

Communities Scrutiny Committee 22 October 2020

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Stephen Churchman, Glyn Daniels, Elwyn Edwards, Simon Glyn, Annwen Hughes, Aled Wyn Jones, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elwyn Jones, Kevin Morris Jones, Linda Morgan, Dafydd Owen, Edgar Wyn Owen, Elfed Roberts, Angela Russell, Mike Stevens, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Owain Williams.

OFFICERS: Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democratic Services Officer).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Present for item 7:

Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, Relationship with the Health Service) and Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director / Chair of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership)

Present for item 8:

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Council Leader / Cabinet Member for Strategic Leadership) and Nonn Hughes (Manager of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Elfed Roberts as Chair of this committee for 2020/21.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED to re-elect Councillor Gethin G Williams as Vice-chair of this committee for 2020/21.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Catherine Roberts (Senior Operational Officer Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership).

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

5. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

6. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 6 February, 2020 as a true record.

7. ANNUAL UPDATE BY THE (GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY) COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being submitted a report by the Senior Operational Officer of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership. It was explained that the Partnership was required to report formally to the Committee every year, presenting an overview of the Partnership's main strategic developments over the year, together with the commissioning work that set the framework for the priorities which were based on a strategic assessment. It was reiterated that this ensured that the Partnership fulfilled its obligations in accordance with sections of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2006, by working with the Police, the Health Service, the Probation Service and the Fire and Rescue Service. Attention was drawn to the main messages resulting from the activities undertaken in 2020/21 together with the year's main achievements.

The main milestones for 2020 – 2021 were highlighted and the Scrutiny Committee was asked to support the priorities listed in the report together with the future direction of the work.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

In response to an observation regarding concerns that crimes using scams were on the increase and the need to raise further awareness on how to identify, avoid or report them, it was reported that the Police and the Trading Standards Unit were carrying out work to promote this. It was noted that the Communications Team had conducted several campaigns to draw attention to the matter on the Council's website and on social media, but there was a need to avoid overwhelming the audience with too much information. It was reinforced that the matter was being addressed by the Safeguarding Panel and that the Older People Commissioner had identified it as a national matter with several attempts made to raise awareness.

In response to an observation regarding the Police's lack of resources and the Council not having sufficient enforcement resources to deal with matters and offences related to traffic and highways, it was noted, that although traffic matters were not within the Partnership's remit, that the Police and the Council had collaborated well recently (over the period of the pandemic) to deal with these matters, but that there was room for improvement.

In response to an increase in substance misuse and that the use was going under the radar in a number of communities, it was highlighted that work was being done regionally to increase support. An observation was made that the Partnership was only reporting on the number of reported crime, nevertheless, it was collaborating well with County Lines to gather information to gain an understanding of the situation in order to make interventions. Members were encouraged to share any knowledge of local matters with the Police to respond / investigate the incidents.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by members:-

- Legalising drugs would free up money to undertake preventative work rather than spending money on policing the problem. Need to look at innovative ways of dealing with the situation.
- It was suggested that the Police should present a training session again for the members on the work being done to tackle County Lines.
- Needed police presence in our communities - more powers locally to deal with local matters and to prevent antisocial behaviour.
- That the Home Office should consider abolishing the Police Commissioner function and create a Mayor post for north Wales - need to consider where the matter could be discussed.

RESOLVED

- a) **To accept the contents of the report and the appended documents noting the observations**
- b) **The priorities and the future direction of the work were supported.**

8. 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

A report was submitted by the Council Leader outlining the achievements of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board during 2019/20.

He expanded on the contents of the report and a brief update was provided on the developments within the priority areas along with the work of the sub-groups responsible for those areas. Since March, 2020, in light of the covid-19 pandemic, it was explained that public bodies had had to adjust to respond to the health crisis by changing their way of working and communicating with others.

It was highlighted that the public bodies were moving towards recovery and considering the social, economic, environmental and cultural effects. It was noted that the regional group which was coordinating the response to the crisis had asked the Public Services Boards across the north to look at the recovery work with a focus on community resilience. A workshop had been held for Gwynedd and Anglesey PSB in September, where consideration had been given to how the Board could respond to 40 matters that had been identified by the Board partners. It had been concluded that eight matters required further attention. It was noted that they were investigating how the Board could operate without duplicating the work already undertaken by individual partners to add value. The sub-groups' remits would be updated to respond to the matters.

Members expressed their thanks for the report.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by members:-

- Homes for local people - the housing market had witnessed a boom recently. The priority was homes for local people not that they were of an innovative nature.
- That a 'Community' Housing Association should prepare housing that would protect society. Disappointed that the report did not address the concerns of Gwynedd residents in terms of a lack of housing for local people.
- There was an opportunity for the Board to influence changes to Planning legislation. It was suggested that it could be included as part of the Board's remit to press on the Government to change the planning field to enable houses to be safeguarded for local people.
- Needed to press on the Government to bring social housing under the Local Authority's banner
- The Adra company was no longer something that could be controlled
- The Wales Self-build Scheme was a field to consider - a pioneering scheme
- Lack of housing for local people was having an impact on the language - people moving away
- The points system for managing the Common Housing Register was ineffective

- That there was a need for assurance on how the implementation and the success of regional recovery schemes were being measured
- Language Charter - needed more backbone and needed to promote and influence the use of the Charter more broadly
- There was a need to protect policies for fire containment, land protection and agriculture in the context of climate change
- There was a need to see a difference in the field of care - closure of residential/nursing homes, shortage of carers was a concern, shortage of GPs who spoke Welsh, shortage of dentists, increase in mental health
- That there was a need to ensure that money was available to deal with poverty
- In response to observations regarding housing for local people, it was noted that Welsh Government was responsible for changing the constitution of the Adra Company and that they had undermined the Council's decision. It was accepted that there was a need for authorities to lobby to change planning procedure and it was suggested that the Board should share messages with the Government on the impact the situation was having on communities and the wellbeing of our citizens. It was reiterated that a meeting had been arranged between the Leader and housing and planning officers to discuss the work being done to seek to convince the Welsh Government on these matters. It was also highlighted that the Gwynedd Council Housing Action Plan that would propose possible solutions was eagerly awaited.
- The points system had been amended to a bands system that would prioritise local people. It was reiterated that the technical problems related to the Housing Options Team were being addressed.
- It was reported that the Regional Group that was responsible for measuring the work of the recovery plans and long-term success would be measured, as it would be difficult to see progress in the short-term. It was reported that the Regional Group was a group of officers that had been established as a successor to the Emergency Response Group. It was noted that there was concern regarding the lack of contribution from Elected Members to the group's decisions and that information from politicians was needed to contribute to the discussion.
- That Agriculture Policy prioritised the environment rather than food production
- In the care field, money had been offered to the Penrhos Home and that the matter was now in the hands of the Local Health Board. The Home was an important resource for the area - needed to continue to press on the health service.

RESOLVED

- (a) To accept the report on the progress of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board's work and to accept the observations.**

The meeting commenced at 11.00am and concluded at 12:35pm.