £11m will be afforded to deliver the second phase of the ARFOR Programme until March 2025. In April 2022, the ARFOR Board (the Leaders of the four counties) submitted an 'outline proposal' for the second phase of the programme to Welsh Government setting out the rationale, purpose, strategic objective and principles for ARFOR 2. In consultation with Welsh Government, officials from the four counties have developed proposals for translating the strategic objectives into deliverable projects. The proposed main components of ARFOR 2 were highlighted within the report.

The Regeneration Manager reported that a total of 75 grants were awarded to support 42 existing businesses, 18 new businesses, 60 new jobs, 108 existing jobs, 36 new products or services, and £750k of private investment. The implementation phase of the programme was disrupted by the pandemic, but despite this, the programme evaluation reported that it had made a difference in supporting a significant number of new businesses and jobs, and establishing useful collaboration between the four counties. He further said that the ARFOR programme has given the opportunity for businesses to benefit from the grant funding. The next phase of the ARFOR programme will give an opportunity for businesses to benefit from the funding available.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main points:-

- Reference was made that it has been reported over the years that young people have left the island seeking employment. Questions were raised as to whether the ARFOR grant funding has attracted young people to return to work on the island. The Regeneration Manager responded that the 'Llwyddo'n Lleol' model within the ARFOR programme is identified as good example in attracting young people back to the island. The Chief Executive said that data has not been collected during the ARFOR 1 programme and the Scrutiny Committee could request that data is collected during the monitoring model which will need to be undertaken by the 4 counties during the next 2 years of the ARFOR 2 programme.
- Reference was made that 18 new businesses have been created through the ARFOR 1 programme. Questions were raised as to the where the businesses have been created on the island and as to whether technology has supported these businesses. The Regeneration Manager responded that there were a variety of different businesses created through the ARFOR 1 programme such as:- food a drink businesses, technical and consultancy and design businesses.
- Questions were raised as to what extent the first phase of the ARFOR programme successfully planned and delivered on Anglesey and to what lessons have been learnt to the next phase of ARFOR 2. The Regeneration Manager responded that the ARFOR 2 programme will afford extra funding towards marketing and promotion which was lacking within the first phase of the programme due to the pandemic. A number of businesses who have been supported by the ARFOR 1 programme have also invested low energy

machinery to address the increase in the energy prices. He further said that grants will be also available through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and work will be undertaken to the possibility of funding energy saving plans in support of local businesses.

- Questions were raised as to how the ARFOR Board decides which businesses are to be supported. The Regeneration Manager said that there is significant funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support businesses and it is important that the ARFOR programme does not duplicate the funding process. The ARFOR funding will be targeted towards projects that will result in success for those businesses supported. Further questions were raised as to whether the businesses that have been supported will continue after the grants funding comes to an end. The Regeneration Manager said that the two year ARFOR 1 programme was to support in-business investment and the businesses would provide funding themselves toward specific projects; grant funding was not towards running costs of the businesses. The projects that were supported as still ongoing with only one business having ceased.

It was RESOLVED :-

- **To note the delivery of the first phase of the ARFOR programme on Anglesey in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.**
- **To note the proposal to deliver a second phase of the ARFOR programme up to March 2025.**
- **The need to monitor the data of young people returning to work on the island following the grant funding towards businesses from the ARFOR programme.**

ACTION : As noted above.

6 NORTH WALES REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICES

Submitted – a report by the Chief Executive in relation to the above.

The Chief Executive reported that the Council has duties for emergency planning and response under the Civil Contingencies Acts 2004, the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001, and the Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996. The Council meets its obligations by collaborating with the North Wales Local Authorities through the North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service for which Flintshire County Council is the host authority. Within the Council, responsibilities for emergency planning and response are shared across services and nominated service representatives are identified within the Emergency Management Response Team structure. The Chief Executive highlighted the role of the North Wales Councils Regional Emergency as is noted within the report. He noted that there will be a need to review the lessons learnt following the pandemic together with the need to review the business continuity plans of the Authority to assure that in any emergency that the Council may respond in an efficient manner.

Mr Jon Zalot from the North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service reported on the main activities of the Emergency Planning Service on Anglesey as

is highlighted within the report. He specifically referred that in March 2022, with a suspected influx of refugees incoming from Ireland due to the war in Ukraine, a bespoke plan was created in collaboration with the emergency services. Holyhead Leisure Centre was made available to ensure that if an influx of people arrived in the port that suitable accommodation was available if required.

The Committee considered the report and raised the following main points:-

- Reference was made to the increase pressures on resources in local government and supporting regional partnerships. Questions were raised as to whether funding regional partnerships and emergency services will add pressure on the Council resources. The Chief Executive responded that supporting regional partnerships will be under consideration due to resources issues in local government and to ensure that it adds value to the Authority. He noted that the regional collaboration with the Regional Emergency Planning Services is strong as the justification of six individual team in each local authority would not be sustainable.
- Questions were raised as to whether there would be added benefits for the Authority to have its own Emergency Planning Service due to the Port in Holyhead, two bridges and Wylfa Power Station. The Chief Executive responded that working within a regional capacity in Emergency Planning has immense advantages. He said that having the expertise of staff within one regional Emergency Planning Service gives added value to the six local authorities. The level of contribution towards the service by each local authority is measures by population levels and this Council receives the same support and capacity from the Regional Emergency Planning Services as the other five local authority.
- Questions were raised as to the role of the Regional Emergency Planning Services in respect of flooding incidents and serious accidents. The Chief Executive that the first responder to flooding and serious accidents is the staff of the local authority. He further said that it is dependent on the seriousness of the incident with multi-agency emergency services being called to attend to the incident. Further questions were raised whether lessons learnt in specific incidents is dealt with regionally to assure effectiveness of future responses to incidents. Ms Carol Dove, Regional Emergency Planning Team responded that the Manager of the Team attends regional and pan-Wales meetings together with Welsh Government meetings to afford horizon scanning information.
- Reference was made to the energy crisis and people facing high energy bills to heat their homes. Questions were raised as to how the Council was addressing this matter. The Chief Executive responded that the matter is being addressed with Medrwn Môn leading on supporting and collaborating with Community Groups, Menter Môn leading and collaborating with businesses and public houses, Charitable Association concentrating on village hall hubs and the Housing Services working on warm space facilities within community lounges. He further said that the Older Peoples' Team are supporting vulnerable individuals. A grant of £21,580 has been received to fund the response to the high energy crisis and further core funding will be needed to enable schemes to progress. He further noted that the elected members will receive details of the progression of the scheme in due course.

It was RESOLVED to note the progress of the North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service work 2021/2022.

ACTION : As noted above.

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report of the Scrutiny Manager setting out the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's indicative Forward Work Programme for 2022/23 was presented for consideration.

It was RESOLVED:-

- **To agree the current version of the Forward Work Programme for 2022/23.**
- **To note the progress thus far in implementing the Forward Work Programme.**

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**