

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 12 March 2025

- PRESENT:** Councillor Dylan Rees (Chair)
Councillor Gwilym O Jones (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors Non Dafydd, John Ifan Jones, Euryrn Morris,
Pip O'Neill, Derek Owen, Margaret Murley Roberts, Ken Taylor and
Sonia Williams
- Councillor Gary Pritchard - Leader of the Council and Portfolio
Member for Economic Development;
Councillor Alun Roberts – Portfolio Member for Adults' Services &
Community Safety.
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Executive,
Head of Democracy,
Policy and Welsh Language Manager (FO) (for item 4 only),
Chief Economic Development Manager (TJ) (for item 5 only),
Project Manager (Shared Prosperity Fund) (MF) (for item 5 only),
Scrutiny Officer (EA),
Committee Officer (MEH),
Webcasting Committee Services Officer (FT).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillor Dafydd Roberts – Portfolio Member for Education and
the Welsh Language.
- Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People,
Head of Regulation and Economic Development.
- ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Neville Evans – Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism
Maritime;
Councillor Nicola Roberts – Portfolio Member for Planning, Public
Protection & Climate Change;
Councillor Dafydd R Thomas – Portfolio Member for Highways,
Property & Waste;
Councillor Robin Williams – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member
for Finance and Housing Services.

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 January, 2025 were confirmed as correct.

Arising thereon:-

Item 4 – Welsh Language Policy Review

Action 2 – That a letter be sent to Welsh Government to request and emphasise the need for new legislation to protect Welsh historic place names.

Awaiting response to the correspondence.

Action 3 – That the Leader of the Council be requested to raise the issue with the WLGA.

Awaiting response to the issues raised with the WLGA.

Item 5 – Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion Report – A summary of the current ALN & I situation

Action 2 – That a letter be sent to Welsh Government that additional funding needs to be made available for the Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion service.

Awaiting response to the correspondence.

Action 3 – That the support of the WLGA needs to be undertaken, to put pressure on Welsh Government, on behalf of the 22 local authorities, that additional funding is needed towards Additional Learning Needs & Inclusion.

Awaiting response to the issues raised.

4 ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2024

The report of the Director of Function (Council Business)/Monitoring Officer was presented for consideration by the Committee.

The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety said that the Annual Report includes an outline of the work undertaken during 2024 towards achieving the objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028 and there is also strong links between the Plan and the Council Plan for 2023-2028. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Council must publish an Annual Equality report by 31 March each year following the reporting period. There are specific requirements in terms of what must be reported annually. In

accordance with these requirements, the reports includes employment information during the period between 1 April, 2023 and 31 March, 2024; an overview of the steps taken during 2024 to identify and collect relevant information and how the information is used in terms of general equality duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and unlawful persecution, promote equal opportunities and foster good relationships between different groups.

The following were points of discussion by the Committee:-

- Questions were raised as to how the data gap can be address for protected characteristics of current staff while respecting individuals' rights to withhold personal information. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety responded that everyone has the right to withhold personal information. The Council is encouraging staff to revisit their personal data whilst ensuring that the information is totally confidential. He expressed that the Council wishes to create a culture of trust and respect so that staff feel confident in sharing personal information. The Chief Executive said that data is important, and a new steering group – Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group has been established to ensure that the requirements are complied with and to monitor activity to ensure that each member of staff is treated equally. The Group will consider how data gaps can be reduced.
- Reference was made to the Council's gender pay gap as of 31 March 2024 which is positive at 9.7%. Questions were raised as to what steps can be taken to eliminate this gap entirely. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety assured that there is no difference in the pay scale of any equivalent posts for persons within the Council. He noted that it is evident that female employees tend to occupy lower paid roles, and this is common across local authorities and other public sector organisations. The Council wishes to promote the opportunity for females to apply for high level posts.
- Questions were raised as to whether there is a process in place to deal with discrimination and bullying of staff members based on their gender identify. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety responded that any discrimination and bullying of staff or Elected Members is not tolerated within the Council. The Chief Executive said that there are robust policies and processes in place to address any discrimination and the culture of the Authority is that staff can discuss any issues with their managers. If a serious incident occurs, then the matter will be dealt with by independent officers and thereafter to an appropriate Panel to discuss the issue. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager said that the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy is relevant to any occurrences of undermining and bullying of any person due to their gender identify within the Council.
- Comments were made that comparison from year to year would be advantageous within the report as regard to percentage of staff who respond to updating their personal data. The number of staff that have completed short course training would also be also advantages. The Head of Democracy said that equalities training is mandatory for elected members.
- Questions were raised whether collection of data has been undertaken to ascertain as to why females are more reluctant to apply for senior roles in the Council. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Service & Community Safety responded that the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group is to be

established, and one of its focus areas will be to ensure that each member of staff is treated equally. He noted that there will be a cross-section of membership of the Group.

- Questions were raised whether data is available of the people that have been supported following the funding of £250k received by CAB toward the cost-of-living crisis through the SPF grant. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety responded that details were currently unavailable and will need to be forwarded to the Members of the Committee.
- Reference was made to the corporate induction process for new employees within the Council. Questions were raised whether there are opportunities for Elected Members to attend such corporate induction process for new employees. The Leader of the Council responded that he attends the corporate induction process in his role as Leader to explain the role of Elected Members and the democratic processes within the Council. The Chief Executive said that he also attends the corporate induction sessions, and he expressed that having the Leader attending is appropriate to give a view of the political arrangements of the Council. He noted discussion will be needed with the Human Resources Department to allow for improving the ways Elected Members' can be briefed on the processes undertaken during the induction process.
- Questions were raised whether the title and scope of the new Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group were appropriate considering the different areas of work. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety responded that he agreed that there is a need to strengthen the equalities platform, and it will be a matter for the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group to discuss the remit of Group and the title of the Group in due course. The Chair ascertained whether consideration has been given to include Co-Opted Members who as part of the Committees on this Council on the newly established Group. The Chief Executive responded that when the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group is established consideration can be given to widen the membership of the Group. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager said the stakeholders are important and especially within the new Strategic Plan to build on the links established. She noted that there is a public sector equality network across the region with continuous dialog with relevant Officers and agencies who work on behalf of groups protected by the equalities legislation. The Chair further asked as to how the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group will monitor its performance. The Portfolio Member for Adult's Services & Community Safety responded that once the Group has been established it will be their responsibility to monitor their performance against the relative indicators .
- Questions were raised as to whether percentages reported within the report would be different if the education staff within the schools were to be deleted as a high number of staff within schools are female. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that data collected can be considered within the next Annual Report as regards to separate the professions and sectors within the Council.
- Reference was made that there has been a significant increase in applicants in the 65+ age category (13 compared to 2 in 2022/2023). Questions were raised

as to what is driving this trend, and how can the Council better encourage applicants from other age groups? The Portfolio Member for Adult's Services responded that people may retire early from their current employment and thereafter feel that they want another role due to different factors i.e. increase in the cost of living.

- Questions were raised as to what plans are in place to include data on contractors who work for the Council within the Annual Report and to consider their equality policies and practices within their organisation. The Portfolio Member for Adults' Services & Community Safety responded that expectations as regards to equalities are placed on the contractors. He noted that the data as regards to contractors within the next Annual Report will be considered further.
- Questions were raised whether further details as regards to Menopause Awareness Sessions, including their scope and staff availability can be provided. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that training is afforded as regards to Menopause Awareness for individuals and more importantly to Managers to be sensitive and considerate to people's circumstances.

It was RESOLVED to accept the Annual Equality Report 2023/2024.

ACTIONS:

- Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group to consider a campaign to raise awareness to strengthen the baseline staff data, using insights from the Annual Conversation to monitor trends;
- To reconsider introducing new Equality Training for staff and Elected Members, following the approval of the Annual Equality Report 2024;
- To explore ways of improving Elected Members' understanding of the corporate induction process for new staff in collaboration with HR;
- To reconsider the Welsh Language and Equality Promotion Group's title and scope.

5 OVERVIEW OF THE ANGLESEY UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

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

The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development said that the UK Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund as a replacement to the European Structural Fund programmes. The EU Structural Fund has been a major funding source in Wales for several decades and Anglesey had always been a significant recipient of these funds which supported businesses, developing skills, increasing employability as well as capital infrastructure programmes. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a £2.6 billion of funding provided by UK Government for

local investment across the UK between December 2022 and March 2025. The allocation for Anglesey through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was £16,081.937 (with £2.78m ringfenced towards Multiply). Funding was approved and released from UK Government on an annual basis. The priority has been to ensure that all allocated project expenditure is utilised, and meaningful benefits are achieved, for the benefit of Anglesey residents and businesses with financial support to 496 businesses, enterprises and organisations, supported 913 residents to improve their numeracy skills, supported the creation of, or safeguarded, 80 jobs on the Island and helped 361 people to secure a qualification.

The following were points of discussion by the Committee:-

- Questions were raised as to the next steps following the completion of the current programme in March 2025 and whether there are projects, who may have not been successful within the current funding opportunities, ready to take advantage of any funding available. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that the original timescales of the SPF Programme have been extended into 2025/2026, but it represents a significant reduction in the funds available compared with the first available funding. The Chief Economic Development Manager said that the funding for 2025/2026 is £5m which will have a limited timescale of 1 year. It is uncertain as to the amount of funding that will be available thereafter, but discussions are being undertaken within the WLGA to ensure that Anglesey has a share of the funding that will become available.
- Questions were raised as to the 80 jobs created or safeguarded as regards to the SPF funding. The Leader and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that this Authority took advantage of the Multiply Scheme. This was a positive step, demonstrating the relevant Delivery Partners' capacity to spend additional funding and to realise greater benefits for the Island.
- Reference was made that the projected forecast for the number of people accessing mental and physical health support leading to employment was 76, yet the actual number recorded is 0. Questions were raised as to what the reasons behind this significant gap are. The Chief Economic Development Manager responded that the figures received as regards to the people accessing the support is currently 46. Work will be undertaken with the partner organisations to ascertain the barriers young people are facing to the transition of working environment.
- Reference was made that there will be uncertainty for people whether they will continue to be in employment following the SPF funding coming to an end. The Chief Executive responded that the SPF funding for 2025/2026 will be considerably less than previous years and difficult decisions will need to be made as to how many projects that will be supported, and some people's contractors may not be extended. He further said that the SPF funding is also relevant to the Authority as the Council leads on some projects and employs staff into the roles within these relevant projects. The Chief Economic Development Manager said that the funding for 2025/2026 was received late and decisions needed to be made quickly to score the projects by the Officers within the Economic Development; decisions will be forwarded to the relevant organisations as soon as possible. He emphasised that pressure needs to be made to ensure that details of the funding avenues for the future needs to be

forthcoming to ensure that the projects continue. The Leader expressed that considerably less grant funding has been received even though the UK Government assured that the funding would be similar to the European funding which has supported projects over the years. He noted that the contracts of employees specified that their contracts would come to an end at the end of March 2025. However, additional funding has been received until 2026 but is significantly lower than previously. He noted that it is imperative that employment opportunities generated from the SPF funding enable people to be able to apply for permanent employment rather than dependent on grant funding projects.

- Questions were raised as to whether joint working will continue with the third sector as regards to grant funded projects. The Chief Executive responded that due to the cost-of-living crisis and poverty it is essential that joint working continues with the third sector on a strategic, moral and financial level. However, as the level of grant funding is significantly lower than previous years, difficult decisions will have to be made as to whom will receive the funding to ensure the successful impact of the supported projects. The Leader emphasised that working in partnership is crucial to support projects within local communities. He noted that the WLGA has put pressure on Welsh Government to influence UK Government to set up a source of funding following 2026 as there is currently uncertainties as to the grant funding in the future.
- Questions were raised as to what assurances can be given that all projects will successfully meet their evaluation milestones and commitments prior to the closure process and what are the monitoring process. The Chief Economic Development Manager responded that he was confident that all projects will be completed as they have been reporting on progress monthly.
- Questions were raised as to what plans are in place to implement placemaking initiatives within the next delivery period, and who will take the lead on the projects. The Chief Economic Development Manager responded that the placemaking initiatives is separate from the SPF funding and grant funding has been secured for Amlwch and Holyhead through the Transforming Towns funding process. He noted that the three other towns will be considered when the capacity is available, and he was willing to share the draft plans with the Members as regards to Amlwch and Holyhead projects.
- Reference was made that the rural areas are not supported, and it seems that the investment to allow people to live and work in their communities is not forthcoming. Questions were as to the reason as to why the Housing Strategy has not been included within the SPF funding. The Leader responded that towns on the Island attract grant funding much easier than rural areas. He noted that work is undertaken to improve the economic development within rural areas i.e. industrial units. The Chief Economic Development Manager said that he will investigate the reason as to why the Housing Strategy has not been included within the SPF funding and will report back to the Elected Members. Further comments were made that it is hoped that the grant funding in 2026/2027 and thereafter will have a vision to expand funding resource to the largest villages on the Island. The Chief Economic Development Manager said that it is an intention to map out through the partner organisations to gauge where the SPF funding has been of value in the communities.

It was RESOLVED to:-

- **Note the successful delivery of Anglesey's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the positive outputs achieved between 2022 and 2025;**
- **Note the implementation of Anglesey's UK Shared Prosperity Fund in line with UK Government guidance;**
- **Recognises the on-going role of the Council in managing the delivery of the funding on the Island, as well as supporting local delivery partners;**
- **Request further updates from Officers in respect of Shared Prosperity Fund delivery during 2025/2026.**

ACTION : As noted above.

6 NOMINATION OF A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

It was RESOLVED to defer the item until discussion are undertaken to review the structure of the Scrutiny Panels.

7 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025

The report of the Scrutiny Manager setting out the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's indicative Forward Work Programme for 2024/2025 was presented for consideration.

It was RESOLVED to:-

- **Agree the current version of the forward work programme for 2024/2025;**
- **Note the progress thus far in implementing the forward work programme.**

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**