

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 12 June 2025

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

Councillors Non Dafydd, Douglas M Fowlie, John Ifan Jones, Euryr Morris, Pip O'Neill, Derek Owen, Sonia Williams and Liz Wood

Portfolio Members

Councillor Gary Pritchard – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development;
Councillor Dafydd Roberts – Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language.

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People,
Head of Profession (Human Resources) & Transformation (for item 3),
Senior Manager (Primary Sector) (for item 4),
Policy and Welsh Language Manager (for item 3),
Chief Economic Development Manager (THJ) (for item 5),
Programme Manager (EM) (for item 5),
Scrutiny Manager (AD),
Scrutiny Officer (EA),
Committee Officer (MEH),
Support Assistant – Democratic Services (Webcasting)(CH).

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ken Taylor;
Mr John Tierney (The Roman Catholic Church)

Councillor Robin Williams – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance and Housing Services.

Head of Regulation & Economic Development;
Head of Democracy.

ALSO PRESENT: **Portfolio Members**

Councillor Neville Evans – Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism & Maritime;
Councillor Alun Roberts – Portfolio Member for Adult's Services & Community Safety.

The Chair welcomed Councillors Douglas M Fowlie and Liz Wood to their first meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair expressed his best wishes to Councillor Jeff Evans, a former Member of this Committee who has now been elected as Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair also congratulated Mrs Mared Lewis the wife of Councillor Dafydd Roberts on the honour of being accepted to the Gorsedd of the Bards at the National Eisteddfod.

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the following meetings were confirmed as correct:-

- Minutes of the meeting held on 9 April, 2025;
- Minutes of the Election of Chair and Vice-Chair held on 20 May, 2025.

Arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February, 2025 – Item 4 – Welsh Language Policy Review

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

The Chair said that a response has now been received by the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Welsh language approving the steps taken by the Authority through the Welsh Language Policy. A commitment by the Welsh Government and other public bodies has been secured to ensure that Welsh historic place names are protected.

3 WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL REPORT – 2024 TO 2025

The Welsh Language Annual Report was presented for the Committee's consideration and for comment prior to its submission for delegated approval by the Portfolio Member for publication.

The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language said that in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations 2015 the Council must prepare an Annual Report regarding the compliance with the standards. He referred that there has been an increase in staff receiving Welsh language training over the year and the National Centre for Learning Welsh has supported the Council.

The following were points of discussion by the Committee:-

- Reference was made that it is encouraging that there has been a 200% increase in the number of Officers and Elected Members receiving training to improve their Welsh language skills. Piloting a new language awareness session for learners and confident Welsh speakers was afforded by Iaith Cyf., recently and comments were made that feedback from these sessions would be advantageous and whether there will be further sessions provided in due course. It was further noted that Elected Members should be invited to the sessions to celebrate the efforts of Welsh learners. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that the feedback from the Training Session was positive and those who attended were appreciative of the opportunity to attend the session. She noted that the Training Team within the Human Resources Department are considering holding a similar session in the future. The sessions to celebrate the efforts of learners affords opportunities to support learners to practise and speak the Welsh language is considered advantageous within a more natural environment rather than a formal setting. The Tutors set a task for the learners to arrange such activities and to practise their Welsh language skills. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager further said that there is an opportunity for Elected Members and Staff to attend general sessions as regards to improving language skills within the Council.
- Questions were raised as to what extent does the Council miss an opportunity by focusing recruitment of staff who already speak the Welsh language, rather than considering non-Welsh speakers and learners who could benefit from the Council's language training. Further questions were raised as to what the financial costs of re-advertising roles for a third time due to unmet Welsh language requirements. The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language responded that he considered that the Council is affording training opportunities to staff who do not feel confident in their Welsh language skills. The 5 criteria that measures the language requirements for applying for posts within the Council is dependent on the language skills and responsibilities requirements of the post together with addressing the requirements to respond to enquiries from the public within their preferred language of choice. The Head of Profession (Human Resources) & Transformation said that there are no additional costs in re-advertising posts within the Authority as the posts are advertised on the Council's website.
- Questions were raised as to how the Council evaluate the language requirements for advertised posts and whether the GCSE qualification in the Welsh language is measured. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that the linguistic level is assessed for the role due to their required duties. The recruitment policy sets out clear expectations of the role and the application form requires the applicant to describe their Welsh language ability. The responsibility for assessment of the capability is undertaken during the interview process.
- Reference was made to the 'recruitment data' shown within the report of details of new posts and vacancies advertised during the year according to their Welsh language skills requirements. Questions were raised whether the 'recruitment data' is a self-assessment of linguistic capabilities as there is no solid evidence of the requirement for a GCSE qualification for posts within the Council. The Chief Executive responded that applicants for posts within the Council are required to present their GCSE certificates prior to interview which shows that

they are qualified for the specific post. The interview process ascertains the applicants' abilities in both Welsh and English language and other qualifications required to each individual role within the Council. Further reference was made that the 'recruitment data' shows that no posts were advertised that did not require Welsh language skills. Questions were raised as to whether posts could be advertised with mandatory requirements to be able to speak Welsh to increase the number of Welsh speakers on the Island. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that Managers are able to set the required capability standards of speaking Welsh during the process of advertising posts within the Council. She further said that the Council offers training and support to staff at every level of capability in the Welsh language, however, it is dependent on the role of the posts.

- Questions were raised as to what extent does the Welsh language policy apply to internal use amongst staff. The Chief Executive responded that the personal commitment is the most important perspective to learn the Welsh language. A platform has been established within the Council that learning the Welsh language is a positive perspective and this has been shown with more staff wishing to participate in training courses afforded by the Council. Further questions were raised as to the expectations for staff to respond to emails and correspondence in the preferred language of the individual. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager said that the Welsh Language Policy refers to the internal administration of the Council which is relevant to all staff and internal correspondence should be responded to in the preferred language of the individual.
- Questions were raised as to what extent can the report include a more detailed year-on-year comparison of the Welsh language skills levels together with comparisons within each department. The Chief Executive said that efforts are undertaken to include additional year-on-year comparisons of staff's Welsh language skills as the Council wishes to be a data informed Authority and to put dashboards in place to monitor tendencies and trends.
- Reference was made that the Annual Report refers that 3% of employees of the Council have no Welsh language abilities. Questions were raised as to whether these individuals are new employees who have not had an opportunity to be able to attend the Welsh language courses or whether they choose not to undertake Welsh language courses afforded by the Council. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that the % of staff who have noted that they have no Welsh language skills is a self-assessment and a high proportion of staff have the ability to have basic Welsh language capabilities. She further said that work undertaken with the Training Team within the Council enables a better overview of the Welsh language abilities and progress of individuals which will enable a more comprehensive analysis within the Annual Report in future.
- Questions were raised as to whether sharing good practise undertaken by the Council in promoting the Welsh language with other outside bodies and third sector organisations. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that a Project Group has been established by the Welsh Language Commissioner which recognises organisations that are able to support, share and promote the Welsh language perspective to other organisations.
- Questions were raised as to why the facility for translating documentation from Elected Members is not available. The Chief Executive responded that the

capacity of the Translation Team within the Democratic Services would not be able to receive additional workload as there is a high demand for written and simultaneous translation within the Council. He noted that progress within the technical capability regarding AI could be a tool in the future. Members of the Committee wished to thank the Translation Team for their high standards of simultaneous translation at meetings and written documentation to Committees of the Council.

- Questions were raised as to what extent does the Welsh language requirements during the recruitment process affect the standard of applicants for the role. The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language responded that he considered that the Authority is successful in attracting individuals to apply for posts within the Council due to the ability to be working in a Welsh speaking environment and affordability of training opportunities to improve their Welsh language skills.
- Reference was made to the report as regards to consideration given to the Welsh language within the Procurement Strategic Plan. Questions were raised whether there is a weakness in the priority of the Welsh language within the Procurement Strategy. The Policy and Welsh Language Manager responded that there is an expectation to support local providers better placed to understand the local linguistic context and provide bilingual services.

It was RESOLVED:-

- **To accept the Welsh Language Annual Report 2024 to 2025;**
- **To note its contents and to forward the scrutiny committee's comments to the Portfolio Member as part of its submission for delegated approval and subsequent publication.**

4 WELSH IN EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN : 2024/2025 - MEASURE PROGRESS

Submitted – a report by the Director of Education, Skills and Young People for consideration by the Committee.

The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language said that the purpose of the report is to provide an annual update on the progress made as regards to the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. He noted that the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan measures the effectiveness of the Plan in achieving the 7 Outcome Targets. The report for 2024/2025 notes the stability of Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 but a decline in Outcomes 4 and 7.

The following were points of discussion by the Committee:-

- Reference was made to Outcomes 4 which notes that there has been decline in the percentage of pupils learning Welsh GCSE first language and more registering for second language GCSE. Reference was also made to Outcome 7 which notes that there has been a decline in teaching staff able to teach Welsh and teaching other subjects through the medium of Welsh. Questions were raised as to what the underlying causes of these trends. The Portfolio Member for Education and Welsh Language responded that the focus of

education is to help pupils to reach their potential. He noted that there is currently a Welsh first language and Welsh second language GCSE's available to pupils. However, there will changes introduced in two years with Welsh Language and Welsh Literature examinations being combined into one GCSE for pupils in the Welsh medium and bilingual schools and a Welsh Second Language GCSE will be discontinued and a new GCSE in Welsh will be created for learners in English medium settings. He further said that there are national recruitment challenges of teaching staff and specific steps have been undertaken with working closely with Bangor University to highlight the potential opportunities within the education sector. The Primary Senior Manager – Education said that regular strategic meetings are undertaken with recruitment Officers from Bangor University and representative from the Education School and Psychology School of the University. Collaborative working is undertaken with CaBan, which is a partnership group working with schools and Bangor University.

- Questions were raised as to what additional support will be provided to Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi to help them fully achieve their ambitious goal of reaching Category 3 by September 2029. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded that the Learning Service is an integral part of supporting Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi to gaining wider support for the school. A WESP Project Group has been established in May 2024, with an extensive focus on establishing a Category 3, Year 7 class, establishing a language centre within the school that also supports teaching of Humanities through the medium of Welsh and a programme of specific support to support the teaching staff. The Chair of the Education Scrutiny Panel said that the Education Scrutiny Panel visited Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi and were able to see the willingness in promoting the Welsh language within the school. Year 7 had confident Welsh speakers, and it is hoped that the progression of the language will extend to Year 8.
- Reference was made that 3 schools in the Holyhead catchment area have requested additional support as regards to the Welsh language. Questions were raised as to the criteria required for other schools on the Island to request additional support in the Welsh language as some schools have pupils from English speaking homes. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded that the Learning Service work closely with schools to gather their priorities on an annual basis. The Learning Service ensures that appropriate provision is put in place to support for individual schools. Work is undertaken with the Language Charter Officer for Gwynedd and Anglesey to address the individual schools' priorities.
- Reference was made that there seems to be less use of the Welsh language in Years 8 and above in Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi. Questions were raised as to how the Learning Service can overcome these tendencies. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that opportunities for young people to enable them to speak Welsh outside school hours is paramount. The Primary Senior Manager – Education said that a member of staff from the Language Centre area working within the school and teaching Humanities to increase the capacity of learning within the school. Further questions were raised that other catchment areas need to be considered for support with the Welsh language as there is a potential for the language to deteriorate. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded that a member of the

Language Centre can visit any school if they require support. He noted that the Language Charter supports the use of the Welsh language outside the classroom and school hours. David Hughes Secondary School has recently been awarded a 'Siarter Iaith' Accreditation and other schools will also be trying to achieve this accreditation in the future. The Deputy Chief Executive said that it is important to note that it is up to each individual school to develop the Welsh language and to afford the best possible education. Further questions were raised as to whether there are similar problems in the other 4 Secondary Schools on Anglesey as regards to the transition of children from primary schools in relation to the Welsh language. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded following discussions with the 4 other Secondary Schools on Anglesey there has been no specific problems reported but that the matter will also be raised in strategic forums.

- Reference was made that the Learning Service uses LAEG funds under the Welsh 2050 Grant sub-heading to support language centres and using grant funds to increase the provision for engaging with secondary schools. Questions were raised as to the risks associated should there be any change to the grant post-2025. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded that the LAEG grant funding is an annual grant and it would be advantageous to have assurance for a three-year period to enable forward planning for the Language Centres provision.
- Questions were raised as to the waiting time for pupils to be able to attend the Language Centres and the costs associated with transporting children to the centres. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded that there are 40 pupils that are continuously on the waiting-list for access to the Language Centres. 96 pupils attend the Language Centres on a yearly basis. He noted that children that have come to live on the Island have access to the Language Centre. The staff from the Language Centres attend schools before and after being in the Language Centres. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People said that transporting pupils to the Language Centre is costly and efforts are being made to afford an 'outreach' facility to reduce transport costs.
- Reference was made that teaching staff should be made aware of the Language Awareness Sessions to enable them to be informed of the history and culture of the Welsh language. The Primary Senior Manager – Education responded that the collaboration with the Language Forum is appreciative and language awareness session could be improved for teaching staff.
- Reference was made that the report highlights a risk to schools' capacity to continue effectively immersing and integrating newcomers into the mainstream. Questions were raised as to the data available to provide a better understanding of the situation. The Primary Senior – Manager responded that there are 40 pupils in schools as newcomers awaiting access to the Language Centres. The Language Centre staff during this term have been providing support to every school.

It was RESOLVED to note the update on the Isle of Anglesey Welsh in Education Strategic Plan : 2024/2025 data.

ACTION : That a request be made to Welsh Government that the LAEG grant funding should be for a three-year period to allow for forward planning for the provision of the Language Centres provision.

5 UK GOVERNMENT FUNDED PROGRAMME (YNYS MÔN LEVELLING UP PROGRAMME) - MEASURE PROGRESS

Submitted – a report by the Head of Regulation and Economic Development for consideration by the Committee.

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development reported that this is the fourth of five-update report submitted to this Committee outlining progress in the delivery of the UK Government funded Programme for Holyhead.

The following were points of discussion by the Committee:-

- Questions were raised as to the total number of jobs created by the programme. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that 52 full time posts were agreed as part of the programme with UK Government and the number of jobs created will be apparent when the scheme has been completed in March 2026. He noted that contractors that have undertaken the works have employed additional employees. The Programme Manager responded that 12 full time posts have been created as part of the Programme.
- Questions were raised that due to rising costs, what impact is this having on outputs and whether the intended outcomes are still to be achievable and has this risk been formally raised with UK Government. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that the risk associated with rising costs due to inflation impacting on materials was identified as a risk at the start of the process to the Programme Board. He noted that continued discussions are undertaken with the delivery partners and some elements of the projects have been removed due to cost implications.
- Questions were raised whether there are businesses ready to occupy the units that have been created through the UK Government Funded Programme. The Programme Manager responded that the businesses have applied through an open process and interviews were undertaken with the interested parties. The businesses that were successful in attaining the units will mostly have a 1 year-lease. Further questions were raised whether a 1 year-lease is sufficient and whether the businesses will have to re-tender for the lease of the units and whether the short-term lease has affected the number of businesses applying for the units. The Programme Manager responded that the success of the businesses within the units will be monitored throughout the year and thereafter they will be offered a further lease. He noted that it is not considered that the offer of only a 1 year-lease impacted the interest in the units as there was a number of businesses interested in the units on offer.
- Questions were raised as to what assurances can be provided that rising costs are not compromising the quality of delivery, and whether there are sufficient financial resources to manage these increased expenses. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that as a member of the Programme Board the Board are ensuring that quality of the work addresses the requirements within the UK Government Funded Programme.

- Questions were raised whether the recent fire at St Cybi's Church posed a financial risk and impacted the project timeframe. The Programme Manager responded that the recent fire has not impacted on St Cybi's Church but there is some damage to the Roman Wall, but this will not affect the funding for the project.
- Questions were raised whether there will be further public engagement events are planned in the future. The Programme Manager responded that a public engagement event is to take place at the end of the year to report on the work on the projects.
- Questions were raised as to what extent has the Diocese of Bangor contributed financially to the work at St Cybi's Church and will they continue to contribute toward the maintenance in the future. The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Member for Economic Development responded that as a partner the Diocese of Bangor contributed 22% of the total costs and as the costs have increased their contribution towards the project has further increased to 24% currently. The Diocese of Bangor will contribute toward the maintenance costs in the future. The Chair said that he raised a question at the Briefing Session afforded as part of the UK Government Funded Programme recently whether the Officers were satisfied that the required governance is in place under the Church in Wales as it has been reported in the media that there has been a lack of governance within the Church in Wales. The Programme Manager responded that the challenges faced by the Diocese of Bangor has been considered. He noted that the Diocese has a Management Team in place at part of the St Cybi's Church project and several issues that have arisen have been resolved.

It was RESOLVED:-

- **To note the progress in the delivery of the UK Government funded Programme for Holyhead;**
- **To note the implementation of the UK Government funded Programme for Holyhead in line with UK Government guidance;**
- **To recognise the on-going role of the Council in supporting the Programme's Delivery Partners.**

6 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2025/2026

The report of the Scrutiny Manager setting out the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee's indicative Forward Work Programme 2025/2026 was presented for consideration.

It was RESOLVED to agree the current version of the forward work programme for 2025/2026.

The meeting concluded at 3.35 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**