

---

## DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 06.12.11

---

Present: Councillor Ioan Thomas (Chairman)

**Councillors:** O.P. Huws, Anne Ll. Jones, Charles W. Jones, Elin Walker Jones, Penri Jones, Keith Marshall, John W. Meredith and R.J. Wright; and Councillors John W. Jones and W. Roy Owen (Portfolio Leaders)

**Officers:** Iwan Trefor Jones (Corporate Director), Sioned E. Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department), Ann Owen (Strategic Policy Manager - Economy, Regeneration and Skills), Vera Jones (Senior Manager – Performance and Efficiency), Dylan Griffiths (Strategy and Development Manager), Caroline Roberts (Investment Manager), Anthony Williams (Performance Account Manager), Rhian Jones (Business Support Officer) and Gwyn Parry Williams (Committee Officer).

**Co-opted Member:** Dafydd Iwan, Chairman of the Gwynedd Economic Partnership

**Others invited to the meeting:** John Idris Jones, Head of Socio-Economic Development (North Wales), Magnox

**Apologies:** Councillors T.G. Ellis, Glyn Roberts, John P. Roberts, Owain Williams

### 1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Ioan Thomas declared a personal interest in the following items for the reasons noted -

- a) The Annual Report of the Gwynedd Economic Partnership as he was a member of the Partnership and Chairman of the Business Sub-group.
- b) Six Month Performance Monitoring Report 2011/12 and the indicator in relation to implementing the savings programme in the arts, archives and museums field as he was the Chairman of the Board of Galeri, Caernarfon.

The member was of the opinion that they were not prejudicial interests, and he did not withdraw from the meeting and therefore participated fully in the discussion on those relevant items.

### 2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 27 September, 2011, as a true record.

### 3. GREEN GWYNEDD AND THE LOW CARBON SECTOR (NUCLEAR ENERGY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY)

(a) Submitted – the report of the Head of Economy and Community Department on the Nuclear Safety Report following a Notice of Motion that had been submitted to the Council, and the Green Gwynedd Project Work Programme in order to take advantage and create new economic opportunities from the Wylfa B development and any other renewable energy developments in the north west of Wales.

- (b) The following matters were raised by members:-
- (i) The Chairman emphasised that he did not want to hold a discussion on the opinions of the members as to whether they were for or against Wylfa B, but rather to discuss the economic benefits for the area.
  - (ii) A member drew attention to references in the report towards “legacy ponds” and “silos”, and asked whether steps had been taken at Wylfa and Trawsfynydd in this direction.

In response, the Head of Socio-Economic Development (North Wales), Magnox notified the committee that the “legacy ponds” and the “silos” were the waste kept at Sellafield and that it was waste that dated back to the 50/60s, namely the early days of the nuclear programme. He referred to many incidents during that period where waste had been disposed of that had not been recorded. He noted that one of the major costs for the industry at the moment was to clear the legacy work at Sellafield. In the context of Trawsfynydd, there was no nuclear fuel on site, but there was medium and low level waste, and work had been undertaken to look at the safety studies and this work had identified some minor issues that could be addressed. He noted that the safety study was valid and acceptable. In relation to Wylfa, there was nuclear fuel in the reactors and the work undertaken by Magnox following the disaster in Japan had shown that this fuel was being stored in a safe manner. The safety studies had been revised in relation to the impact of earthquakes and flooding etc. The nuclear inspectorate requested for a study of the British sites to be held every ten years and the most recent study on Wylfa had been undertaken in 2004 when more than £60m had been spent in bringing the site up to modern standards at part of the safety study.

- (iii) A member referred to a comment in relation to publishing next year’s progress report in terms of implementing lessons in the United Kingdom and he asked what the timetable was for achieving the recommendations in the context of Wylfa B.

In response, the Head notified the committee that in the context of existing sites it was essential for every company which ran sites such as Wylfa and Trawsfynydd at the moment, to submit a comprehensive report by August 2012 as a response to the recommendations. In relation to the new Wylfa and the safety process, he noted that there were two types of design before the nuclear inspectorate and that they would both be studied in detail. Following the disaster in Japan, the inspectorate was eager to see how these designs were developing. When the detailed plan would be available, an interim permission of safety would be issued. He noted that there were two steps in the process of assessing safety and that the work was being undertaken at the moment. The lessons learnt from the Japan disaster were being used in building the safety case for the Wylfa site. It was anticipated that this work would be completed by 2014.

- (iv) In response to a member’s observation, the Head of Socio-Economic Development (North Wales), Magnox, acknowledged that the nuclear industry had been secretive in the past and poor at public engagement. He noted the importance of being open and transparent.
- (v) A member noted that the Gwynedd Economic Partnership’s viewpoint was that if Wylfa B was to be developed then economic benefits and employment should be secured for Gwynedd and north Wales.

- (vi) A member asked whether it would be possible to have details of the types of jobs that would become available in terms of construction and maintenance.

In response, the Head of Economy and Community Department informed the committee that the collaboration work with the Isle of Anglesey County Council included specific work streaming, and one of those work streams was to develop skills and to prepare the workforce for opportunities. She noted that there work was taking place at the moment to scope the type of skills needed and that the skills would depend on the type of technology used.

The Head of Socio-Economic Development (North Wales), Magnox, noted that it was anticipated that the building work would commence in 2015 and would continue for five or six years. Given the skills of the youth etc. it was important to be proactive at this stage in order to ensure that young unemployed people received opportunities for local apprenticeships. In relation to local companies, they were currently not prepared to employ apprentices due to the concern of funding those apprenticeships. It was intended to establish an apprenticeship company with Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils, Horizon and Coleg Menai with the aim of supporting young people in local apprenticeships. Once they would complete their apprenticeships they would have an opportunity to work with Wylfa or with a local company. It was important for this type of plan to be sufficiently funded.

- (vii) He noted that approximately 650 worked on site in Trawsfynydd at the moment and he asked whether or not it was likely that those workers would be transferred to Wylfa when the decommissioning work ended there.

In response, the Head notified the committee that it was anticipated that the current Wylfa would continue to generate electricity for approximately two or three more years and would then enter a period of disposing fuel from the site until 2016/2017 and the work of decommissioning the current Wylfa site would take place following this. Work would commence on the new Wylfa in 2015 and it was expected for the work on the Trawsfynydd site to end in 2016. Therefore the workers from Trawsfynydd could be transferred to work at the new Wylfa.

The Head of Economy and Community Department referred to a specific joint funded scheme called Shaping the Future, with Menter Môn leading the scheme. The aim of the plan was to work with the workforce at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa in order to see how they could be prepared for the opportunities of decommissioning Wylfa.

- (viii) The Corporate Director noted that it was of key importance to prepare children and young people for the opportunities that would arise in light of this development. This field was a substantial challenge for the area. There was a need to transform the experiences children and young people received within the education system and within schools across the county in order to ensure that they had the skills and experience in relevant subjects. In relation to preparing the area for this development, he noted that there were risks to the area if one large employer such as Wylfa came to the area and recruited young people in particular, it was essential to have an understanding of those implications on other companies and on the economy of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Conwy as perhaps many smaller companies in the area could lose their managers. He also noted that the north west Wales area could benefit from this development but that it could affect a number of smaller

companies in terms of recruiting young people and those with qualifications to the business sector.

In relation to skills in schools, the Head of Socio-Economic Development (North Wales), Magnox stated that north-west Wales would be looked at by working with Cynnal to seek to identify what needed to be done with the schools to prepare the curriculum for a low carbon industry. Consideration was given to primary school experiences and also secondary schools would be looked at in the future. For the schools of Anglesey and north Gwynedd, an engineering course had been established for young people aged 14-16 years old which was the equivalent of a GCSE course. In relation to risks for the area, it had been acknowledged that some companies would lose workers and through Prentis Menai it was sought to encourage those companies to employ apprentices now in order to strengthen small local companies in the future. In conjunction with the Welsh Government, they sought to assist the small companies to work with the nuclear industry.

- (ix) The Portfolio Leader – Economy and Community noted that the process of qualifying as a craft worker was quite a lengthy one. He was of the opinion that establishing the apprenticeship company was important to Gwynedd as it would be a way of providing young people with opportunities.
- (x) In response to a member's question regarding placing an emphasis on skills and the use of the Welsh language, the Head of Department notified the committee that as part of any development, developers were required to undertake an assessment of any potential impact on the Welsh language.

The Corporate Director noted that it was important for the relevant training to be available in Welsh and that there was a progression between the education available in the secondary schools and in further education.

- (xi) In relation to the Green Gwynedd Programme and in particular the clause which referred to identifying the potential of larger-scale renewable energy to the economy of Gwynedd and scoping and developing suitable opportunities, a member asked whether the reviews of possible sites would be undertaken in the context of hydro energy etc.

In response, the Head of Economy and Community Department notified the committee that a report was being considered at the moment to look across the county to identify areas where the greatest opportunities and benefits could be gained for Gwynedd from the energy sector. They looked at the current sites and also examples of new opportunities. She noted that Hydro was an excellent opportunity for Gwynedd. An initial inspection of all current energy generation activities had been undertaken and 23 currently operational hydro sites had been identified in the county. She also referred to additional schemes, e.g. the opportunity for a community hydro scheme in Abergwyngregyn that would bring substantial financial gain to the community on an annual basis. She noted that the purpose of the report was to scope and identify the main opportunities in order to prepare and plan with those who were responsible for the infrastructure.

- (xii) In response to a member's question regarding generating energy from the Menai Straits, the Head of Department notified the committee that this could be considered further.

**RESOLVED**

- a) To welcome the steps taken to investigate the safety of the nuclear industry following the impact of the Fukushima earthquake on the nuclear industry in Japan.**
- b) To especially welcome the proposal to implement a series of steps to make the UK nuclear industry safer.**
- c) To receive regular reviews on the progress.**
- ch) To accept that suitable arrangements are in place to work with Isle of Anglesey County Council to take advantage of the economic benefits to the north-west Wales economy with the development of Wylfa B and Energy Island enterprises.**
- d) To accept that the Green Gwynedd Project Plan achieves the objectives.**