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## **Review of the Joint Planning Policy Unit**

**January 2017**  
**Regulation and Economic Development**

## 1) Purpose

The Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) and Gwynedd Council (GC) anticipates that the process to prepare and adopt a new Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP) will be completed successfully early in 2017.

Given that the delivery of the JLDP was the primary objective of establishing the Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU), it is therefore timely and appropriate to undertake a high-level review of the existing collaborative arrangements to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, resilient and affordable.

The purpose of the high-level review is threefold:

- a) To determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of the current collaborative arrangements for the joint delivery of planning policy functions for the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd County Councils.
- b) To identify lessons learnt from the current arrangements which will influence and inform future collaborative working - including contextual issues such as financial challenges; a changing working programme; challenges of complying with new legislation; the consenting of major projects; current perceptions etc.
- c) To identify and consider future (alternative) organisational and staffing arrangements which will meet the current and anticipated needs of both Councils in a robust, efficient and cost effective manner.

The Review has been jointly commissioned by Dylan J. Williams (Head of Regulation and Economic Development, IACC) and Gareth Jones (Senior Manager Planning, Environment and Public Protection Service, GC). The intention is to present the review to the Joint Local Development Panel for consideration and endorsement.

## 2) Background

On the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010, Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey County Council agreed to establish joint working arrangements for the provision of a planning policy function. The business case presented to the Gwynedd Board and IACC Executive Committee is included in **Annex A**. Both Authorities agreed that:

- A JPPU would be created to deliver the planning policy functions for Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- The JPPU would commence work on a single Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- That a Joint Planning Policy Committee (JPPC) would be formed as a formal cross boundary decision-making body.

The JPPU was established formally by GC and IACC on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011 – with a Joint Planning Policy Shared Service Agreement subsequently agreed in October 2011. A copy of the Shared Service Agreement is included in **Annex B**.

It was agreed that the joint working arrangements would continue until the JLDP was adopted or the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 (whichever was the sooner) unless extended by the agreement of the Partner Local Planning Authorities (PLPAs).

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The purpose of the JPPU was defined as to **‘facilitate sustainable development, contribute to social and economic regeneration as well as creating an environment of the highest quality which is accessible to all, by controlling the use of land and buildings’**.

The main duties of the JPPU can be summarised as:

- Producing a single Local Development Plan for the Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey Council Local Planning Authority areas in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (or as amended).
- Monitoring the adopted Gwynedd Unitary Development.
- Producing Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Providing specialist advice (including advice on planning applications, proposals, enforcement issues and appeals) and consultation responses on planning policy issues to the PLPAs, external organisations and the general public.
- Undertaking Housing Land Availability Surveys on an annual basis.
- Contributing to the production of Development Briefs and Development Strategies for the PLPA.

Other duties include:

- Advising or participating in regional, sub-regional and cross boundary planning issues such as transport, waste, minerals, renewable energy.
- Providing evidence and appearing as expert witnesses at the Independent Examination into the single Local Development Plan for the PLPA.
- Providing evidence and appearing as expert witnesses on policy issues in planning and or enforcement appeals when required.
- Representing the interests of the Joint Planning Policy Committee with the press or other media and with other external organisations.
- Responding to other relevant land use planning issues that arise.

The benefits of establishing the JPPU for the IACC and GC were expressed as:

- The creation of a more resilient team with increased flexibility and efficiency in terms of staffing and resources.
- Increased capacity to prepare a ‘sound’ JLDP.
- Ability to plan at a more strategic level and integrate cross boundary policies.
- A shared, regional vision for the Local Development Plan.
- The uniting of specialist knowledge and effort to put greater weight behind arguments to achieve common goals.
- A streamlining of current management structures and the introduction of standard procedures and policies.
- A simplification and streamlining of existing liaison arrangements to improve customer service.
- Improved career development opportunities for planning policy officers.

The JLDP was submitted to the Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate in March 2016 for independent Examination. The programmed Examination Hearing Sessions were held between September to November 2016. Additional Hearing Sessions may be held following completion of public consultation about Matters

Arising Changes (MACs) scheduled to take place for 6 weeks in January / March 2017. The Inspector's report is expected in May 2017 depending on the issues raised following the public consultation on the MACs.

### **3) Governance of the Joint Planning Policy Unit**

Both IACC and GC agreed that a 'Host Authority' was required to manage and co-ordinate the day to day work of the JPPU. It was determined that, given its 'recent' experience of preparing and adopting the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan, that GC should be the Host Authority.

GC is the principal employer of the JPPU (all IACC staff were transferred to GC via the TUPE regulations) and GC manages the provision of accommodation, office equipment and IT support etc.

The Unit is managed by a Planning Manager and it is located in Bangor City Council Offices. The Unit initially consisted of 12 permanent members of staff, but will reduce to 10 by the end of March 2017 and 8 by the end of March 2018 as a result of the need to identify savings. The current structure of the JPPU is included in **Annex C**.

The governance of the JPPU and JLDP consists of a Joint Project Board and Joint Planning Policy Committee. These arrangements are outlined in further detail overleaf.

The JPPU is accountable to the Joint Planning Policy Committee and it ensures that the advice given to it is competent and compliant with current law and good practice.

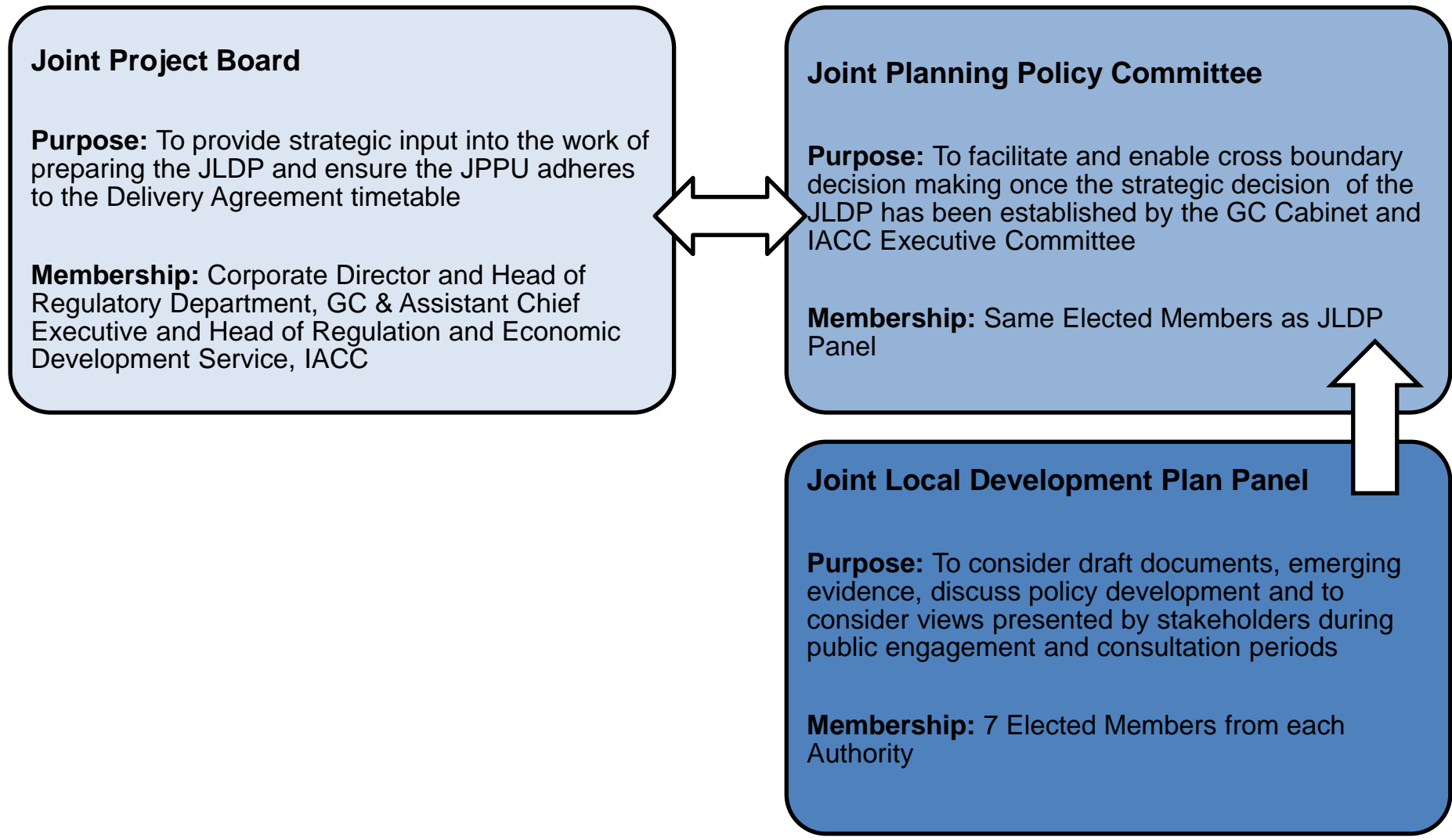
The role of the Joint Planning Policy Committee is to:

- a) To agree and finalise the Anglesey and Gwynedd Deposit JLDP.
- b) To agree and finalise reports on consultation responses and (where appropriate) amendments to the Anglesey and Gwynedd Deposit JLDP.
- c) To adopt Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of an adopted Anglesey and Gwynedd JLDP.
- ch) To receive and accept the Planning Inspector's report.
- d) To have responsibility for the monitoring and review of the Anglesey and Gwynedd JLDP.

There is also a Joint Local Development Plan Panel made up of the same Members as the Joint Planning Policy Committee, who consider draft documents and feed into policy development.

Further information on the Policy Committee and Plan Panel can be viewed [here](#).

Diagram 1: Governance of the JPPU and JLDP



#### **4) Financial Overview of the Joint Planning Policy Unit**

GC is responsible for the financial management and administration of the JPPU. The Planning Manager, the Senior Manager and Head of Finance set the annual budget for the JPPU and present recommendations to the Joint Project Board for agreement.

GC invoices the IACC for payment in advance for the equivalent of 50% of the total annual JPPU staff costs after the 1<sup>st</sup> April. Any underspend on staffing is reinvested back into the Unit.

The accounting and auditing in relation to Joint Committees requires a report on the final annual accounts to be presented to the Joint Planning Policy Committee annually. This has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant requirements as part of the joint working arrangement and the annual final accounts for this joint working arrangement, have been subject to audit by an external auditor approved by the Auditor General for Wales.

**Annex CH** provides an overview of the JPPU's staff costs since 2013/14. Please note that additional savings/ efficiencies (already approved) will see the Unit's number of staff reduce from 12 to 10 (on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017) to 8 officers (on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018). This will achieve savings of £111,570 (to be split equally between both Councils).

GC also invoices the IACC for payment in advance in relation to its contribution to the preparation of the JLDP and any supporting research. Any underspend on these activities is routinely reinvested into the JPPU budget for the following year.

**Annex D** provides a summary of the costs of preparing the JLDP since 2011/12. Integral to the joint working business case was the financial benefits arising from one multi-skilled Unit producing a single Plan for both Authorities. This approach meant the Unit undertaking more evidence work internally; a reduction in the amount of work procured externally and only having one independent Examination (the part of the process with the highest costs). The information provided in **Annex E** summarises that both Authorities have (to date) avoided costs of an additional £300,000 each from the preparation of the JLDP.

**5) Performance Management of the Joint Planning Policy Unit**

The Planning Manager co-ordinates the work of the JPPU through an annual work programme, and reports directly to the Senior Manager Planning, Environment and Public Protection Service, GC (who subsequently reports to the Joint Project Board).

The Joint Project Board maintains an overview of the work of the JPPU and makes operational decisions in relation to the service provided by the Unit to both Authorities. The Project Board is scheduled to meet four times a year.

In order to ensure that the JLDP’s strategic direction is aligned with the corporate objectives of both Councils, a Strategic Officers Group has also established. This Group consists of Senior Officers from a cross-section of relevant Services, together with relevant Cabinet Members from both Councils.

The only formal measure to assess the JPPU’s performance (ref: IACC Planning and Public Protection 2016-17 Service Delivery Plan) is:

Key Action	Responsible Office	By When	Success Criteria		16/17 Target
Achieving milestones in JLDP Delivery Agreement	Planning Manager	Start 01/04/16	Q1	Submit Deposit Plan documentation to Planning Inspectorate	Q1: 100%
			Q2	Hold Public Examination of the Plan	Q2: 100%
		End 31/03/17	Q3	Hold Public Examination of the Plan	Q3: 100%
			Q4	Receive Planning Inspector's Report	Q4: 100%

The JPPU reports on progress in relation to this action and success criteria on a quarterly basis. In addition, the JPPU has also been reporting to the IACC’s Transformation Programme Boards.

## 6) Stakeholder Engagement

To inform this review of the JPPU, the Reviewer has engaged with key internal and external stakeholders (via an electronic survey) to obtain their comments and feedback. These stakeholders included the JPPU, the Joint Planning Policy Committee; GC and IACC Elected Members and Senior Managers and statutory consultees (including the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales).

The survey focussed on three key questions:

- *What are the main achievements of the Joint Planning Policy Unit?*
- *Which aspects of the Joint Planning Policy Unit work well?*
- *Which aspects of the Joint Planning Policy Unit could be improved?*

The responses received to these questions is summarised in **Annex DD**.

## 7) Analysis of Stakeholder Responses

In order to undertake an impartial and arms-length review of the JPPU, the Reviewer has analysed the responses received from stakeholders, as well as considered the information/ evidence he has collated from various sources of information regarding the current collaborative working arrangements (including the Joint Working Business Case).

The analysis and evaluation has also been undertaken with reference to the various principles underpinning the establishment and management of shared services (ref: [‘Shared Services and Management – A Guide for Councils’](#)):

- Shared services can improve the quality of services provided; enhance resilience and deliver cost-effectiveness through the reduction of duplication.
- Effective shared services require clear leadership from both politicians and managers.
- Shared service management arrangements bring with it many challenges. Some of the most commonly cited barriers to effective shared services are cultural or behavioural.
- Robust and effective structures and processes are critical to ensure appropriate levels of control over shared services.
- Shared services are both a real and perceived threats to sovereignty – i.e. the ability of Elected Members and Officers to determine what happens in their areas can be a major stumbling block to sharing.
- It is important to establish governance arrangements that provide an appropriate level of assurance to Elected Members about the performance of shared services and opportunities for members to influence their operation.
- The “lead” organisation must have the capacity, capability and resources to deliver the shared service solution.
- The aim of the Shared Service agreement must be clear, practical and realistic.
- The success of any shared service is reliant upon effective communication, proactive relationships and a shared understanding.
- Being able to demonstrate the success of a shared services is critical to garnering support; whilst not adequately measuring the benefits of a shared service could mean that its success is not properly celebrated.



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- Every shared service requires an exit strategy.

Given the varied nature of the responses and feedback received, it has been necessary to undertake a retrospective (backward looking) and prospective (forward-looking) analysis of the working arrangements.

The Reviewer is of the opinion that:

### **Looking Back**

- i. The progress that the JPPU has made in preparing the JLDP and reaching the examination stage of the process is a significant achievement and milestone for both Authorities.
- ii. The JPPU is a close-knit team with a strong spirit/ ethos. All officers have embraced the Unit's establishment and have contributed to its activities and achievements. It is apparent that the Unit has integrated successfully into a skilled and experienced team that has developed systems, processes and working practices that help to deliver a consistent planning policy function.
- iii. There is limited quantitative evidence however to illustrate that the quality of the service provided to users has improved as a result of the collaborative arrangements.
- iv. It is apparent that ownership of, and accountability for, the JPPU and JLDP by previous IACC senior officers could have been more effective and definitive. It is felt by many that this indifference has contributed towards the negative profile of the Unit and concerns regarding how the Plan has been prepared. Coupled with the regular changes to the IACC's political representation on the Joint Planning Policy Committee, this has often created challenges for the JPPU in terms of effective and meaningful leadership and engagement.
- v. Some concerns have been expressed regarding the sharing of financial information relating to the JPPU and JLDP between GC and IACC. This lack of regular information has caused uncertainties and difficulties for the IACC's Finance Service to set up, monitor and close appropriate and accurate budgets in an effective and efficient manner. The Reviewer notes the concerns but also understands that this has not been raised previously as an issue by IACC directly with GC.
- vi. Similarly, there needs to be greater recognition of the need for more regular communication and reporting of the JPPU's work programme, performance (achievements, outputs and outcomes) to enable both Authorities to undertake robust monitoring of the collaborative working arrangements. The only performance measure relates to the preparation of the JLDP; and there is no recognition of the JPPU's other duties to assess the success and impact of the Unit. Opportunities for both Authorities to influence and prioritise the work of the JPPU (through the Joint Project Board) need to be improved.

### **Looking Forward**

- vii. When adopted, the JLDP will be a clear demonstration that there is merit in undertaking regional collaborative activities to address and respond to common issues and challenges. There is great significance attached by both Councils to the fact that the collaborative working arrangements are unique in Wales and that the JLDP will be the first of its kind to be prepared under such circumstances. The Reviewer notes that Welsh Government has referred to the JPPU as a good practice model for other Councils to follow in terms of collaboration.
- viii. Clarity and certainty is required as to what is the role/ purpose of the JPPU post the adoption of the JLDP. The Plan will need to be monitored on an annual basis and reviewed after 4 years (unless the monitoring reveals the need to undertake and early review). The JPPU will also be required to prepare an extensive range (circa 19) of new Supplementary Planning Guidance in addition to exploring each LPA's viability to deliver a Community Infrastructure Levy tariff. Both Development Management sections in Anglesey and Gwynedd will require support from the JPPU to correctly interpret the new planning policies in the adopted JLDP. A detailed work programme is required to outline potential future activities to secure the ongoing support of both Authorities and ensure that the required resources are available.
- ix. The JPPU will also need to consider and respond to the implications of new legislation (e.g. the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) which will impact upon the scope of future activities and the resources required to undertake them.
- x. Any collaborative arrangements require clear, robust and equitable governance by both Councils in order for them to be effective, add value and be cost effective. The terms of the Shared Services Agreement need to be reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate and meet the needs and expectations of both Authorities. It is evident that, for some, there have been concerns and frustrations regarding the value/ benefits of the collaborative arrangements. For example, concerns have been expressed as to whether the socio-economic needs of Anglesey have been properly recognised and addressed during the preparation of the JLDP. The Reviewer would refer to the issues raised in point ch (above) which may have contributed to such concerns.
- xi. Further to this, and dependent upon a respondent's area of interest (either thematically or geographically), the perception and profile of the JPPU is varied and inconsistent. The JPPU is congratulated by some for the quality of services provided and the way it engages with stakeholders and customers; whilst other respondents have identified clear areas for improvement and concerns exist regarding a perceived imbalance in its objectivity and activities. The Reviewer would again refer to the issues raised in point ch which may have contributed to such concerns.

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- xii. Further work is required to improve the profile and visibility of the JPPU to ensure its contribution to the statutory responsibilities of both Authorities is fully recognised. It needs to be emphasised that this work is often complex, contentious and challenging. In addition, there needs to be improved accessibility to the JPPU (for service users and other Council officers) and more regular engagement with the respective Development Management sections of GC and IACC.
- xiii. The budget required to fund the JPPU in the immediate future is currently uncertain (i.e. linked to the Unit's future work programme). Whilst financial savings have been made previously with further savings agreed for 2017 and 2018, it is inevitable that further efficiencies will have to be considered by the Councils as a result of the unprecedented financial challenges facing both the GC and IACC. It is anticipated that this will impact upon the capacity of the JPPU and the availability of resources to fund its future activities.
- xiv. In order for the JPPU to operate more successfully in the future, it is imperative that there is full accessibility to, and integration with, the IACC's planning functions' digital information systems. The failure to address this barrier has impacted upon the JPPU's ability to undertake its cross boundary responsibilities effectively and in a timely manner.

## **8) Conclusions**

In conclusion, and with particular regard to the purpose of the high level review (See Section 1), it is apparent that the collaborative working arrangements between Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey County Council are considered to have been effective and appropriate given the progress that has been achieved in relation to the preparation of the JLDP; the financial savings that have been realised from only having to prepare one Plan for both areas; as well as the proficient and experienced Team that has been established and developed since 2011. The preparation of a “joint” development plan has been a lengthy, challenging and often contentious process, and the JPPU and the Members of the Joint Planning Policy Committee must be commended for their professional and committed approach to the task.

Furthermore, it must be recognised that the work of the JPPU is not limited to producing the JLDP, and therefore does not end when the Plan is adopted. The work of the JPPU consists of a variety of other duties, including the statutory requirement to monitor the adopted Plan on an annual basis; the production of new Supplementary Planning Guidance and the provision of specialist planning policy advice. If the JPPU were to be disbanded, then all duties would have to be duplicated in the individual Authorities by separate Units/ Teams.

Given the overall success of the JPPU as a model for collaboration (and assuming that the Joint Plan is adopted), the Reviewer considers that there is sufficient justification to continue with the JPPU as the model for continued joint working with regard to the provision of planning policy capacity. However, there are lessons to be learnt from the current arrangements as concerns have been expressed regarding the governance, accountability, scope of influence, profile and priorities of the JPPU – as well as uncertainty regarding the value and contribution of the Unit (i.e. to matters more than just the JLDP). These concerns must be addressed in order to ensure that any future collaborative working is effective, robust and equitable; whilst opportunities to improve the profile, visibility and integration of the JPPU with both Authorities and other stakeholders must also be identified and realised.

In terms of future organisational and staffing arrangements, it is imperative that the purpose of the JPPU is redefined following the anticipated adoption of the JLDP and that both Authorities have sufficient detail and clarity about the nature of the Unit's future work programme. Given the scale of the financial challenges facing both Authorities, the Reviewer believes that further savings/ efficiencies, in addition to those already achieved, will be required to be considered from the JPPU and that this will inevitably impact upon the Unit's future capacity and resources. The Reviewer notes that any additional savings over and above those already agreed will ultimately be a matter for the individual Councils to decide.

As a final comment, the Reviewer fully recognises the uncertainty and apprehension created for the JPPU by the timing of the review given that it coincided with the formal examination of the JLDP. Unfortunately, it was not possible to avoid this situation given the need to complete the review in order to identify, as early as

possible, the scope/ nature of future working arrangements as well as inform current budget setting processes.

## **9) Recommendations**

It is considered that there is sufficient justification to continue with the JPPU as the preferred collaboration model for the provision of a planning policy function for GC and IACC. It is therefore recommended that a new Shared Service Agreement is prepared for the next five years (2017-2022) to correspond with the first formal review of the Plan. A new/ amended Shared Service Agreement should reflect the following:

- a) A re-definition of the purpose and role of the JPPU following the adoption of the JLDP to reflect the needs and expectations of the IACC and GC.
- b) Establishing a clear, specific and outcome orientated work programme for the JPPU post the adoption of the JLDP and securing sufficient resources (in a period of savings/ efficiencies).
- c) Strengthening the overall governance and shared ownership of the JPPU in both Councils – including refining the role of the Joint Planning Policy Committee and the Joint Local Development Plan Panel.
- ch) Reviewing and establishing the most effective office location for the JPPU in order to better integrate the Unit and its Officers with the planning services of both Councils (and their respective business systems and working practices) and potentially reduce overheads and costs.
- d) Improving current management arrangements and influence in relation to financial planning and reporting, HR issues, the monitoring of performance and the prioritisation of work/ activities.
- dd) Encouraging more effective communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders to improve the JPPU's profile and visibility and ensure acknowledgement of the Unit's duties, achievements and added value.
- e) Improving the profile and awareness of the JPPU, capabilities, knowledge and expertise with both Councils.
- f) Defining the role of the JPPU in addressing the specific requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act.

**Annex A - Joint delivery of the Planning Policy Service Business Case**

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>COUNCIL'S BOARD</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>15 June 2010</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Proposals for the joint delivery of the Planning Policy Service</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>Approve the joint delivery of the Planning Policy Service for Anglesey and Gwynedd</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>i) That a Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU) is created to deliver the Planning Policy Service for Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Local Planning Authorities.</b></li> <li><b>ii) That a Joint Project Board is created to oversee the work of the JPPU</b></li> <li><b>iii) That the JPPU commences work on a single Local Development Plan (LDP) for Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Local Planning Authorities. (Scenario 1)</b></li> <li><b>iv) That a Joint Local Development Plan Panel is formed to provide input into the production of a single LDP for both Authorities.</b></li> <li><b>v) That a Joint Planning Policy Committee is formed as a formal cross boundary decision making body.</b></li> <li><b>vi) That the authority is given to the Head of Regulatory Department and the Head of Democratic and Legal Department to implement i), ii), iii), iv) and v).</b></li> </ul>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Aled Davies, Head of Regulatory Department (Gwynedd)</b> <b>Jim Woodcock, Head of Planning and Public Protection (Anglesey)</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO LEADER</b>	<b>Councillor Gareth Roberts (Gwynedd)</b> <b>Councillor Aled Morris Jones (Anglesey)</b>

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**Background**

1.1 This report is submitted following discussions between Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey County Council regarding opportunities for the delivery of the Planning Policy Service. The recommendations in this report have been agreed in principle by the Leaders, relevant Portfolio Leaders and Heads of Services of both Authorities. The

discussions between the Authorities have related mainly to the possible options for joint working on delivering Local Development Plans (a statutory requirement) as this is the primary function of the Planning Policy Service. However, the recommendations in this report relate to the delivery of the Planning Policy Service as a whole for Gwynedd and Anglesey authorities (see **Appendix 1** Local Planning Authority Areas).

- 1.2 There have been discussions with the Snowdonia National Park Authority, but the type of joint working referred to in this report may not suit their needs at present, due to the advanced stage they have reached in the production of their Local Development Plan. However, it may be possible that the recommendations of this report could also apply to the Snowdonia National Park Authority in the future.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations on the most effective way to provide the Planning Policy Service for Gwynedd and Anglesey. The report will include the following:
- The justification for a joint working arrangement
  - The preferred option for the delivery of the service
  - Possible scenarios for delivering the LDP
  - Recommendations on how best to deliver the service

## **2. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR A JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENT**

- 2.1 In order to assess whether there is justification for a joint working arrangement for the delivery of the Planning Policy Service for Gwynedd and Anglesey, there is a need to look at the existing service arrangements in the Authorities, how the Planning Inspectorate will assess the LDP and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats relating to the service.

### **The existing service arrangements**

- 2.2 The overall purpose of the Planning Policy function is:

**To facilitate sustainable development, contribute to social and economic regeneration as well as creating an environment of the highest quality which is accessible to all, by controlling the use of land and buildings by:**

- 1. Producing and monitoring development plans**
- 2. Producing Supplementary Planning Guidance**
- 3. Providing specialist advice and consultation responses on Planning Policy issues to the Authority, external organisations and the general public**
- 4. Undertaking Housing Land Availability Surveys on a yearly basis**
- 5. Contributing to the production of Development Briefs and Development Strategies**
- 6. Promoting sustainable development**

### **Current service arrangements**

- 2.3 It is considered that the main issues relating to current service arrangements are as follows:
- The **functions** of the planning policy service in Gwynedd and Anglesey are to a significant extent the same. The principal function of the Planning Policy Service revolves around the production, monitoring, review and interpretation of the Local Development Plan (LDP). Other functions of the Planning Policy Service, such as

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production of Supplementary Planning Guidance, Development Briefs and Annual Housing Land Assessments are mainly related to the LDP for the Authority.

- The Planning Policy Service also has an **advisory function** in respect of providing advice on planning applications to the Development Control Section and providing policy advice to other Local Authority services, Members, the general public and various other external organisations. In addition to this, the Service has an important function in trying to ensure that the needs of the Authority are considered in national and regional policy and guidance and provides responses on consultation documents produced by various organisations, including the Welsh Assembly Government and other Local Authorities.
- The **key issues** relating to the functions of the Planning Policy Service are mainly related to the production, monitoring and review of the LDP. There is a statutory process related to the production of the LDP, requiring the production of specific documents such as Strategic Environmental Assessments and Health Impact Assessments. There is also a statutory procedure requiring consultation at certain stages and an independent examination (similar to a public inquiry). The LDP will provide land use planning policies on housing, employment, tourism, transport, waste, minerals, energy and the environment. Supplementary Planning Guidance will provide more detailed information on the various policies of the LDP. The **key issues** in respect of the production and the content of the LDP are generally common to both Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- There is a wide range of **customer contacts** with various departments and services within the Council as well as external organisations and the general public. Customer contacts are mainly by e-mail, letter and telephone, although there is also face to face customer contact.
- There are key similarities in the **character** and profile of Gwynedd and Anglesey. Both authorities are predominately rural in character, have a high quality natural and built environment (areas of outstanding natural beauty, a number of Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, National Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a large number of listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas and areas of archaeological importance). Both Authorities have a dispersed and low density of population per hectare and the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales averaging over 60% of Welsh speakers. The economy in both authority areas is reliant upon a small number of key employers (e.g. Public Sector (County Councils, Health Service), Wylfa and RAF Valley (Anglesey). Tourism has a significant role to play in the economies of the 2 Authorities and given the rural character of the area the agricultural industry is still prominent. The main **challenges** facing Gwynedd and Anglesey include the following:
  - i) The entire coastline and other parts of the area is at risk of **flooding**
  - ii) **Climate change** is happening and there is a need to respond to its possible effects and reduce further effects (e.g. energy conservation and provision of renewable energy)
  - iii) **Energy** developments primarily at Wylfa and in the Irish Sea with associated infrastructure and other land use implications



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- iv) **Conservation** and enhancement of the area's environmental assets
  - v) High house prices, particularly in rural areas has lead to a strong demand for **affordable housing** to meet local housing needs
  - vi) Changes in **household characteristics** in terms of size and composition
  - vii) **Public service provision** in peripheral locations in particular, undermined by social and demographic changes and providers' financial constraints
  - viii) The **economy** has historically grown at a significantly slower rate than that of the rest of Wales and the UK. The current economic recession has seen the closure of key employers (e.g. Anglesey Aluminium) and the job losses in both private and public sectors
  - ix) Changing **shopping patterns** mean that town centres and villages are at risk
  - x) Inadequate **infrastructure** throughout the area
  - xi) Development and the future of the **Welsh Language and culture**
  - xii) Deficiency of **employment land** in some part of the area
  - xiii) Parts of the area suffer multiple **deprivation**
  - xiv) Understanding and satisfying the need for **Gypsies and travellers** in the area
  - xv) Planning for the provision of a network of **waste** management facilities for the sustainable management of waste
- **Staff structures and management** within the 2 Authorities are located within a service, or department that also includes Development Control. In Gwynedd the Planning Policy Team has 5 permanent FTE and 1 temporary FTE which includes a Planning Policy Manager. In Anglesey the Team consists of 8 permanent FTE, which includes a Planning Policy Manager (currently vacant), another vacant post and a post reporting to Economic Development, making 5 permanent FTE in post at the moment.
  - The Authorities currently **collaborate** informally on an "ad hoc" basis and share knowledge and expertise. This collaboration occurs through the North Wales Planning Officers' Group (Policy) which meets at least twice a year. There is also the North West Wales Consortium for Local Housing Market Assessment which has representatives from the 2 Authorities. There have also been instances when work has been commissioned jointly and these areas of work have included retail studies and will also include work on meeting the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers.

### **How the Planning Inspectorate will assess the LDP**

2.4 Towards the end of the LDP production process, the LDP for both Authorities will be subject to an Independent Examination by a Welsh Assembly Government Planning Inspector. The purpose of this examination is to determine whether the Plan is sound. There are 10 tests for soundness which are procedural, consistency and coherence and effectiveness tests. The specific tests include the following:

- It is a land use plan which has regard to other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area **or adjoining areas**
- The plan sets out a coherent strategy from which its policies and allocations logically flow and, **where cross-boundary issues are relevant, it is compatible with the development plans prepared by neighbouring authorities**

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2.5 If the LDP does not meet the tests for soundness it will be **rejected** by the Planning Inspector, which is a significant risk for an Authority. The key issues here are that the LDP for 1 Authority must have regard to the LDP of adjoining areas. There are key strategic cross boundary issues relevant to both Gwynedd and Anglesey, which means that the LDP for 1 Authority must be compatible with the other. These strategic cross-boundary issues would include the Mon-Menai Hub, the future of Wylfa and the role of Bangor as a sub regional centre.

**Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**

2.6 Based on a subjective assessment of the existing provision of the Planning Policy Service in Gwynedd and Anglesey, the following is considered to represent the current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to the service: (Not all of the following are relevant to both Authorities)

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
Local knowledge of the area Service in the same Department / Service / Directorate as Development Control Professional service provided to customers High profile Expertise / specialist knowledge Customer service, responsiveness Provision of a bilingual service Good links with Development Control	Reliance on grant to fund staff No formal collaboration between the Authorities Limited resources impacting service Difficulties with recruitment Limited resources fund LDP production Lack of career development opportunities No standard service performance indicators Duplication of work Risks regarding the soundness of individual LDP for each area
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
Sharing of specialist knowledge Provision of standard procedures and policies Career development opportunities Increase flexibility of staff resource Plan at a more strategic level ( this can relieve pressures in one authority by developing in the other) Integration of cross boundary policies Simplify and streamline liaison arrangements with customers Standardisation of ITC procedures Sharing of costs (e.g. producing 1 or 2 LDP instead of 3) More chance of meeting the tests for soundness	Lack of funding and resources Difficulties due to different ITC systems Possible lack of support from Members Possible staff apprehension Reduced accessibility for customers Difficulty in supply of support service functions Possible conflict due to different priorities in the 2 Authorities Inconsistencies in staff terms and conditions

**Justification for joint working**

2.7 The existing service arrangements highlight the similarities of the Planning Policy Service in both Authorities in respect of the functions of the service, the key issues relating to the functions of the service, the customer contacts, the character of the areas and the main challenges facing both Authorities in the preparation of the LDP.

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- 2.8 Furthermore, it is essential that the LDP of one Authority has regard to the LDP of the other Authority and that the LDP of both Authorities are compatible, as these issues will be assessed by the Planning Inspectorate to test the soundness of the Plans. Failure to meet the tests for soundness would result in the Planning Inspectorate **rejecting** a Plan.
- 2.9 Given the existing service arrangements and the tests related to assessing the soundness of the LDP, it is considered that there is a clear justification for a joint working arrangement to deliver the Planning Policy Service.

### **3. PREFERRED OPTION FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE SERVICE**

#### **Joint Planning Policy Unit**

- 3.1 The possible options which have been considered for delivery of the service have been specific to formalising collaboration between the Planning Policy services in the 2 Authorities. It is considered that in order to build on existing strengths, address existing weaknesses and take advantages of the opportunities, there has to be formal collaboration between the services of both Authorities. It is considered that the only option which is likely to put the service in a position to benefit from the opportunities relating to joint working, would be to create a Joint Planning Policy Unit which would be managed by a Host Authority. This would centralise the service in one office location with a Host Authority managing the day to day work of the JPPU.
- 3.2 A Joint Project Board to include the Head of Regulatory Department (Gwynedd Council) and the Head of Planning and Public Protection Services (Isle of Anglesey County Council) would be created to oversee the work of the JPPU. The Host Authority would therefore report to the Joint Project Board.
- 3.3 There would have to be an Agreement (or equivalent) in order to agree details such as the terms of reference for the JPPU, the Host Authority and the Joint Project Board.
- 3.4 The benefits for Gwynedd and Anglesey of providing the service through a JPPU include:
- Sharing of specialist knowledge
  - Provision of standard procedures and policies
  - Career development opportunities
  - Creation of a more resilient service
  - Increase flexibility of staff resource and more efficient use of staff resource
  - Plan at a more strategic level and integration of cross boundary policies
  - Simplify, streamline and improve liaison arrangements with customers and thereby improve customer service
  - Sharing of costs and making the best use of resources
  - Having a shared vision for the LDP
  - Sharing research for the LDP work
  - Streamlining of management structure
  - Combining knowledge and effort to put greater weight behind arguments to achieve common goals (e.g. housing for local people, language issues)
  - Fully addressing the issues relating to the soundness of LDP
  - Capacity to prepare sound LDP

### **Selection of Host Authority for the Joint Planning Policy Unit**

- 3.5 There is agreement between both Authorities that a Host Authority is required in order to manage the day to day work of the JPPU.
- 3.6 The Head of Regulatory Department (Gwynedd) and the Head of Planning Services (Anglesey) agree that having regard to the existing staffing structures of both Authorities, the recent experience in Gwynedd of taking the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan through to adoption, there is a justification for practical reasons, that the Host Authority of the JPPU should be Gwynedd Council.
- 3.7 With the creation of a JPPU, a new staff structure would be created which would provide the opportunity to make the best possible use of vacant posts. It would also lead to career opportunities, the sharing and development of specialist knowledge and skill in planning policy issues.
- 3.8 In order to deal with the key strategic issues such as Wylfa, other energy development, the role of Bangor as a sub-regional centre and sustainable transport, there will need to be a consideration in future as to whether additional staff would be required as part of the JPPU.

## **4. POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR DELIVERING THE LDP**

### **The current position**

- 4.1 The current position regarding LDP production is that Gwynedd has commenced work on a Delivery Agreement, having recently had its Unitary Development Plan adopted (July 2009). However, there is as yet no formal request submitted to WAG to formally commence work on the LDP.
- 4.2 Anglesey has formally commenced work on the LDP but has to redraft the Pre-Deposit Draft which was due to go out to consultation in August 2010. However, this redrafting depends on the possible implications of the Government's Energy Strategy and the potential development of Wylfa and as a result, on Anglesey as an "Energy" Island. The Government is in the process of undertaking a Strategic Site Assessment, with the final selected sites to be announced in 2010. Furthermore, since work commenced on the LDP, Anglesey Aluminium, one of the major employers on the Island has recently closed. Both these issues may have significant implications on the current LDP work.
- 4.3 Anglesey's original timetable indicated that their LDP would be adopted in September 2013. Following discussions between both Authorities, Anglesey recently commissioned work to assess the current evidence base work undertaken, identify the work required and to advise on whether the adoption of their LDP by September 2013 would be realistic. The advice given is based on the JPPU working on the Anglesey LDP and the assessment undertaken states that a more realistic date of adoption would be December 2013. This advice goes on to state:- *"however it must be stressed that*

*this is a best case scenario and the timetable could easily slip by 6 months and more if the Plan encounters problems or suffers from insufficient decision making*". The Anglesey LDP, mainly due to uncertainties regarding the future of Wylfa in particular could therefore easily take until early in 2015 or beyond to be adopted.

- 4.4 Having regards to the positions of the respective Authorities, various scenarios can be considered in terms of how the Joint Planning Policy Unit could deliver the LDP. The 2 Authorities have considered 3 scenarios all of which would require:
- A Host Authority for the JPPU
  - A Joint Project Board
  - That the JPPU at some stage works on a single LDP for both Authorities

Additional governance arrangements would need to be set up for the work on 1 LDP as described in Scenario 1.

- 4.5 **SCENARIO 1: JPPU to immediately commence working on 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey.**

**Governance:**

It is important that there are political and administrative governance arrangements in place to ensure that both Authorities support and have ownership of the high level strategic direction of the LDP. It is also important that all Members of both Authorities have an input into the LDP production process.

There will be a need to report to both Authorities in the production of the single LDP. This will include reporting to:

**Full Council (Gwynedd and Anglesey)**

The LDP regulations require that certain stages of the LDP are reported to the Full Council.

- **Council Board and the Executive (Gwynedd and Anglesey)**

This will ensure ownership and support by both Authorities to the strategic direction of the single LDP.

- **Scrutiny Committee (Gwynedd and Anglesey)**

This will ensure that all Members of both Authorities will have an opportunity to participate at key stages of the preparation of the single LDP.

Working on a single LDP for both Authorities will also require the creation of a **Joint Local Development Plan (LDP) Panel**. This Panel will be made up of Members from Anglesey and Gwynedd and will have the main responsibility of steering the LDP production. The JPPU would report on the progress of the LDP work to the Joint LDP Panel.

There would also have to be a cross boundary decision making body having powers to make cross boundary decisions, following the agreement of the strategic direction of the LDP by the Gwynedd Council Board and the Anglesey Executive. The most practical and effective way to achieve this would be to create a **Joint Planning Policy Committee** made up of Members from Gwynedd and Anglesey. This would avoid potential risks to the LDP timetable that may arise from having to get all the decisions from the individual Authorities, whilst at the same time respecting the fact that certain

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decisions / approvals at key stages will be made by the individual authorities. Arrangements will also need to be put into place for resolving potential differences in decisions made through this governance arrangement.

It is considered that the political governance arrangement referred to above will provide the right balance in terms of decision making, scrutiny and input with regards to the process of producing the LDP. The table in **Appendix 2** provides an indication of how the reporting and decisions would be undertaken for the production of the LDP.

**Timescale:** Adoption of Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey by 2016. This is an approximate target date, given that unexpected situations can arise during plan production that can have an impact on the timescale for adoption.

**Benefits:** All of the benefits of providing the service by the JPPU as specified in 3.4 above, but more specifically in respect of the production of the LDP:

- i. **Have a focus on 1 Joint LDP with a shared vision for the 2 Authorities.**  
This scenario provides the best possible opportunity to plan at a more strategic level and for the integration of cross boundary planning policies.
- ii. **1 adopted Joint LDP may in place for both LPA areas**  
This scenario would have an approximate target date of 2016 for the adoption of a single LDP for Anglesey and Gwynedd.
- iii. **Planning for different outcomes**  
There are strategic issues which will affect both LPA areas and the most significant has to be Wylfa B. Whether Wylfa B goes ahead or not, it will impact on forward planning in Anglesey and Gwynedd Local Planning Authority areas. This is an issue that both Authorities will have to plan for regardless and working as a JPPU on 1 Joint LDP, will put both Authorities in a stronger position to plan for and deal with different outcomes more effectively.
- iii. **Saving costs**  
This scenario has the potential for saving costs. These cost savings would be likely to be seen in the cost of the process required to produce the Joint LDP. The initial cost savings will not be significant, but will become evident in the plan making process as there will be less duplication of work and work can be undertaken more efficiently and quickly. The production of 1 Joint LDP for both Authorities would remove the duplication of work associated with the production of 2 LDP (one for each Authority). Evidence base work could be jointly commissioned; there would be 1 SEA, 1 HIA, 1 Independent Examination and consultations based on 1 Joint LDP. Based on current data available regarding LDP production, it is estimated that on average the cost of producing 1 LDP works out at approximately £250,000 per annum (on top of existing staffing costs) based on Gwynedd estimates. On average it would therefore cost 1 Authority £1m to £1.25m to produce 1 LDP and 2 Authorities £2m to £2.5m to produce 2 LDP. Producing 1 Joint LDP instead of 2 LDP (1 for each Authority) would be likely to cost less (possibly 70% of the cost of producing 2 LDP), as this would avoid duplication. It must be emphasised that these costs are estimated costs and that the cost of one LDP for each Authority would be likely to differ.

**Issues and risks:**

- i) Work on the Anglesey LDP would be abandoned and there would be a delay in Anglesey having an adopted LDP. However, this delay would only be approximately 12 months more than it would take to adopt the Anglesey LDP and the evidence base could be used in the production of 1 Joint LDP. It must be stressed that the work undertaken for the Anglesey LDP would not be wasted as it would contribute to the work required for the Joint LDP.
- ii) The administrative governance arrangements described above would be required, which would include the creation of a Joint Planning Policy Committee having the power to make cross boundary decisions. If this is not put in place to make decisions, this could delay the plan production process, as there would then be a need to report everything to the relevant Committees of both Authorities.
- iii) There has to be a firm commitment by both Authorities to produce 1 Joint LDP.
- iv) Human resource issues relating to relocations / transfer
- v) Setting up costs including costs of new offices and IT issues. These would be likely to be offset by shared management costs for the JPPU, as well as the cost savings in the process of producing only 1 Joint LDP.

**4.6 SCENARIO 2: JPPU to continue work on Anglesey LDP through to adoption and then commence work on 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey**

**Governance:** The JPPU would initially report to the existing LDP Panel and Committee(s) in accordance with the existing decision making process set up for Anglesey, as this would be specifically related to the Anglesey LDP. The governance for work on the 1 Joint LDP for both Gwynedd and Anglesey would be the same as scenario 1, and would have to be set up prior to the commencement of work on the Joint LDP.

**Timescale:** Adoption of Anglesey LDP in early 2015. Commence work on 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey in 2014 with adoption of 1 Joint LDP in 2019.

**Benefits:** All of the benefits of providing the service by the JPPU as specified in 3.4 but more specifically in respect of the production of the LDP:

- i) **Anglesey may have an adopted LDP by early 2015**  
The initial benefit here would be for Anglesey, but the work of the JPPU on the Anglesey LDP would develop an understanding of the process, the key issues and lessons could be learnt for the preparation of the 1 Joint LDP for both Anglesey and Gwynedd.
- ii) **Preparatory work on 1 Joint LDP for Anglesey and Gwynedd can commence**  
There would be scope to jointly commission elements of the evidence base work.
- iii) **Planning for different outcomes**  
The JPPU would still be in a stronger position as the Unit would be working on the Anglesey LDP but would also be developing a vision and undertaking preparatory work for 1 Joint LDP for both areas.
- iv) **Saving costs**

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These would mainly be relevant to the work on 1 Joint LDP for both authorities and would again be cost savings relating to the plan making process (see Scenario 1). However, in addition to this there would be the cost of completing the process of producing the LDP for Anglesey.

### **Issues and risks:**

- i) Work would not commence on the Joint LDP to include Gwynedd area until 2014 and there would possibly be no adopted LDP coverage for Gwynedd until 2019.
- ii) The real cost savings in the LDP process would not be seen until the work commenced on the 1 Joint LDP for both Authorities, although there would be a delay in spending for Gwynedd in the initial period.
- iii) There would still be an element of duplication in the process of producing the LDP as 2 Plans (Anglesey LDP and a Joint LDP) would be produced over the next 10 years.
- iv) With this scenario 2 plans are produced over the next 10 years and savings in the process will only be likely to be evident when production commences on the 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey in 2014. The production of the LDP for Anglesey would be approximately £1m to £1.25m (on top of existing staffing costs) which would be additional to the cost of producing 1 Joint LDP to cover both areas.
- v) The Anglesey LDP if adopted in early 2015 would only have taken approximately 12 months less than it would have taken to adopt 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey areas.(i.e. Scenario 1)
- vi) There would have to be a firm commitment by both Authorities that 1 Joint LDP would be produced for both areas otherwise this would represent too much of a risk for Gwynedd.
- vii) Human resource issues relating to relocations / transfer
- viii) Setting up costs, new office costs and IT issues. These would be likely to be offset by shared management costs for the JPPU.

#### **4.7 SCENARIO 3: JPPU to continue work on Anglesey LDP through to adoption and at same time work on Gwynedd LDP and then commence work on 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey.**

**Timescale:** Adoption of Anglesey LDP early 2015. Adoption of Gwynedd LDP in 2016. Commencement of work on 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey in 2015 with adoption of 1 Joint LDP in 2020.

**Governance:** The JPPU would continue reporting to the existing LDP Panels and Committees in accordance with the existing decision making processes in the respective Authorities. The governance specified in scenario 1 would apply for the production of the Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey.

**Benefits:** All of the benefits of providing the service by the JPPU as specified above but more specifically in respect of the production of the LDP:



- i) **Anglesey may have an adopted LDP by early 2015 and Gwynedd by late 2016**  
There would be benefits for both Authorities in terms of having adopted LDP with up to date planning policies. The work of the JPPU on 2 LDP would also be good preparation for production of 1 Joint LDP for both Authorities.
- ii) **Preparatory work on 1 Joint LDP for Anglesey and Gwynedd can commence**  
There would be scope to jointly commission elements of the evidence base work in preparation for the Joint LDP to cover both Authorities.
- iii) **Planning for different outcomes**  
The JPPU would still be in a stronger position as the Unit would be working on the Anglesey LDP and the Gwynedd LDP, but would also be developing a vision and undertaking preparatory work for 1 Joint LDP for both areas.
- iv) **Saving costs**  
These would mainly be relevant to the work on 1 LDP for both authorities and would again be cost savings in the process (see Scenario 1). However, in addition to this there would be the cost of completing the process of producing the LDP for Anglesey and the LDP for Gwynedd, on top of the cost of producing 1 Joint LDP.

**Issues and risks:**

- i) This scenario would mean that work would not commence on 1 Joint LDP for GC and Anglesey until 2015.
- ii) There would still be duplication in the process of producing the LDP as 3 Plans (Anglesey LDP, Gwynedd LDP and 1 Joint LDP) would be produced over the next 10 years. The production of 2 LDP (1 for each Authority) would be approximately £2m to £2.5m – which would be additional to the cost of producing 1 LDP to cover both areas.
- iii) With this scenario 3 plans are produced over the next 10 years and savings in the process will only be likely to be evident when production commences on the 1 Joint LDP in 2015.
- iv) The LDP for Anglesey if adopted in early 2015 would only have taken approximately 12 months less than it would have taken to adopt 1 Joint LDP for Gwynedd and Anglesey areas.(i.e. Scenario 1)
- v) There would have to be a firm commitment by both Authorities to produce 1 Joint LDP for both areas.
- vi) Human resource issues relating to relocations / transfer
- vii) Setting up costs, new office costs and IT issues. These would be likely to be offset by shared management costs for the JPPU.

**Appendix 3** illustrates indicative timescales for commencement of work and adoption of LDP having regard to the 3 scenarios referred to above.

**Main risks of joint working**

- 4.8 The risks associated with this collaborative arrangement will involve the same risks which the 2 Authorities will face in producing their LDP. However, the level of risk should be less as the management of the LDP work by the JPPU would contribute towards cross boundary compatibility and integration of planning policies in both

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authorities. This should as a result contribute towards addressing the issue of soundness of the LDP, which will be an initial key consideration of the Planning Inspector in assessing the LDP.

- 4.9 If a JPPU was not created, both Authorities would still have to work on their individual LDP which would both be subject to a formal review 4 years following adoption. However, neither Authority would reap the benefits provided by the creation of the JPPU.
- 4.10 There may be risks relating to human resources within the service as there would be a change in the way that the service is provided, although the nature of the work would essentially be the same. Discussions with staff, the union representative and the Human Resources Department have already commenced.
- 4.11 It is essential that once the JPPU is created, there is no “opt out” clause for any Authority during LDP production, as this could represent a significant and unacceptable risk to both Authorities. It is also likely that the Welsh Assembly Government would require that there is a firm commitment by both Authorities to deliver the Joint LDP.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The assessment of the existing service arrangements in both Authorities has highlighted the similarities in the key functions of the service, the character and profile of the 2 Authorities as well as the main challenges facing both Authorities in the production of the LDP. Furthermore, ensuring that the Plan passes the soundness test is vital. A formal joint working arrangement would put both Authorities in a stronger position to meet the soundness test relating to compatibility of cross boundary policies in particular. It is considered that there is a clear and robust justification for a joint working arrangement between Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- 5.2 The creation of a Joint Planning Policy Unit managed by a Host Authority would make the best possible use of limited resources and would have the best possible chance of taking advantages of the opportunities available through joint working. This is considered to be the case regardless of the scenarios for production of the LDP.
- 5.3 It is considered that commencement of work on 1 Joint LDP as soon as possible (Scenario 1) would provide the most benefits for both authorities. The evidence base work undertaken by Anglesey to date should form part of the base information, which would feed into the process of producing a single LDP to cover both Authorities and contribute significantly to the work of the JPPU. This evidence base must be built upon, especially in terms of extending initial research work to cover the Gwynedd Authority area.
- 5.4 It is also evident with regards to the timescales for production of the Anglesey LDP (Scenario 2), the Gwynedd LDP (Scenario 3) and the single LDP for both Authorities (Scenario 1), that there is likely to be no significant difference.
- 5.5 Scenario 1 would be a pragmatic approach to dealing with the uncertainties relating to Wylfa, particularly as these are uncertainties that will have an impact on both

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Authorities. It would reduce risks relating to soundness and would reduce future expenditure on the plan preparation. Furthermore, there is an opportunity here for an “exemplar” project which can demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of joint working between Authorities to the rest of Wales.

- 5.6 The principal objective here is to make the most effective and efficient use of resources, to put in place a framework to facilitate the provision of 1 LDP to cover the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Planning Authority Areas. This involves the creation of a Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU), the creation of a Joint Project Board to oversee the work of the JPPU, the creation of a Joint Local Development Plan Panel to steer the plan production and the creation of a Joint Planning Policy Committee, as a cross boundary decision making body for the single LDP.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

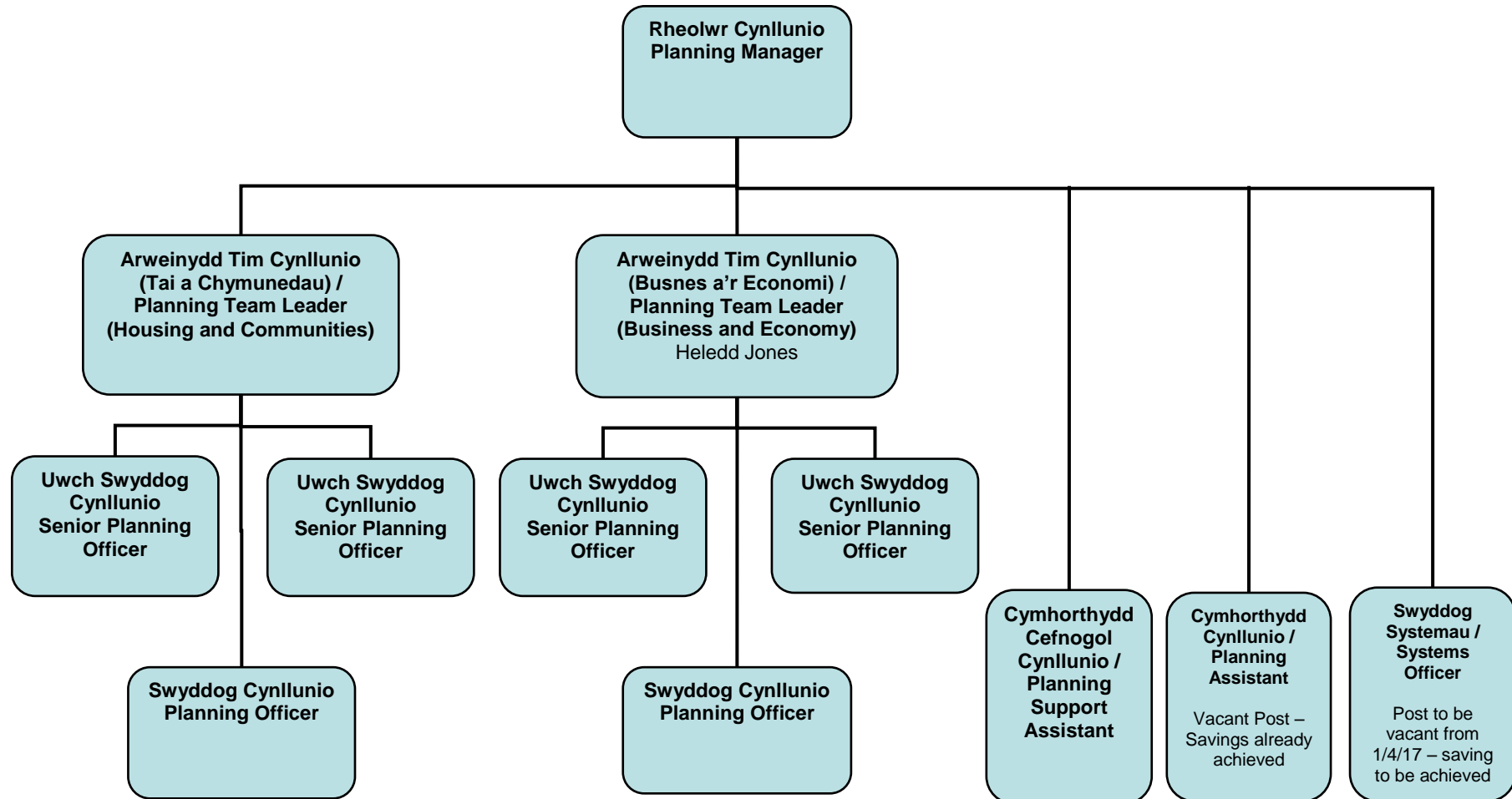
- i) That a Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU) is created to deliver the Planning Policy Service for Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Local Planning Authorities.**
- ii) That a Joint Project Board is created to oversee the work of the JPPU**
- iii) That the JPPU commences work on a single Local Development Plan (LDP) for Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Local Planning Authorities. (Scenario 1)**
- iv) That a Joint Local Development Plan Panel is formed to provide input into the production of a single LDP for both Authorities.**
- v) That a Joint Planning Policy Committee is formed as a formal cross boundary decision making body.**
- vi) That the authority is given to the Head of Regulatory Department and the Head of Democratic and Legal Department to implement i), ii), iii), iv) and v).**

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**Annex B – Joint Planning Policy Unit Shared Service Agreement**

Please see the attached PDF file.

Annex C - Structure of the JPPU (January 2017)



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Annex CH - Overview of the JPPU's staff costs and savings since 2013/14

	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
Costs	FTE	Total	FTE	Total	FTE	Total	FTE	Total	FTE	Total	FTE	Total
Management costs	N/A	£11,960	N/A	£13,520	N/A	£13,670	N/A	£14,050	N/A	£14,050	N/A	£14,050
JPPU Capacity	12.0	£444,450	11.6	£424,580	11.6	£429,250	11.6	£442,880	10.0	£394,520	10.0	£394,520
Savings/ Efficiencies	-	-	0.4 Post Flexible retirement of Planning Assistant	-	-	-£50,000 Reduction of £25,000 by both GC and IACC funded by underspends from preparing the JLDP	-	-£50,000 Reduction of £25,000 by both GC and IACC funded by underspends from preparing the JLDP	-	-£1,640 Approved saving – 2 posts to be deleted (Systems Officer & Policy Assistant)	-2.0 Posts	-£61,640 Additional saving of £60,000 approved (2 posts)
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>£444,450</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>£424,580</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>£379,250</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>£392,880</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>£392,880</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>£332,880</b>
<b>Summary of savings since 2013/14</b>											<b>-4.0</b>	<b>-£111,570</b>

**Annex D - A summary of the costs of preparing the JLDP and the anticipated savings for each Authority**

The following table provides information originally included in the Shared Service Agreement (Appendix F). The information about the potential expenditure was based on the best available information, which was drawn from an analysis of expenditure by other local planning authorities on research and process costs. At the time of writing it was anticipated that Horizon, under an emerging Planning Performance Agreement, would contribute to some elements of research on the basis that the research would entail work 'over and above' research that would be required without the Wylfa Newydd Project. The last row in the table refers to known funding available from Welsh Government in the form of performance related grants. The table seeks to demonstrate potential savings for both Authorities: in excess of £300,000 per Authority.

Possible expenditure profiles LDP

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Total
<b>Gwynedd</b>	140,600	86,600	87,600	109,600	41,600	441,600	42,600	950,200
<b>Mon</b>	179,000	100,000	86,000	108,000	40,000	440,000	41,000	994,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>319,600</b>	<b>186,600</b>	<b>193,600</b>	<b>217,600</b>	<b>81,600</b>	<b>881,600</b>	<b>83,600</b>	<b>1,944,200</b>
<b>Joint Gwynedd &amp; Môn</b>	<b>236,600</b>	<b>157,600</b>	<b>127,600</b>	<b>139,600</b>	<b>42,600</b>	<b>540,600</b>	<b>52,600</b>	<b>1,297,200</b>
<b>Minus budget by Horizon for evidence base work</b>	(64,500)	(64,500)						
<b>Minus budget by Welsh Government to be spent before end of March 2011</b>	(25,000)							

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In accordance with the specific accounting and audit reporting requirements for Joint Committees a report presenting the final accounts is presented to the Joint Planning Policy Committee annually. The final accounts are subject to audit by an external auditor approved by the Auditor General for Wales. The following provides an overview of the actual costs relating to the process of preparing the Joint Local Development Plan.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Actual process costs (£)</b>	<b>Income (£)</b>	<b>Net costs (£)</b>
2011 – 2012	59,122	(7,426)	51,696
2012 – 2013	178,702	0	178,702
2013 – 2014	152,167	(364)	151,803
2014 – 2015	169,480	(157,272)	12,208
2015 – 2016	78,050	(4,620)	73,430
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>637,521</b>	<b>(169,682)</b>	<b>467,839</b>

It is reasonable to assume that each Authority would have had to spend the equivalent amount of money to prepare individual Local Development Plans. On this basis, each Authority has potentially saved in the region of £318,760 **to date** (i.e. £637,521/ 2) by preparing a Joint Local Development Plan. This broadly aligns with the level of savings anticipated at the start of the process. The burden on each Authority has also been reduced as a result of income, which includes a relatively substantial 'one off' grant from Welsh Government for research work and payment for work undertaken in relation to the Wylfa Newydd project under the Planning Performance Agreement.

Actual costs for 2016 – 2017 are anticipated to be higher than previous years on the basis that the costs of the Public Examination will have to be covered by the Councils. This may amount to approximately £500,000 in total. Apart from the Wyla Newydd, the issues and matters raised at the Examination Hearings were common to both Councils. Again, it is reasonable to assume that a single Examination of a Joint Local Development Plan presents a clear financial benefit for both Councils, as the Inspector's fees and all other costs associated with an examination, e.g. Programme Officer, are shared on a 50:50 basis.



## **Annex DD - Summary of Stakeholder Feedback**

### **a) What are the main achievements of the Joint Planning Policy Unit?**

- i. Good progress on the JLDP (i.e. collation of robust evidence base, preparation of consultation documents etc.) and reaching the examination stage of the preparation process.
- ii. Adherence to the JLDP [Delivery Agreement's](#) tight timetable and progressing the JLDP through the governance arrangements of both Authorities without disagreement or conflict.
- iii. Preparation of a robust planning policy framework for North West Wales (together with a strong baseline) to provide consistency for developers and decision makers.
- iv. The collaborative/ joint working arrangements are innovative, ground breaking and unique in Wales.
- v. Successful establishment and integration of the Unit - with little support or assistance from either Authority.
- vi. Clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities. Successful integration of staff and technology leading to the sharing and development of new/ broader skills.
- vii. Excellent service provided to all the Unit's customers (both internally and externally). Good working relationships developed and maintained across Council Departments and Services.
- viii. Friendly and approachable staff who provide clear and consistent guidance and support.
- ix. Effective consideration of cross boundary (and potentially contentious) issues e.g. Wylfa Newydd.
- x. The sharing of specialist/ expert capacity to ensure the Authorities have access to professional planning policy advice.
- xi. The provision of strong, professional and appropriate support to both Authority's Planning Services (and other Service areas such Housing and Economic Development).
- xii. Support for, and input into, various partnerships and groups e.g. Housing Partnerships etc.
- xiii. High level of computer literacy and technical competence i.e. mapping software.
- xiv. The development of planning policies to safeguard the Welsh language.
- xv. Completion of the annual housing surveys.
- xvi. Financial savings for both Authorities as a result of the collaborative working.

### **b) Which aspects of the Joint Planning Policy work well?**

- I. Effective collaboration and co-operation between the JPPU and both Authorities
- II. The successful integration of officers, working practices and systems ensuring a consistent approach to the Unit's work programme and tasks.
- III. The skills, experience and professionalism of all staff. The Unit is friendly, approachable and offers bilingual services.
- IV. Specialist expertise within the JPPU that can advise on specific issues.
- V. Consistency in terms of the advice given and the standard of information provided to service users.
- VI. A wider, regional consideration of planning policy issues, rather than a purely local focus.

## Official

- VII. The standard of pre-application advice which helps to shape planning applications (and also generate significant income for the respective Planning Services).
- VIII. Effective communication and engagement with Elected Members and communities.
- IX. The sharing of good practice (within the Unit, with both Authorities and with other partners).

### **c) Which aspects of the Joint Planning Policy Unit could be improved?**

- I. Need to improve awareness of the JPPU to ensure people have a better understanding of what activities it undertakes for both Authorities.
- II. The lack of regular contact with Officers from both Authorities means less opportunities for informal co-operation and closer working.
- III. More support from Senior Managers and Elected Members – especially when individuals express frustrations with the implications of planning policies and/or processes.
- IV. More engagement with both Council's Senior Leadership Teams to discuss strategic planning policy issues before any detailed work is undertaken.
- V. Certainty is required that the JPPU addresses Gwynedd and Anglesey issues fairly, equally and in a balanced manner.
- VI. More proactive engagement with stakeholders to ensure greater ownership and understanding of planning policy issues.
- VII. Need to encourage Services from both Authorities (e.g. Education) to take a greater interest in planning policy issues and the preparation of development plans.
- VIII. It should be easier for the general public to engage with Officers from the Unit. The profile of the Unit is too low in locations such as Llangefni, Pwllheli and Caernarfon.
- IX. Belief that the JPPU is isolated/ detached in the Town Hall in Bangor.
- X. Stronger engagement between the Unit and Development Management staff in both Authorities.
- XI. The perception of the Unit is poor within some Services. Officers should "hot desk" with officers from Gwynedd and Anglesey to promote the work of the Unit, as well as provide greater opportunities to meet with residents in their own communities.
- XII. The JPPU's inability to access IACC systems is a barrier to effective communication.
- XIII. Lack of recognition in IACC offices that JPPU staff work for the Authority i.e. having to sign into buildings and wear visitor badges.
- XIV. The JPPU must do more to create a positive climate to encourage economic development in Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- XV. The JPPU working arrangements should be expanded to include Planning specialist services so that there is greater variety and consistency in the advice provided.
- XVI. Improved use of project management techniques and processes.