

PARTNERSHIP AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2014

- PRESENT:** Councillor Derlwyn Rees Hughes (Chair)
Councillor Alun Wyn Mummery (Vice-Chair)
- Councillors John Griffith, R LI Jones, Dylan Rees and Dafydd Rhys Thomas.
- Mr. Keith Roberts (The Roman Catholic Church).
- IN ATTENDANCE:** Corporate Director (Lifelong Learning) (Item 7),
Senior Manager for School Standards (TR) (Item 7),
Head of Service (Housing) (Items 5 & 6),
Technical Services Manager (Housing) (DR) (Item 5),
Principal Technical Officer (Grants) (JGD) (Item 6),
Scrutiny Officer,
Committee Officer (MEH).
- APOLOGIES:** Councillors William Thomas Hughes, Carwyn Jones,
Richard Owain Jones
- ALSO PRESENT:** Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder (Education) (Items 4 & 7),
Portfolio Holder (Social Services & Housing) (Items 5, 6, 8 & 9),
Mr. Elfyn Jones GwE: Senior Challenge Advisor (Item 7),
Senior Partnership Manager (Gwynedd & Ynys Môn) (AD) (Item 5),
Mr. John R. Jones – Chief Officer Medrwn Môn.
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1 APOLOGIES

Apologies as noted above.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The Chair referred to Item 7 and wished to note that he is representing the authority as a Governor on the GwE Users' Group.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September, 2014 were confirmed.

4 SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN (GWYNEDD & YNYS MÔN) AND PROPOSED JOINT LOCAL SERVICE BOARD SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

Submitted – a report by the Senior Partnership Manager Gwynedd and Môn.

The Senior Partnership Manager reported that the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Services Board had made a number of significant decisions relating to its future vision and strategic direction. At the last meeting of the LSB held on 26 September, 2014 consideration was given to the following :-

- Draft set of operating principles to underpin the functioning and work of the Board;
- Some underpinning partnership values;
- A draft terms of reference;
- Key shared priorities for delivery over the next 2 years;
- TOP 10 LSB issues on the radar.

The emerging LSB three key shared priorities are :-

- Key Priority 1 – Older People
- Key Priority 2 – Dysfunctional Families
- Key Priority 3 – Sustainable Communities/Community Regeneration

with three underpinning Enablers - Technology, Language and Culture and Engagement.

Subject to LSB approval on 28 November, the next step would be to further develop each of the work-streams giving particular consideration to the following :-

- Desired organisational outcomes per Key Priority and Enabler for each LSB partner over the next 2 years;
- Evidence base for each Priority/Enabler;
- Contribution of LSB partners to each work-stream;
- Delivery structure and governance under the Local Services Board to progress each Key Priority and Enabler.

The Officer further reported that one current prioritised work-stream was that of further developing elected member scrutiny arrangements underpinning the work of the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Local Services Board. The principle objective had been to consider how to further develop robust scrutiny arrangements, providing an appropriate level of challenge to the Board, jointly across both Counties to reflect the mandate of the LSB. In light of Elected Member support of both Ynys Môn and Gwynedd Councils, work had progress in developing joint LSB scrutiny arrangements :-

- Multi-agency Task & Finish Project Group had been established. Its membership included Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Fire & Rescue, North Wales Police, Snowdonia National Park, Local Authorities. The Group was currently negotiating 3rd sector representation;
- Initial options paper had been developed outlining the possible joint scrutiny models to be considered by Elected Members;

- Negotiated input and mentoring by the Centre for Public Scrutiny throughout the process of developing the joint scrutiny arrangements for Ynys Môn and Gwynedd.

It was further reported that the next steps in the joint scrutiny work-stream would focus on:

- Finalising the options appraisal paper giving consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of each proposed scrutiny model;
- Submitting joint scrutiny arrangement proposals for consideration by the Elected Member scrutiny committees of both Local Authorities early in the New Year. (Proposals to include a full options appraisal for each model);
- Seeking 3rd Sector input to the Options Appraisal of the scrutiny models.

Issues raised by Members :-

- Members referred to the specific responsibilities of LSBs and queried any powers the Local Services Board had to ensure that appropriate governance and performance management arrangements were in place to implement improvements, that managers and front line staff across agencies were working together effectively and that agreed priorities were reflected in individual organisations' corporate plans. The Senior Partnerships Manager responded by referring to arrangements that were in place by Welsh Government through statutory guidance – *Shared Purpose, Shared Delivery*. The Board was not currently a statutory function but would become statutory following enactment of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Bill (from April, 2016).
- Questions were also posed as to how 3rd Sector interests would be represented in the proposed joint LSB scrutiny arrangements. The Senior Partnerships Manager responded by clarifying that negotiations were ongoing with 3rd sector representative bodies in both Gwynedd and Ynys Môn. The outcome of these dialogues would be reflected in the proposals to be submitted for Elected Member consideration early in the New Year.

RESOLVED to :-

- **Accept the report and support the Local Services Board proposed key priorities and enablers as outlined in the report.**
- **Note progress to date and proposed next steps in developing elected member joint scrutiny arrangements underpinning the work of the LSB.**

ACTION : A report be submitted to the next meeting of the Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee outlining an appraisal of possible scrutiny models for developing joint LSB scrutiny arrangements with Gwynedd Council.

5 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUBSIDY - VOLUNTARY AGREEMENT

Submitted – a report by the Head of Housing Services in respect of the above.

It was reported that an agreement has been reached between HM Treasury and Welsh Government that will allow the eleven Authorities in Wales with retained Council stock to exit from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system and become self-financing from April 2015. The settlement value for exit has also been negotiated. The Local Authority's HRA account will be better off financially by approximately £765K per annum, by paying less interest on existing loans. In order this takes place, a Voluntary Agreement will need to be signed by all eleven Local Authorities. Having become self-financing, all eleven Authorities will be able to :-

- Accelerate Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) work, to ensure achievement by 2020, and sustain it into the future. Of the eleven, only four have achieved WHQS – Isle of Anglesey County Council being one;
- Increase investment in existing homes and in regenerating neighbourhoods over the short, medium and longer term;
- Ensure tenants benefit from more efficient and effective housing services;
- Increase the supply of new affordable homes;
- Increase investment in a range of other local priorities which could include increasing the energy efficiency of council homes, estate regeneration, remodelling general needs or sheltered housing, and purchase of existing homes to increase supply;
- Take a much longer term and business- like view of the housing stock and associated assets such as garages, commercial properties and land;
- Create jobs and training opportunities and increase investment in the local economy.

It was noted that this report will be submitted to the Executive, to be held on 1st December, 2014, together with the recommendations as set out in the report.

Issues raised by Members :-

- Questions were raised regarding the future of the housing stock if the Local Government Reorganisation was to take place. The neighbouring authority has placed its housing stock with a housing association. The Head of Housing Services responded that this issue has not been discussed at National Level. She further stated that it is not a matter for local government to decide if the housing stock is sold or not; the tenants would be given the opportunity to vote on the future of the housing stock. However the local authorities who have outsourced their housing stock have transferred the stock to a Housing Association for a nominal fee.
- Members wish to extend their appreciation to the Housing Service for arranging the recent Forum in respect of this matter.

RESOLVED to accept the report and the recommendations contained therein.

ACTION : To note that the report will be submitted to the Executive on 1st December, 2014.

6 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY AND POLICY

Submitted – a report by the Head of Housing Services in relation to the above.

It was reported that the Council has offered grants to improve private sector housing. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 changed the legislative framework which governed Local Authorities ability to provide financial assistance to home owners and allows for authorities to offer loan funding. Whilst acknowledging that lending money by providing repayable loans is a more economic use of the Council's limited resources it is proposed that Housing Services introduce loan base assistance to replace some of the existing grants. In January 2015, the WG intend to launch a Home Improvement Repayable Fund to enable local authorities to provide a home improvement loan scheme. In order to participate in this scheme, the Council will need to be in a position to offer loans under its Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, before funds can be drawn down. Amendments to the current Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, to reflect the proposed changes, will therefore be required. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants will not be affected and these will remain available under the provisions of Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

It was reported that this report will be submitted to the next Executive for approval.

Issues raised by Members :-

- Members welcomed the interest free loans of £1,000 to a maximum of £25,000 for home improvements but were concerned as to how the authority will administer and mitigate against risk of default on payments by applicants. The Officers responded that applicants will be subject to an affordability assessment to ensure that they can afford the loan and do not have an adverse credit history. All loans will be secured as a charge against the property. This work will be undertaken as part of the administration of the loan by Street UK Services Limited.
- Members stated that they wished to see more empty homes been upgrade and be available for local families and the homeless.
- The workers which will come to Anglesey to build the proposed Wylfa Newydd could have an effect on the availability of homes for rent on Anglesey.

RESOLVED :-

- **To support the changes to the private sector housing renewal strategy and policy (as Appendix 1), subject to consultation with external partners and organisations.**

- **To support the appointment of Street UK Services Limited, a third party provider, to administer and manage loan schemes on the Council's behalf and to the transfer of the Council's allocation for loans to Street UK Services Limited as 'Facility Monies' in order to service the loans, subject to the recommendations of the Section 151 Officer.**

ACTION : To note that this report will be submitted to the Executive on 1st December, 2014 for consideration.

7 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SLA WITH THE REGIONAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (GWE)

Submitted – a report by the Corporate Director Lifelong Learning in relation to the above.

The Chair welcomed Mr. Elfyn Jones GwE: Senior Challenge Advisor and Mr. Trebor Roberts, Senior Manager for School Standards and Inclusion to address the meeting.

It was reported that the School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) was established in partnership between 6 Local Authorities in North Wales to be accountable to the Councils and to undertake their statutory duties in relation to school improvement and specifically to monitor, challenge and deliver support services. The nature and breath of expectations are made clear in a Service Level Agreement and the delivery model was compiled based on a fixed number of days for :-

- Conducting termly monitoring visits;
- Supporting at risk category schools (amber/red);
- Pre and post inspection support.

In 2014, through the National Model for regional working, the Welsh Government imposed further and wider national expectations on the consortia's work. Planning to respond to these requirements is currently work in progress.

An analysis of Anglesey school's performance against the various indicators was set out in the Annual Report.

GwE has received information from the National Support Programme regarding the support needs of all schools in Anglesey as regards literacy and numeracy. GwE has also analysed test results and has identified the best and worst performing schools in each LA and the weakest performing schools will receive targeted support and the best performing schools will be given opportunities to share their effective practice.

The Portfolio Holder (Education) stated that it is important that the elected members are aware of Estyn's Framework, the requirements of the Welsh Audit Office and expectations of the Welsh Government with regard to the governance and management of the regional consortia, require that they are in a position to answer

such questions as listed within the report, as part of self-evaluation and quality assurance.

The Corporate Director (Lifelong Learning) stated that this is the Annual Report on the SLA with the Regional School Improvement Service since the establishment of GwE last year. He stated that the joint working with the Officers of the Education Authority and GwE is extremely positive.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee were pleased to see improvement across the performance of Anglesey Schools which were highlighted in the report. It was suggested that this report should be distributed to all Elected Members of the County Council for information.

RESOLVED to note the report.

ACTION : That a copy of the report be circulated to Members of the County Council.

8 ANNUAL REPORT - 'LISTENING AND LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS'

Submitted – a report in relation to the above.

The Business Support Unit Manager reported that Social Services operate a statutory Representations and Complaints Procedure in Wales. Until August 2014, this was in accordance with the 'Listening and Learning' regulations and guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2006. There is an obligation to produce an Annual Report on the operation of the Representations and Complaints Procedure and present it to the Local Authority Social Services Committee for scrutiny and to monitor the arrangements for dealing effectively with complaints received from service users and their representatives.

Issues raised by Members :-

- The timescale to respond to Stage 2 complaints was unrealistic as the procedure can be complex and the complainant needs to be reassured that the complaint is dealt with properly and not restricted to a deadline.
- Members were pleased to note that the Department are reviewing complaints received over the year and producing an Action Plan for the service.
- When a complaint is received the complainant should be satisfied that the complaint is been implemented through the complaints system.

The Business Support Unit Manager responded that as part of the Customer Care Charter the staff within the department has been given guidance how to better deal with complaints in compliance with the Charter.

RESOLVED :-

- **To note the nature of the complaints received during 2013/14 regarding the service provided by the Social Services Department.**

- To note the performance of the Social Services Department in implementing the Representations and Complaints Procedure and dealing with complaints.
- To note the Action Plan for developing the arrangements for dealing effectively with representations and complaints received from service users and their representatives.

9 ANNUAL UPDATE - SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS IN ANGLESEY

Submitted – a report by the Head of Adult's Services in relation to the above.

It was reported that the Wales Policy and Procedure for the Protection of Vulnerable Adults from abuse is intended to guide the safeguarding work of all those concerned with the welfare of vulnerable adults employed in the statutory, third and independent sectors in health, social care, the police and other services. Good inter-agency working ensures that all referrals are managed effectively and efficiently aiming to continuously improve performance and safeguard the most vulnerable citizens of Ynys Môn.

Adult Service and key partners recognise the need to agree and implement an action plan in preparation for the new safeguarding guidance as outlined in the Social Services (Wales) and Wellbeing Act. The Gwynedd and Môn Safeguarding Board outline the mechanisms and drivers for changing practice which are operationalised by key service managers across the sectors.

RESOLVED :-

- To note the update regarding safeguarding noted in the attached report, Ynys Môn Protection of Vulnerable Adults, Highlight Report 2013/14 (Appendix 1).
- To note and agree the developments noted in Section 5 of the Highlight Report.
- To note the update regarding Safeguarding Adults Board Regional and Local Arrangements (Appendix 2).
- To note and agree the recommendations noted in Section 3 of the report.
- To support continued member engagement in the overall Safeguarding Agenda.

ACTION : To note that the report will be submitted to the Executive in due course.

10 UPDATE BY THE CHAIR OR VICE-CHAIR

The Chair reported that a briefing meeting has been arranged on 18th December, 2014 on the Scrutiny procedure and Work Programme of both Scrutiny Committees for Town/Community Councils and the third sector.

The Scrutiny Officer noted that the Chair and Vice-Chairs of both Scrutiny Committees have been invited to attend.

The Vice-Chair stated that he had attended a session on 'Added Value of Scrutiny' by Mr. Rod Alcott, WLGA in preparation for the Corporate Governance Assessment in February 2015.

11 WORK PROGRAMME

Submitted and noted – the draft Work Programme.

The meeting concluded at 5.00 pm

**COUNCILLOR D.R. HUGHES
CHAIR**