

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting held on 10 December 2025

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

Councillors Non Dafydd, Douglas M Fowlie, Euryn Morris, Pip O'Neill, Margaret Murley Roberts, Ken Taylor and Sonia Williams and Liz Woods

Ms Kathryn Seeney – Parent Governor – Primary Schools Sector
Ms Christina Williams – Parent Governor – Secondary Schools Sector and ALN

Portfolio Members

Councillor Dafydd Roberts – Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language (for item 4);
Councillor Ieuan Williams – Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change (for item 3).

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive,
Deputy Chief Executive,
Director of Education, Skills and Young People (for item 4 only),
Head of Highways, Waste & Property (for item 3 only),
Head of Democracy,
Legal Service Manager/Deputy Monitoring Officer (GPW) (for item 3 only),
Chief Waste Management Officer (ME) (for item 3 only),
Strategic Leader (Primary) (RW) (for item 4 only),
Chief Digital Officer (MH) (for item 4 only),
Scrutiny Officer (EA),
Committee Officer (MEH),
Webcasting Committee Services Officer (FT).

APOLOGIES: Councillors John Ifan Jones and Derek Owen.

Councillor Alun Roberts – Portfolio Member for Leisure, Tourism, Maritime & Property;
Councillor Robin Williams – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Member for Finance, Corporate Business & Customer Experience.

ALSO PRESENT: **Portfolio Members**

Councillor Neville Evans – Portfolio Member for Adults' Services;
Councillor Dyfed Wyn Jones – Portfolio Member for Children, Young People and Families Services;

1 APOLOGIES

As noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

None received.

3 WASTE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING CONSULTATION

The report of the Head of Highways, Waste and Property was presented for the Committees consideration.

The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change said that the Council has a statutory obligation to achieve a 70% recycling rate, which is not currently met. In order to increase the recycling rates and reach the statutory obligation, the Council must consider making changes to the waste collection and recycling arrangements. There is a requirement to consult with those likely to be affected when any proposal to introduce a significant change to a service is considered, especially where the proposal is to reduce the service. Since any changes to the collection service will impact every householder on Anglesey, a full consultation process will therefore be required. He referred to Appendix 1 attached to the report and noted that the Council has set out a clear commitment to protect the environment and reducing carbon footprint within the Council Plan 2023-2028 and recycling plays a vital role in this work. By reducing the amount of waste that goes to disposal, emissions can be reduced, conserve valuable resources, and help create a cleaner, greener environment for future generations. The Authority currently recycles 65% which is below the target of 70%, and based on the recycling rates, the Council could face a fine of around £350k per year. He referred that WRAP Cymru which lists the possible actions needed to increase recycling rates (the link to the documentation was included in Appendix 1). WRAP Cymru also refers that around 52% of the waste currently placed in black bins on Anglesey could be recycled and they have attended the Penheligyn Waste Disposal Site to separate the waste in the black bins. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change said that the purpose of the report is to ascertain whether the Scrutiny Committee considers that the questions within the consultation document is adequate and appropriate. Dependent on the result of the consultation process it could result in a 4 weekly black bin collection in the future. He noted that it is important to have responses to the consultation, which could be contentious, to gather views as to ways to increasing recycling on the Island. He further that any changes would require investment from around £3m to £16m in new vehicles and improvements at the waste and recycling sites and due to this the earliest potential change to the collection service could be 2029. There is a potential that Welsh Government will afford grants if it considers that the Authority is committed to reduce waste and increase recycling rates.

The Head of Highways, Waste and Property reported that minor changes will be made to the questionnaire to ensure that it is compatible with virtual requirement on

the Council's website and an additional question was included as to the impact on the Welsh language to conform with the Equalities Act.

In considering the report the following main issues were raised:-

- Reference was made that the target set by Welsh Government for local authorities is to reach a recycling rate of 70%. Questions were raised as to whether the Authority will face a fine of £350k per year until the proposed changes to the collection service in 2029. Further questions were raised whether the proposed changes could be brought forward and potentially increasing the recycling rates with the availability of additional recycling provision i.e. increase capacity for carboard collection. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change responded that Welsh Government vision is to ensure that local authorities are striving to increase recycling rates and have a plan in place to reach a recycling target of 70%. The Head of Highways, Waste and Property said that there will be significant work to be achieved to ensure that the infrastructure is in place before introducing changes to the waste collection service. He considered that introducing the changes in October 2029 is considered appropriate as there will be a reduction of the high volume of tourist to the Island and will be before the Christmas period. The Chief Waste Management Officer said that the fines imposed by Welsh Government currently exists for local authorities that do not reach the required recycling rates. However, constant consultation exists with Welsh Government as they require evidence that the Authority has a credible plan in place to reach the required recycling targets which results in avoiding the risk of fines imposed and the consultation process will be part of the evidence base to address the requirement of Welsh Government.
- Questions were raised that there is a need for people to be afforded additional information as to the materials that can be recycled rather than put in the black bin. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change responded that work will be undertaken with the Communications Team of the Authority to promote and educate residents to the recycling requirements through social media. The Head of Highways, Waste and Property said that there are currently staff who visit communities and schools in promoting recycling and Welsh Government has afforded a grant to support such a provision. Reference was made that residents should be made aware as to the type of materials that need to be recycled and to highlight that clean recyclable waste attracts a higher price.
- Questions were raised whether there is a potential for staff redundancies if the Authority resolves to introduce a 4 weekly black bin collection. The Head of Highways, Waste and Property said that it is not anticipated that there will be staff redundancies as they will be collecting and processing additional recycling materials.
- Questions were raised whether the Authority can target the areas that are below the current 65% recycling figures. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change responded that there are some areas with high volume of flats and terrace houses in Holyhead which is more difficult for people to able to recycle and store the recycling boxes.
- Questions were raised as to whether consideration has been given if a change in government occurs at the Welsh Government following the Senedd's Election

in May 2026 which could potentially cease the requirement for 70% recycling rates. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property responded that the currently priority of Welsh Government is to increase recycling rates which needs to be addressed. The Chief Executive that it is a statutory requirement by Welsh Government to increase the 70% recycling rates, and the Authority is committed to reach the target as is highlighted within the Council Plan for 2023-2028.

- Reference was made that the Authority had previously had a higher rate of recycling rates than the required 70% rate. Questions were raised as to the reasons that the recycling rates have fallen over the years. The Head of Highways, Waste and Property responded that the reduction in recycling rates occurred during the lockdown period during the pandemic. With the trends changing with people buying more goods online, there has been an increase in cardboard waste. He further said that some tourists also have not been used to recycling as is the requirement in Wales. Further questions were raised that increasing the rate higher than 5% could be an option to be considered. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change said that it is appreciated that there will be difference of opinion as regards to the proposed changes in collecting recyclable waste and black bin refuse, but the proposal is to afford extra boxes to recycle and more communication and educating the requirement for recycling. The Chief Executive said that the purpose of the report is to ascertain whether the consultation process is adequate to gauge the opinions of the residents of Anglesey on the need to increase the recycling rates on Anglesey and potentially having a 4 weekly black bin collection. He noted that considerable work has already been undertaken with WRAP Cymru and Welsh Government which has resulted in the need to the improve the recycling rates and to avoid potential fines. He further said that there needs to be a targeted approach in some areas, with some residents not participating in the need to recycle.
- Questions were raised as to the 52% recyclable materials that have been found in the black refuse bin. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change responded that it is mainly food waste that has been found in the black refuse bin that could be recycled.
- Reference was made to the timing of the public consultation starting on 7 January, 2026 and lasting for 6 weeks. Questions were raised whether it would be advantageous to conduct the public consultation process when the Council Tax Bills are sent out to residents of the Island. It was considered that this will give more publicity to people who may not have access to social media platforms. It was further said that the means of consultation should target the elderly who may not have access to the social media platforms with visiting activities held within local communities. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property responded that he was uncertain whether delaying the consultation process would result in more people responding to the consultation, but he would discuss the matter with the Officers in due course. He noted that the reason for starting the consultation at the beginning of the year was to avoid the pre-election period of the Senedd Elections in May, 2026 and to be able to evaluate the responses. The Head of Highways, Waste and Property said that links are afforded on the Authority's social media to highlights where the recycling materials are processed. He further said that delaying the consultation could have a negative effect as the Authority need to show the

commitment in respect of improving recycling rates to avoid potential fines by Welsh Government.

- Questions were raised whether there have been alternatives solutions considered if there is a negative response by the residents of the Island during the consultation process. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property responded that it is imperative that residents of the Island respond to the consultation process as it affects all residents with regards to collecting waste and recycling.
- Reference was made to the amount of packaging of goods by supermarkets and companies who deliver goods such as Amazon and there is a need to targets these companies rather than only the residents. The Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Climate Change agreed that companies and supermarkets should be targeted by the governments to reduce packaging. Further questions were raised whether there is a decrease in workplace recycling with more people working from home. The Chief Executive responded that workplace and domestic recycling are managed separately and there is a duty to maximise both to reach the recycling targets. He said that a new recycling system has been introduced within the Council Offices to improve the workplace recycling.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive :-

- **That the consultation process on potential changes to the recycling and waste collection service be approved to help reach the 70% statutory recycling targets.**
- **To accept the questions to be asked as part of the consultation process**
- **To accept the timetable for the public consultation, starting on 7 January, 2026 and lasting for 6 weeks, but with the expectation that consideration is given to the Committee's concern.**

4 DIGITAL EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2031

The report of the Director of Education, Skills and Young People was presented for the Committee's consideration.

The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language said that the Digital Education Strategic Plan contributes to the development of a modern education system. The current plan expired in 2024 and therefore it is necessary to establish a new plan for the next period. The requirement for IT equipment in schools has increased over the years and it is important that they reach the current requirements

In considering the report the following main issues were raised:-

- Reference was made that the reports refers that the Council has earmarked a sum to fund the Strategic Plan, however, it is unlikely that the funds currently earmarked will be sufficient. Questions were raised as to the implications on the Plan is there is insufficient funding and what is the shortfall the Council is facing. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that funding has been earmarked for part of the Strategic Plan, however, there is currently a lack of funding to achieve the Plan. Discussions will have to be undertaken to ensure

that additional funding can be sourced and data will need to be used to ensure that any funding will be targeted towards the needs of the schools. Investments will need to be made in equipment and infrastructure. He noted that the Executive has approved funding for the current financial year, and the gaps will need to be investigated in the future. The Chief Digital Officer said that work has been undertaken to gauge the possible deficit and infrastructure requirements with cost implications due to continued upgrading of equipment. Engagement with schools will be required to gauge their needs to ensure that the curriculum is met.

- Questions were raised whether information will be gathered as to the IT skills of school's staff before the Strategic Plan is implemented. The Strategic Leader (Primary) responded that staff skills are monitored, and Digital Co-ordinators gather the data with regards to the needs of development skills within the primary catchment areas which was part of the previous Plan.
- Questions were raised as to how the performance of the Strategic Plan will be monitored of the period of 2026-2031. The Strategic Leader (Primary) responded that in the primary sector there will be a need to develop support in respect of STEM subjects with secondary networks that support the upskilling and share good practice with each secondary schools. This is part of the development of a self-developing system.
- Questions were raised whether sufficient provision has been put in place following Cwmni Cynnal coming to an end in 2022. The Chief Digital Officer responded that transfer provision to the Authority following Cwmni Cynnal coming to an end in 2022 has been a considerable change for schools and Council staff who have been used to receiving the service from Cwmni Cynnal for many years. He noted that consultation has been undertaken with schools to gauge their requirements and to make sure that school's IT provision is sufficient.
- Questions were raised as to whether the digital platform could support children with reading and numeracy difficulties. The Strategic Leader (Primary) responded that there is a need to look at the digital element that supports the curriculum and enrich the provision for learners.
- Questions were raised as the number of Chromebooks and iPad's that are currently within schools and how many are unaccounted for. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that devices management is a joint provision between the Learning and IT Departments and the schools. The Deputy Chief Executive said that it is the responsibility of the Head Teachers and the Governing Bodies to ensure that IT devices should be accounted for within the schools. Further comments were made that it is important that pupils use the Chromebooks provided and that Teachers use the technology to provide educational lessons. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that a Steering Group has been established, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, who will be ensuring clear governance and monitoring arrangements; feedback from the Steering Group will be afforded to the Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language.
- Reference was made to sharing of good practices occurring within schools, with two schools investing in a mobile phone to receive text messages from parents. A Google platform was also used for the transition of pupils from Year 6 to Year 7 for pupils to share their concerns and experiences with the transition into the secondary schools.

- Reference was made that some schools use different digital systems and some pupil's data are missing. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that a new Management Information System will be introduced within the next 18 months which will result in more consistency with the systems school's use. The Portfolio Member for Education and the Welsh Language said that it is concerning that comments have been made that pupil's data is missing. He noted that all schools have a GDPR policy and have received training on data protection.
- Questions were raised as to how the Strategic Plan will be monitored regarding closing the gap for disadvantaged learners. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that there is a need to ensure that every pupil can access digital devices. The established Steering Group will be monitoring the provision. The Digital Strategic Plan will be a data driven and regular reporting will be given to the Leadership Team and how the gaps are reduced within digital services in schools.
- Questions were raised as to the main risk as regards to cyber security within schools. The Chief Digital Officer responded that cyber security risk increases with the increased devices in schools. He noted that there has been an assessment of the cyber security risk within the Authority and schools which include ransomware with files being locked and the Council facing ransom risks. Plans are in place to mitigate the risks and to ensure that updates and firewalls have been installed on devices.
- Reference was made to the announcement that new SMR's will be built on the Wylfa Site and that Anglesey has been identified as an AI growth zone. Questions were raised whether potential partnerships have been identified as regards to the AI growth zone and whether investment from both governments will be afforded to improve the digital skills on the Island. The Chief Executive responded that there is a need to know what the identified AI growth zone potential in the first instance; it is hoped that the AI investment will be part of the Freeport status. He said once the Freeport status has been signed, engagement will be undertaken with key partners such as Coleg Menai and Bangor University to ensure that the educational courses align with the expectations of potential employers for the next generation.
- Questions were raised whether there is a potential for pupils to be educated on how to use of mobile phones safely and to use recommended digital platforms within the school environment. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that the use of mobile phones within the school environment is a matter for the Governing Bodies of the schools.
- Reference was made that the digital technology is continuing to develop with upgraded technology occurring on a regular basis. Questions were raised as to the risk associated with the lack of funding available to continue to upgrade systems to ensure that pupils can take advantage of every opportunity to be able to compete for employment opportunities in the future. The Chief Digital Officer responded that it is a challenge to be able to upgrade systems on a continuous basis. He noted that the Authority is fortunate to be part of the Welsh Governments' Hub Team which has representatives from each local authorities in Wales who discuss new technologies, new trends and processes in addressing the AI technology and potential funding provision.
- Reference was made that some pupils do not have access to the internet within the home environment. Questions were raised as to how these pupils are going

to be supported if there is more learning provision to be undertaken online. The Director of Education, Skills and Young People responded that it is important that schools identify the support for every pupil when work is set online.

It was RESOLVED to accept the contents of the Digital Education Strategic Plan for the period 2026-2031.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm

**COUNCILLOR DYLAN REES
CHAIR**