

Isle of Anglesey County Council Scrutiny Report

Committee:	Partnership & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
Date:	17.03.2026
Subject:	UK Government Funding – Holyhead: A culture and heritage driven transformation
Scrutiny Chair:	Cllr. Dylan Rees

1. Who will be the portfolio holder presenting / leading the report?

Name	Role
Councillor Gary Pritchard	Leader and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Service Officers Supporting	Role
Tudur Jones	Chief Economic Development Officer
Efan Milner	Programme Manager

2. Why the Scrutiny Committee is being asked to consider the matter

This is the 5th update to the Committee outlining progress in the delivery of the UK Government funded Programme for Holyhead (formerly Levelling Up Fund)

3. Role of the Scrutiny Committee and recommendations

- For assurance
- For recommendation to the Executive
- For information.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is requested to:

- R1. Note progress in the delivery of the UK Government funded Programme for Holyhead
- R2. Note the role of the Council in supporting the Programme's Delivery Partners and the successes achieved to date
- R3. Note the delivery of the outcomes and outputs agreed with UK Government
- R4. Note the completion of projects to date and the expected completion dates of the remaining projects.

The focus of this update to the Scrutiny Committee will be to confirm

- a. Which projects have been completed and the outcomes/outputs achieved
- b. Which projects are nearing completion and the expected dates.

4. How does the recommendation(s) contribute to the objectives of the Council's Plan?

The UK Government Funded Programme was developed against the context of Council priorities, with other key local, regional and national policies and strategies informing its scope Plan (i.e. Regional Economic Framework for North Wales, the Welsh Government Programme for Government and the Levelling Up White Paper).

Local strategies:

- Council Plan 2023-2028 (Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2023)
- Isle of Anglesey & Gwynedd Well-being Plan (Gwynedd & Anglesey Public Service Board, 2018)
- Isle of Anglesey County Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020 –2024 (Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2020)
- Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 –2026 (Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2017)
- Isle of Anglesey County Council toward Net Zero Plan 2022-2025 (Isle of Anglesey County Council, 2022)

5. Key scrutiny themes

Key themes the Scrutiny Committee should concentrate on:

1. Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [focus on customer/citizen]
2. A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [focus on value]
3. A look at any risks [focus on risk]
4. Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [focus on performance & quality]
5. Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:
 - a. Long term
 - b. Prevention
 - c. Integration
 - d. Collaboration
 - e. Involvement
6. The potential impacts the decision would have on:
 - a. protected groups under the Equality Act 2010
 - b. those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (when making strategic decisions)
 - c. opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

6. Key points / summary

6.1 Summary

In January 2023 the Council were successful in securing the £17m it had requested from the UK Government under the LUF Programme. The Holyhead LUF Programme has two central aims. Firstly, to tackle high levels of deprivation and secondly to overcome the market failures in the town centre. Culture and heritage are important parts of the bid which are currently under- provided by the market, and which need public investment to grow and thrive.

The Programme therefore aims to:

- a. Reduce vacant property rates and improve the physical appearance of the town centre
- b. Increase footfall and capture more spending
- c. Increase employment and reduce unemployment
- d. Provide modern floorspace to meet business needs
- e. Increase and improve access to arts, culture and leisure
- f. Increase the scale and diversity of the town centre offer

The funding is now called the Local Regeneration Fund but is still referred to locally as LUF. A short description of the projects within the wider programme is provided below. Some projects have achieved practical completion and are now operational the remaining projects will be completed by May 2026. Several others have had to be withdrawn completely

A short description of the projects is provided below whilst a more detailed overview, including project costs and delivered outputs for each project, is provided in **Annex A**.

6.2 Programme Governance

A Programme Board was established at the outset to oversee its delivery. The Board consists of the local MP, the Council Leader, Finance Portfolio Holder, the County Council's Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, Head of Service (Regulation & Economic Development Service) and Programme officers.

Regular Board meetings have been held during the Programme's delivery to provide direction, consider project proposals and monitor progress. Any changes to the Programme have been reported to and approved by the Board. This includes changes to budgets, outputs, outcomes and issues impacting delivery. The Board also review the Programme risk register to make sure that appropriate mitigation is in place to reduce the risks.

Council officers also provided the UK Government with detailed quarterly reports up to July 2025 when reporting procedures were changed. The reports to UK Government were reviewed by officers from Finance and approved by the Council's Section 151 Officer. Under the revised procedures the next report to UK Government will be April 2026. Programme Officers also meet monthly with UK Government officials to report on progress and advise on any issues. UK Government are satisfied that the programme is in line the proposed goals.

6.1 Delivery Partner - Holyhead Town Council - £1.48M

Kiosks

Redevelopment of four former shelters on Newry beach into trading kiosks for small businesses. The four kiosks have been completed and are occupied by local businesses. These businesses include; Y Cwt Creu, Cuffed-in Coffee, Mon Ice and Island Bakes. Occupying the premises has enabled business growth and provided employment numbers

above the original expected outputs of the programme. It is estimated that they have provided 6.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in the first year of trading which is x2 over the projected delivery. The Kiosks have been well received locally and contribute to increased footfall on Newry Beach, outside of the Cruise season.

Empire Complex

The refurbishment of the Empire Complex has increased the capacity of the play centre, upgraded the play frame and refurbished the existing cinema to improve visitor experience. A small rear property extension was also built to house the function room for parties, upgraded WC's and a modern kitchen to allow the Empire Complex to manage the catering demands for the increased capacity of the play centre. The Empire complex refurbishment is now complete and the successfully operating. The refurbishment has delivered substantial and measurable improvements including increased footfall, community engagement and service capacity. The work has directly contributed to significant increases in visitor numbers overall with a weekly footfall of approximately 2000 visitors per week during peak times which is a significant increase of 600 per week. The facilities now provide a modern, inclusive and sustainable community asset that continues to support economic activity and enhance wellbeing across Holyhead. 4.5 FTE's have been created through the project, which is x3 above the original projection of 1.5 from the bid application.

6.2 Delivery Partner - Mon CF - £5.41M

Former HSBC Building

Contractor – OBR Construction (Anglesey)

The HSBC building is being refurbished to provide two separate commercial units (Tap Room and Restaurant) and 7 overnight accommodation flats. The provision of a restaurant and tap room will aim to increase the footfall and indirectly support neighbouring businesses. Whilst progress has generally been good on the refurbishment, there have been significant delays as a result of the process for sustainable drainage requirements being reviewed, adapted and agreed. Anticipated completion is now May 2026. Council Officers will be advising UK Government on the timeline in the next reporting period in April. Local brewery, Bragdy Cybi, will be occupying the Tap Room and a new EOI process for the restaurant is underway by Môn CF. The commercial units in the building aim to provide x16 FTE jobs between them, providing prime local employment in the Town Centre.

Central Building

Contractor – OBR Construction (Anglesey)

Work on the Central Building is progressing well with completion expected by the end of February 2026. Once completed, the building will be occupied by a Café on the ground floor and a Dance Studio on the upper floors. The Dance Studio has in excess of 100+ enrolled students, and this will drive significant footfall into the high street as well as ensuring a significant positive visual impact by returning a dilapidated premises back into use. Between the two occupying businesses, x7 FTE jobs will be supported by the improvements to the building bringing dilapidated space back into use.

9 Stanley Street

Contractor – Anglesey Builders (Anglesey)

This refurbishment has now been completed and a local business – Anglesey Soap – has opened on the ground floor. The retail space is supporting x1.5 FTE jobs. The two bedroomed flat above the shop has also been let, providing modern residential space in the Town Centre.

14a/b Stanley Street

This scheme has had to be withdrawn from the Vacant Property Project due to the structural issues related to Churchill House (the buildings are connected). To recoup the lost Outputs and Outcomes the Programme Board agreed to transfer the budget to another property (2 – 4 Market Street). Work on this building is now complete. The property has been occupied by Feast Brothers who are an Italian restaurant. The refurbishment of this premises has helped support x4 FTE jobs and helped attract established small businesses to the Town.

6.3 Delivery Partner - Bangor Diocese - £1.89M

Contractor – Grosvenor Construction (Conwy)

The scope of the Diocese's project was to re-order the internal elements of St Cybi's Church by removing pews and defunct equipment to create a community orientated space, which can help the church host different events to attract new parishioners to sustain the future of the Church. Under floor heating and other carbon reduction features have been installed to help upgrade the heating provision and management of running costs.

Secondly, a modern extension has been built to Eglwys Y Bedd to house kitchen and WC facilities ready for social enterprise occupation. The original building of Eglwys Y Bedd has been modernised with improved heating and lighting provision, as well as new glass frontage installed. The extension of the premises aims to support 2.5 FTE jobs.

Both projects have now achieved practical completion despite delays throughout the project relating to archaeological issues, material delays and consenting. Feedback from the Church and in particular the Vicar has been positive praising the standard of work and that the space is now much more useable.

Regular services have re-commenced in the Church on Wednesdays and Sundays and the Diocese are in discussions with a local social enterprise to operate Eglwys y Bedd.

6.4 Delivery Partner - Ucheldre - £4.18M

Contractor – Grosvenor Construction (Conwy)

Due to the complexity and technical scope of the project, the timeline from start to completion has prolonged further than originally anticipated. However, the Ucheldre has remained operational where possible throughout the build to prevent loss of income. Material delays for the glazing have impacted the timeline and had a knock-on effect to other elements of the project preventing their progress such as the flooring and cladding installation on the extension. Increased project scope to address new water ingress concerns have also added time to the project, as well as complications installing a disabled lift access.

The works being funded through the UK Government programme will be completed by March 2026. Minor works inside the Centre and the landscaping outside will be completed later through funding from the Arts Council for Wales. Upon completion, the project has the potential

to support 11 FTE jobs as well as increasing the number of visitors to the Arts Centre each year through an increased events programme because of the capacity increase.

6.5 County Council Projects

Shopfront Enhancements - £533k

Contractor – Quadriga (Manchester)

In total 6 retail premises will benefit from upgraded shopfronts by March 2026 under the programme, a refurbishment led by a heritage specialist contractor. Businesses including JM Butchers, Williams & Goodwin, Rose & Crown (née Gleasons), Picnics and the Computer Geeks, will have new shopfronts in keeping with the Townscape Heritage. 9 Stanley Street and 2-4 Market Street also delivered shopfront enhancements through their refurbishment works and were eligible outputs.

Third Party Projects - £1.84M

Contractors – OBR Construction (Anglesey), Claytons (Gwynedd) & Quadriga (Manchester)

The scope of the programme is to work with third party property owners to bring dilapidated or vacant properties back into use. A total of 3 properties; 2 & 8 Boston Street and 1 Stanley Street, will have been completed under the programme. The completed property refurbishments will deliver ground floor retail space while providing 1- and 2-bedroom residential space on the upper floors, which is vital in the current housing crisis.

Whilst the programme originally planned to deliver eight property refurbishments, this has not been possible as the owners of the properties were unable to secure match funding or the timeline for completion was unachievable within the funding period. These outputs have been reclaimed elsewhere in the programme.

Wider Public Realm; Swift Square, St Cybi and Market Hall - £540k

Contractor – Grosvenor Construction (Conwy) & Calibre Metalwork (Manchester)

Refurbishment of the Swift Square Public Conveniences and construction of a viewing platform into the Northeast tower of Caergybi Roman Fort. Following multiple incidents of vandalism to the public conveniences, they have been closed for an extended period while solutions are sought to prevent further damage upon re-opening. Repair works are currently out to tender with the view to re-open them to the public as soon as feasible.

St Cybi's Churchyard improvement works – Currently on site and addressing the three upper Churchyard entrances to the Caergybi Fort and the Church, through addressing weakness in the arch, decaying timber and removing invasive vegetation growth damaging the monument. In addition, trip hazards are being addressed through replacement flagstones to the public footpath, loose stones to the dwarf wall re-bedded and the railings repainted. New artist led mosaics are being laid into the entrance thresholds within each, reflecting key themes of Holyhead's leading heritage location.

Market Hall steps, arches and railings – Addressing access issues to the steps after reopening the Market Hall. To address user comments, handrails were fitted to the steps, including downlighting, visibility anti-slip strips added to nosing of the steps, new heritage interpretation installed and the railings to either pavilion building repaired and repainted.

6.6 Additional Projects

As noted, during the Programme some projects were withdrawn for a variety of reasons such as lack of match funding, deliverability and increased costs. Requests to remove the projects were presented to the Project Board for approval before being reported to UK Government. To ensure that all the funding was utilised in Holyhead and to ensure continuously achieving outputs and outcomes, several alternative projects were presented to the Board for their approval. Again, these additional schemes were reported to UK Government, and they provided several outcomes which had been lost from agreed projects.

The additional funded projects and their deliverable outputs and outcomes are:

- a. Plas Alltran £100,000 – Collaboration with IACC Housing Services to deliver 5 social housing units and the renovation of a dilapidated listed building. The building has been long term vacant and renovation will help relieve pressures on local housing crisis.
- b. 2-4 Market Street £30,000 – As noted in 6.2, Work on this building is now complete. The property has been occupied by Feast Brothers who are an Italian restaurant. The refurbishment of this premises has helped support 4 FTE jobs and helped attract established small businesses to the Town.
- c. Maritime Museum £100,000 – Funding allocated to complete external enabling works which would facilitate an extension to the building to be built at a future date. The scope of the current funded works is to excavate external rock and dispose off-site as well as upgrading the on-site services. These critical works will de-risk as much of the scheme as possible and make the process of extending the building quicker and easier when future funding becomes available.

7. Impact assessments

7.1. Potential impacts on groups protected under the Equality Act 2010

None – applications by and for protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 will be dealt with the same.

7.2. Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage (strategic decisions)

Positive – this funding is being used to improve the socio-economic disadvantages being experienced in Holyhead.

7.3. Potential effects on opportunities to use Welsh and not treat the language less favourably than English

Positive – by creating employment opportunities in the area it is hoped that more Welsh speakers will be able to benefit and stay in the locality. The Council is also engaging with local businesses on the use of bilingual signs and menus.

7.4. Potential impact on the Council's Net Zero Carbon target

Neutral – reduction in running costs through the installation of PV panels and/or air source heat pumps on buildings. Also aid reduction in EPC values in new and existing buildings

8. Financial implications

Neutral – there are no financial implications on the County Council as the cost of the bid development and staffing implications have been paid for and will be met through external sources.

9. Appendices

Annex A – Detailed Overview of Programme
Annex B – Progress Images

10. Report author and background papers

[Report to Scrutiny Committee November 2023](#)
[Report to Scrutiny Committee March 2024](#)
[Report to Scrutiny Committee November 2024](#)
[Report to Scrutiny Committee June 2025](#)

<https://www.anglesey.gov.wales/en/Business/Economic-development/Holyhead-Levelling-Up-Fund/Welcome.aspx>

Table 1

The table below sets out the outputs agreed with UK Government and the total delivered to date

Output Indicators	Projects	Outputs at submission	Total outputs expected to be delivered
Employment			
Total - Full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs	All projects	65	61
FTE jobs	Beach Frontages	4.5	6.5
FTE jobs	Empire Play Centre	1.5	4.5
FTE jobs	Mon CF	30	28.5
FTE jobs	Church	2.5	2.5
FTE jobs	Ucheldre	11	11
FTE jobs	Townscape Transformation	17	8
Floorspace / units delivered			
Amount of existing community centre space improved	Play Centre	193sqm	193sqm
Amount of new cultural space created	Ucheldre	576.5sqm	576.5sqm
Amount of new sports centre space created	Vacant Property Programme	114sqm	114sqm
Number of existing residential units improved	Townscape Transformation	4	4
Number of new residential units	Vacant Property Programme Townscape	15	9
Number of dilapidated buildings improved	Vacant Property Programme, Townscape Transformation, Beach frontages	23	18
Number of existing public amenities/facilities improved	Swift Square toilets, Breakwater Visitor Centre	2	2
Number of additional commercial units	Vacant Property Programme Townscape Transformation	8	8
Number of heritage buildings renovated/restored	St Cybi's Church	1	1
Amount of improved cultural space completed	St Cybi's Church	500sqm	500sqm

Amount of public realm improved	St Cybi's churchyard and Breakwater Visitor Centre	1,750sqm	TBC
---------------------------------	--	----------	-----

Table 2

The table below sets out the outcomes agreed with UK Government and the total delivered to date

Outcome Indicators	Project	Outcomes at submission	Outcomes delivered to date
Number of visitors/audience members to cultural venues	St Cybi's Church	9,200 (3,600 additional)	To be monitored / reviewed
Number of visitors/audience members to cultural venues	Ucheldre	52,500 (17,000 additional)	To be monitored / reviewed
Number of visitors to cultural venues	Play centre	16,240 additional	To be monitored / reviewed
Number of cultural events	Ucheldre	Post-redevelopment: increase from 75 to 90 a year	To be monitored / reviewed
Audience numbers for cultural events	Ucheldre	Increase up to 5,000 by 2029/30	To be monitored / reviewed
Consumer Spending	Ucheldre	Increase up to £121,576 by 2029/30	To be monitored / reviewed
Increased employment	All	65	61
Direct land value uplift	Vacant Property Programme, Townscape Transformation	£1.2m	To be monitored / reviewed
Wider land value uplift	Vacant Property Programme, Townscape Transformation	£4.6m	To be monitored / reviewed
Dilapidated buildings brought back into use	Vacant Property Programme (4 buildings), Townscape Transformation (8 buildings – only the vacant ones), Beach frontages (4 buildings).	16	12

Perception of Place by Visitors	All	Improved perception of place by visitors	To be monitored / reviewed
Change in Unemployment Rate	All	A 10% reduction against the baseline	To be monitored / reviewed
Change in Footfall	All	up to 50% change against the baseline	To be monitored / reviewed

Table 3

Expected completion dates

Delivery Partner	Project	Completed	Current Completion Forecast
Town Council	Kiosks	Completed	-
	Empire	Completed	-
MonCF	9 Stanley Street	Completed	-
	Central Building	-	February 2026
	HSBC	-	May 2026
Bangor Diocese	St Cybi's & Eglwys y Bedd	Completed	-
Ucheldre Centre	Ucheldre Extension	-	March 2026
IACC	Shopfronts	-	March 2026
	3 rd Party Projects	-	March 2026
	Public Realm Swift Square and St Cybi's Churchyard	-	March 2026
	Breakwater Country Park Visitor Centre and Heritage Trails	Completed	-

Annex B – Progress images

Delivery partner: Holyhead Town Council

Project: Newry kiosk refurbishment

Before



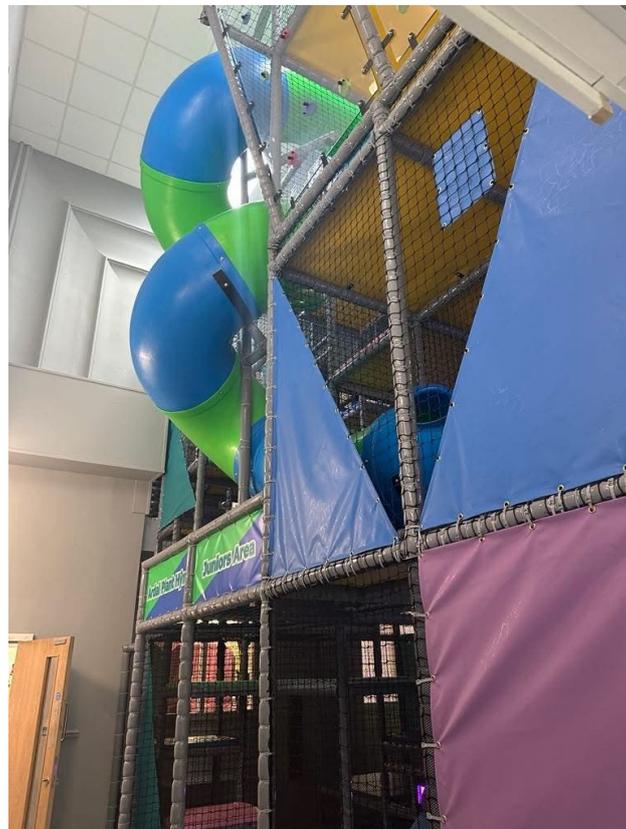
After



Delivery partner: Holyhead Town Council

Project: Empire Cinema and Play Centre refurbishment

After



Delivery partner: Ucheldre

Before



During



During internal extension works:



Complete – Internal gallery refurbishment:



Delivery partner: Diocese of Bangor

Project: St Cybi's and Eglwys Y Bedd refurbishments

Before:



Delivery partner: Mon CF

Project: HSBC



Project: Central Building



Project: 9 Stanley Street and 2-4 Market Street



2 – 4 Stanley Street



Delivery Partner: IACC Heritage

Project: Townscape Transformation



Project: Shop Fronts





Project: Churchyard repairs



Project: Maritime Museum rock excavation

