

# IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April, 2013 (11:00 am)

- PRESENT:** Commissioner Alex Aldridge (Chair)  
Chief Executive
- Executive : Councillors W.J.Chorlton; K.P.Hughes; R.LI.Hughes;  
O.Glyn Jones; Bryan Owen; G.O.Parry,MBE; R.G.Parry,OBE.
- Scrutiny Chairs : Councillor 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);  
Messrs. Andy Bruce and Huw Lloyd Jones (Wales Audit Office);  
Mr.Mark Roberts (Local Authority Inspector, CSSIW).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors L.Davies, K.Evans, T.Lloyd Hughes, Commissioners  
Byron Davies and Mick Giannasi; Professor Mel Ainscow (Chair  
of the Anglesey Education Recovery Board); Ms.Tanis Cannick  
(Project Manager for the Anglesey Education Recovery Board).

The Chair stated that this would probably be the last meeting that the Commissioners would be involved with as part of the Intervention at this Council. He wished to express his sincere appreciation to the Leader, the Executive, Scrutiny Chairs, Welsh Government, Wales Audit Office, CSSIW, Anglesey Education Recovery Board and the relevant officers that had been involved, for their work in transforming this Authority over the last two years. He also paid particular tribute to Councillor G.O.Parry,MBE for his service and commitment to local government over many years and he wished him well in his retirement. Commissioners would be attending the extraordinary Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2013 at which it was hoped the Minister would announce that the Intervention at Anglesey had come to an end. He wished the Authority every success for the future.

## 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 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2013.

#### 4. ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL SELF-ASSESSMENT – APRIL 2013

The Chair mentioned that the Commissioners had prepared their own self-assessment and on the basis of the information contained within this report and those that had preceded it over the last two years, they would be recommending to the Minister as follows:-

- *That the Minister brings the Welsh Government Intervention in the Isle of Anglesey County Council to an end when the current Ministerial Direction expires on 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2013;*
- *That the Minister defers making a formal decision until 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2013, in order that she can make a further assessment from the Commissioners to identify any issues emerging from the induction of the new Council.*

Reported by the Deputy Chief Executive – That this report was the first self-assessment report prepared by the Council and covered the period between November 2012 to April 2013 and the transition back to local political control.

The report identified progress against the SLT's 180 day cycle which was designed to meet the priority requirements of each of the six key themes and outlined priority work areas which would focus attention of the forthcoming improvement and sustainability phase. Whilst significant progress had been made, there was also some slippage and these were identified within the report by their RAG status. None were red but there were a few identified as amber upon which more work was required.

In line with the Auditor General's on-going developments such an annual self-assessment would be integrated within the Council's business planning cycle in order to critically self-evaluate performance and identify future priority work-streams.

Significant challenges awaited the organisation during the current improvement and sustainability phase but the clear sense of purpose and direction engendered by the SLT would enable the organisation to take a focused approach to decision making and risk management to overcome the hurdles which it would undoubtedly face.

The induction of a new political administration would be a test and the importance placed on the newly formed Executive post election in working closely with the SLT to own and drive the transformational change would be key to ensuring that the prospect of longer term sustainable recovery is achieved.

The track record of change over the past six months demonstrated the appetite and the willingness for change amongst the SLT. The success of what needed to be delivered over the next six months was very much down to the operational management of the Council.

With the drive, enthusiasm and clear sense of purpose developing under the direction of the Programme Boards it was proposed that this Council can and will continue to manage its own affairs independently of external intervention. The Programme Boards would drive the transformation plan forward over the next 4 years. Examples were circulated at the meeting of the type of information which would be presented at each Programme Board. It was an expectation that Executive and some Scrutiny members would be members of these Boards. Some middle managers should also be involved to ensure progressing the ethos throughout the organisation. Each Programme Board could also request external support, i.e. by the Wales Audit Office.

Critical Success Factors had been identified to demonstrate improvements and these were:-

- Service modernisation including social service transformation, revised leisure provision and school modernisation;
- Management Team re-structure aligned to the transformation plan;
- A comprehensive Member Induction Scheme to inform new Members of the transformation plan, its associated work programmes and the corporate memory;
- The realisation of a focused corporate plan aligned to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- An effective IT strategy to enable the realisation of the transformation plan;
- Completion of the Job Evaluation project under the established programme governance structure.

Underpinning the effective realisation of each of these CSF's was the means by which stakeholder engagement was undertaken. This was identified as an important next stage priority which was cross boundary/cross organisation and needed to be far reaching to enhance the credibility of the Council over the forthcoming improvement and sustainability phase.

There were also risks to the achievement of these CSF's as evidenced under each theme of the report and collated at Appendix 2. Delivery on the above through managing these risks would further demonstrate that the Council was leading on and developing the essential components of a mature public sector organisation operating in the current economic climate.

The Deputy Chief Executive also circulated the results of the feedback from the Transformation Agenda staff sessions held recently, which demonstrated quite clearly that the message in terms of change and transformation was now permeating its way down through the Authority and that staff on the whole were very enthusiastic as to the way forward.

The Heads of Service re-structure had been approved in principle by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> May and an internal consultation process would now commence on the proposed Service changes. The target date to complete the process was 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2013.

Mr. Huw Lloyd Jones stated that the WAO would reserve their position but were broadly impressed with what had been achieved to date.

Mr. Steve Pomeroy pointed out that Welsh Government would not be interested in who would be elected or the composition of Party Groups following the Election. What was required was stability within the Council.

The work outlined in the report was ambitious for any organisation, let alone for a small one. Progress however, was looking good but there was still, however, a lot of work to be done. He was sure that there would be an open door from organisations such as the WAO, WLGA, Welsh Government, etc, with regard to any future support or expertise.

As regards the staff feedback, he thought that many of the responses therein were classified as 'maybe'. Perhaps staff were reluctant at that first meeting to provide positive or negative feedback. It was important for the Authority, that staff formed an opinion in this respect.

He also considered that it might be a good idea if an invitation was extended to a cross representation of staff from the Authority to attend the Minister's address on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2013.

The Chief Executive in response stated that a key part of the induction with the new Council would be the requirement to become more of an outward looking organisation and that there would be a requirement to escalate the level of collaboration and joint working with other authorities and to also accept the need that we would require external support and interaction with outside agencies to ensure the momentum of the transformation agenda.

The Leader and the Executive members together with the Chief Executive thanked the Commissioners for the invaluable assistance they had provided to this Council over the last two years in moving the transformation agenda forward.

*The Improvement and Sustainability Board endorsed the progress being made in respect of the self-evaluation process undertaken by the Authority.*

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

Councillor G.O.Parry, MBE, stated that he had a few concerns. Firstly, there had been a change in the membership of the Education Recovery Board. He felt it was important to have consistency in order to support the current events. He also considered that if there was funding available for two new 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, the Authority would be in a position to transform the public perception of the school rationalisation programme.

He was very grateful to the Director for the work he had done and for transforming several aspects of the education service on Anglesey.

(a) On behalf of the Project Manager for the Education Recovery Board, the Director of Lifelong Learning reported verbally upon the Estyn presentation to the Education Recovery Board held last Wednesday. Attention was drawn to the following points presented by Estyn:- In the period since inspection it seems that the solid foundations put in place, in response to recommendations, have strengthened the service.

- Key appointments at strategic level that have added relevant capacity.
- Pivotal transformation projects like school reorganisation are being managed corporately. Key hurdles to progress are being better identified and the authority has taken action to remove these.
- Elected members are now better informed and are strengthening their understanding of school improvements.
- The temporary appointment to the post of Senior Manager for School Improvement and Inclusion has added capacity.
- Standards are rising in all key areas, but too many schools and subjects perform below expectations.
- Attendance in schools has improved at authority level but this is true for all authorities in Wales.
- Business Planning, risk management and self-evaluation at service level have improved.
- Elected members have a more accurate view of surplus places and an acceptance of the need for change. Evaluating and planning for the school estate is being dealt with corporately. It appears that there are effective programme management and accountability structures in place to drive improvement.

It appears that the authority has made significant efforts since inspection and have made appropriate progress against all key recommendations.

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

(b) Submitted – A report by the Director of Lifelong Learning drawing attention to the work that had been undertaken since the Estyn inspection and highlighting the progress made in relation to the expected outcomes noted in the post-inspection action plan (PIAP)

The overall assessment was that pleasing progress had been made in relation to all recommendations. However a track record of achievement in relation to key issues such as raising standards, attendance and school modernisation needed to be established and developed prior to the next Estyn visit.

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

## **6. UPDATE ON PROGRESS IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES.**

Submitted – A progress report by the Service Improvement Manager against the Service Delivery Plan.

Reported – That the end of 2012-13 had seen continued stability within the Service and sustained delivery of services. This was against a background of a demand on services that had remained high and in terms of numbers on the Child Protection Register, had increased significantly.

Details of notable progress made were referred to at Para 2 of the report and remaining areas of concern and challenges were referred to at Para 3 of the report.

There were a range of challenges that the Service must respond to over the next year, and beyond, and a Business Plan for 2013-14 had been developed and agreed by the Service Improvement Board and these were detailed at Para 3.2 of the report.

The challenge for Children Services was to continue the improvement, across all areas, and make that a sustained and on-going process, whilst successfully addressing the continued and serious concerns over recruitment of social workers and managers. There were significant challenges for the service, as in all parts of Social Services, as delivery models and patterns of demand altered. As well as maintaining statutory duties, the Service must also be positioning itself to be able to respond to, but also lead on, a range of new challenges.

Questions were raised by some members and responded to by the Service Improvement Manager as regards the turnover and retention figures of the Service. Recruitment problems were being encountered and salary was considered to be one of the critical issues.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the Service for their work in this respect and congratulated them upon the progress and substantial improvement that had taken place over the last 18 months. It was important that this progress be maintained and bettered wherever possible.

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

The meeting concluded at 11:55 a.m.

**COMMISSIONER ALEX ALDRIDGE  
CHAIR**