EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 10/10/19

Present: Councillor Paul Rowlinson (Chair)
Councillor Elwyn Jones (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Steve Collings, Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Judith Humphreys, Elin Walker Jones, Gareth Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Dewi Roberts, Elfed Roberts, Mair Rowlands and Gareth Williams.

Co-opted Member: Dilwyn Ellis Hughes (UCAC).

Ex-officio Member: Councillor Edgar Owen.

Officers present:

Vera Jones (Democratic and Language Services Manager) and Eirian Roberts (Democratic Services Officer).

Present for item 5 below:
Roland Evans (Culture and Communities Senior Manager)
Sian Pennant Jones (Marketing and Tourism Manager)

Present for item 6 below:
Llyr B. Jones (Senior Manager Economy and Community)

Present for item 7 below:
Councillor Cemlyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Education)
Garem Jackson (Head of Education)
Debbie A.W.Jones (Education Corporate Services Officer)

1.   APOLOGIES

Councillors: Freya Bentham, Aled Evans and Huw Wyn Jones.
Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales).
Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member for Economy) (who was deputising for the Leader of the Council at another meeting).

2.   DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3.   URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4.   MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 20 June 2019, as a true record.

5.   GWYNEDD PLAN: BENEFITING FROM TOURISM PROJECT

Presented - the report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, updating members on the Benefiting from Tourism project, that was part of the Gwynedd Plan. The committee was invited to scrutinise the implementation process for the project and to scrutinise the Tourism Framework for the future, when the time was right to do so.

The officers elaborated on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from members.

The Chair summarised the main observations made by members during the discussion as follows:-

- As part of the work, the benefits to the people of Gwynedd needed to be considered, as well as the flip side - especially the impact of too much tourism:-
    - on the Welsh language;
    - on parking arrangements;
    - the impact on local people etc, e.g. the increase in Airbnb accommodation;
    - the impact of extending the holiday season and the impact on caravan parks that could turn into additional villages and affect our services, planning procedures and the Welsh language.
  Officers noted their willingness to give a further presentation to this committee on this, including fleshing out some of the options, especially as a few were contentious.
- Hygiene was an obvious element that affected tourism and the Department was encouraged to consider this element further, and to continue to collaborate with Visit Wales, the Council's departments, and to try to identify solutions to these problems.
- A request was also made for the opportunity to gain greater clarity on the options, especially clarity on the business case per option, i.e. the administration cost, the financial benefits of this and benefits for businesses, and the benefits to the wider society.

6. REVIEW OF PWLLHELI HAFAN AND HARBOUR

Presented - the report of the Cabinet Member for Economy, giving members a brief update on the work of developing different options for the Pwllheli Hafan and Harbour.

The officer expanded on the content of the report, and also responded to questions/comments by the members.

In summary, the Chair stated that the committee could see that work was progressing. A full report would be presented to the next meeting and the work could be scrutinised at that time.

7. LANGUAGE CENTRES PILOT SCHEME

Presented - the report of the Cabinet Member for Education inviting the scrutiny committee to put forward ideas and suggestions that could contribute to the research that was to be carried out to measure the impact of implementing the pilot at one Language Centre, and to express their views on the way the impact of implementing the pilot should be measured at one Language Centre.

The Cabinet Member, the Head of Service and the officer elaborated on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from members.

The Chair summarised the main observations made by members during the discussion as follows:-

- The fact that the team acting on behalf of the Education Department was a multidisciplinary team was welcomed. It consisted of experts from the department and outside experts, but it was emphasised that the report on the conclusions of the research should be presented in the name of an outside expert, in order to ensure the objective element. The linguistic expertise within the Education Department was also welcomed, and that the research included a combination of quantitative and qualitative date.
- The methodology identified the need to know the background/baseline per child, and this was welcomed. It was accepted that it was necessary to measure against Level 2 attainment, but a fair way of measuring against the baseline had to be considered.
- It was crucial to obtain feedback from schools as this was key to the methodology, and the opinion of schools, the language centres, and the pupils and their parents was vital. There was also room to ensure the use in the long term of pupil tracking arrangements.
- The committee also emphasised the need to bear in mind that the ongoing improvement of standards had to be considered, not simply maintaining the standards.
- Members also noted the desire to be an ongoing part of the process, and they also wished to receive information about the cost of the work this year.
- It was also noted that the methodology needed to consider the longer term and the impact of the policy on the Council and our schools in the longer term.
- Concerns were raised about the timetable, and a clear message conveyed about the importance of doing the work correctly.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.40 pm

CHAIRMAN