
EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4/2/21

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

Councillors: Steve Collings, Aled Evans, Selwyn Griffiths, Judith Humphreys, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Huw Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dewi Owen, Rheinallt Puw, Dewi Roberts, Elfed Powell Roberts and Mair Rowlands.

Ex-officio Member: Councillor Edgar Wyn Owen

Co-opted Members: Colette Owen (The Catholic Church), Ruth Roe (Meirionnydd Parent/Governors' Representative), Karen Vaughan Jones (Dwyfor Parent/Teachers' Representative), Manon Williams (Arfon Parent/Teachers' Representative), Dilwyn Elis Hughes (UCAC) and Dylan Huw Jones (NASUWT).

Officers present:

Vera Jones (Democracy and Language Services Manager), Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Adviser) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 5a:

Councillor Cemlyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Education)
Garem Jackson (Head of Education)
Debbie Jones (Education Corporate Services Manager)
Ellen Rowlands (TRAC Manager)
Bethan Griffith (Education Ancillary Services Manager)
Gwern ap Rhisiart (Meirion/Dwyfor Area Education Officer)
Diane Jones (Arfon Area Education Officer)
Rhian Parry Jones (Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer)
Ffion Edwards Ellis (Assistant Head of ALN and Inclusion)

Present for item 5b:

Alwyn Jones (Assistant Director (Standards) GwE)
Sharon Vaughan (Core Leader - Secondary, GwE)
Catrin Fflur Roberts (Challenge Adviser - GwE)
Claire Rowlands (Core Leader - Secondary/Challenge Adviser – GwE)
Geraint Evans (Core Leader – Primary, GwE)

Present for item 6:

Councillor Cemlyn Williams (Cabinet Member for Education)
Garem Jackson (Head of Education)
Debbie Jones (Education Corporate Services Manager)

Present for item 7:

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Council Leader)
Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member – Economy and Community)
Roland Evans (Assistant Head of Culture, Economy and Community Department)
Sian Pennant Jones (Tourism, Marketing and Events Manager)

The following were welcomed to the meeting:-

- Councillor Rheinallt Puw, who had taken over the seat of Councillor Elin Walker Jones on the Committee, and Councillor Elin Walker Jones was thanked for her service

- Colette Owen, representing the Catholic Church
- Manon Williams, representing Arfon parents / governors
- Ruth Roe, representing Meirionnydd parents / governors
- Karen Vaughan Jones, representing Dwyfor parents / governors
- Dylan Huw Jones, representing NASUWT

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd was wished a speedy recovery following his recent ill-health.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd and Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared a personal interest in item 5 on the agenda for the reasons noted:-

- Councillor Selwyn Griffiths as his daughter-in-law led the TRAC Department.
- Karen Vaughan Jones as she was the parent of a child attending Ysgol Edern.

The members were not of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

The following members declared a personal interest in item 6 on the agenda for the reasons noted:-

- Councillor Dewi Roberts as his daughter worked for Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.
- Karen Vaughan Jones as she worked for Grŵp Llandrillo Menai.

The members were not of the opinion that they were prejudicial interests, and they did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 5 November 2020 as a true record.

5. THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT 2018-19 AND 2019-20; THE RESPONSE OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND GWE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC; THE WELL-BEING AND ATTAINMENT GAP AND BLENDED LEARNING

The Cabinet Member for Education and officers from the Education Department and GwE were welcomed to the meeting.

(A) EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19, 2019-20, THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE DEPARTMENT'S PRIORITIES

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Education:-

- Detailing the performance for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years;
- Summarising the Education Department's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic;
- Outlining the Education Department's Priorities for the 2020-21 academic year.

The Cabinet Member set out the context, thanking the headteachers and staff at the schools for all their hard work and their commitment during the pandemic, which had been made possible with the support of the Education Department, GwE, the governing bodies and the parents. He added that it was important to note, in the context of well-being, that there had been close collaboration with the Council's Children's Department also, not forgetting the way in which the majority of children and young people had coped with the situation.

The Head of Education Department reiterated these observations noting that the period had been an unprecedented challenge and the Department and the schools had had to respond very differently to ensure the continuation of education for children whilst also ensuring that appropriate attention was afforded to the well-being of learners and staff at the schools. He further noted:-

- That the Chief Inspector of Estyn's letter to Gwynedd Council's Chief Executive (sent separately to committee members) highlighted Estyn's positive opinion on the Department's response in supporting schools and referral units during the first lockdown and also from September onwards. He added that the response of the schools, with the support of the Department and GwE, was evident in the letter, and he thanked everyone from the bottom of his heart for the way they had coped with the changes to continue with children's education and well-being.
- That Covid had sought to impose restrictions on education, but that the children and young people and their resilience and enthusiasm towards the continuation of education had proved that education did not recognise any boundaries.
- This period had also seen the further strengthening of regional collaboration, which had occurred in several fields across the six north Wales authorities, and with GwE also.
- At all times, they had sought to simplify Welsh Government's guidance for schools to make it appropriate in the context of risk assessments, mitigation measures in light of Covid etc.
- Also, regular meetings had been held with the unions, locally and regionally, to update them on our plans, and the unions had agreed and supported the work of not only supporting the learners but also the education workforce.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations. During the discussion, the following observations were noted:-

- The Cabinet Member and the Head of Education Department's gratitude to headteachers, staff and school governors for their heroic response to the enormous challenge they were faced with was reiterated.
- The fact that so many chromebooks had been distributed to families without access to technology was welcomed.
- It was noted that it was heartening to see how much work had taken place, and that it was obvious from Estyn's letter and the Head of Education

Department's presentation and report that our partnership work was being recognised as a strength.

- It was noted that Estyn's letter also highlighted that the work in Gwynedd was pioneering throughout all of Wales, and that this was an important point to convey to the teachers.

In response to questions from members, it was noted:-

- In relation to distance learning, the schools were keeping an eye to see to what extent the children were involved with the school experience, and there were robust and thorough arrangements in place to ensure that schools offered regular guidance and encouragement to children who were experiencing difficulties, and their families. Also, the welfare officers had been supporting the schools through doorstep enquiries over the first lockdown period in an attempt to increase engagement with families. During the current lockdown, there had been fewer referrals to welfare officers, as the schools were able to see the children on screen, but the cases that were referred to them were ones that required more attention.
- We were likely to see some additional children entering the ALN category on the lower levels of need. The Carlam grant would target these children who had fallen behind, and who needed additional encouragement due to the lockdown.
- In terms of early intervention, it had been sought throughout the period to continue with the referral arrangements, the contact with schools and identifying children as soon as possible. Consequently, there had been no delay in terms of any statutory assessment procedures, etc. It had been seen during the autumn term that the increase in referrals was not as significant as expected, and it was believed that this was because of the contact with the schools during the spring and summer terms and the invitation for vulnerable children to attend school during lockdown.
- The Department had accepted a commission to coordinate inter-departmental and multi-agency work to ensure that we dealt with the well-being and attainment gap for all of our children and young people, including children with ALN needs and children who were open to inclusion packages, so that the engagement was appropriate and correct, and the best it could be. Three work streams had been identified in this field, and this included bringing together all the work that had taken place in education, the economy, children, public health and GwE, to see how the gap could be reduced further. The identified streams were the early years (as there was evidence that the greater the contribution from the Department and the schools to the younger children, the better they were able to benefit from their educational experiences when progressing through school), and the post-16 field, (to ensure that this time did not hinder their ability to proceed to the next steps of their career). Work had been commissioned to look at an attainment baseline to secure clear data to demonstrate the situation, and over the coming weeks the Department would coordinate the work of implementing a strong work programme to respond, even more, to these needs, to be able to report to the Supporting People's Well-being Board on the work the Council and its partners could do to keep an eye on the gap, and reduce it as much as possible.
- As a responsible employer, the Council was duty-bound to recognise that the period had put the workforce under immense stress, and to address this. Regional work had been undertaken to offer staff well-being sessions and

since the start of the lockdown, the Education Department, with the support of the Human Resources Department, had been pro-actively offering well-being sessions to all staff. There were systems in place to enable staff to report their concerns, and the workforce had responded very positively to the well-being sessions arranged for them. As staff had to work on a rota during last year's Easter holidays to ensure continuation of the childcare provision, it had been arranged for them to have a fortnight's holiday within a four-week window. Every supply teacher had been invited individually to contact the Department if they had lost employment due to the situation, and the Department had appropriate plans and procedures in place to compensate these people for the work they would have otherwise received under normal circumstances.

- In terms of IT, a system had been put in place to broker devices from schools during the initial lockdown. The Department had a stock of chromebooks in the primary sector, and some in the secondary. During the first wave, over 1,200 devices were distributed to learners, and this covered the primary and secondary cohorts. There were more desktop devices in the secondary sector, and more laptops in the primary sector, and the primary loaned to the secondary, in order to ensure that the devices were available to everyone who needed them. During this latest lockdown, there was greater focus on education (as opposed to well-being in the first lockdown) and this wave had been slightly easier for the Department. During the Summer term, as part of the Digital Strategy, 2,700 new chromebooks were distributed, which provided enough stock for the primary sector to distribute, with more stock available in due course to be shared with the secondary. The brokerage work was continuing and the numbers were increased by more than 300-400 during the last month.
- That the teachers needed the best possible devices and networks to be able to teach remotely, but this did not always work. This was why a digital learning strategy was needed. It was known before the pandemic that there were weaknesses, but the situation over the last year had made this even more apparent. The Department was innovative and had put the strategy in place, however it was frustrated that the emergence of Covid had delayed the availability of devices.
- In addition to the chromebooks that had been distributed already, more than 3,500 laptops had been ordered, one for every teacher in the county, and one for each Year 10 and Year 11 pupil in the county. There were 2,500 more chromebooks on the way also, along with more than 1,000 ipads.
- In terms of the different platforms, Hwb was central to the strategy. The teachers needed the flexibility to use the platform that in their opinion was best suited to the children, given their age, ability and IT skills. Hwb enabled them to that, but it did not restrict teachers to use one software over another. Hwb was continuously evolving also. Therefore, the schools were supported to use the software available on Hwb, and not to divert from this.
- That Estyn's national report had noted that the partnerships across north Wales were very strong. It was not appropriate to make comparisons with the rest of Wales, but there was enough in the report that to paint quite a clear picture.

At the end of the questioning, the Head of Education noted his wish to draw attention to the report regarding the Welsh language in the report. He noted that:-

- The cameo from the Estyn Thematic Report on the Local Authority's work to support latecomers had highlighted how the Authority had succeeded in working with GwE and the language centres staff to create alternative provision during this period, and to reach more children.
- That questions had arisen lately regarding to what extent non-Welsh speaking parents could support their children. The Arfon Education Officer and the Gwynedd Secondary Education Officer had been in a regional meeting with GwE Officers recently where this had been raised, and consequently, a decision was made to pool the best practice across the north Wales counties and put together a package to support non-Welsh speaking carers to do their best to support the education of their children.

(B) GWE'S WORK PROGRAMME AND SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Submitted - the report of the GwE Core Leaders detailing how the regional consortium, in partnership with Local Authorities, had developed and adapted to support schools during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The members received a detailed slides presentation from GwE officers. They provided details on:-

- The content of the main report
- Their work to support the Welsh language
- The resources on GwE's Support Centre
- Learning resources and remote teaching
- Digital learning
- Blended learning
- Accelerated Learning
- School to School resources library
- Professional learning opportunities
- What had happened in terms of the local primary, secondary and specialist sectors
- The next steps

The Chair thanked everyone for the comprehensive report, which presented a lot of information about GwE's work to support the schools that had had to adapt fully during the last year.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations. During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

- It was noted that the report had provided a clear picture to members on GwE's recent work of supporting schools, and it was recommended that the report should be forwarded to all Council members.

In response to questions from members, it was noted:-

- It was accepted that there were supporting and monitoring aspects to GwE's work. Discussions had been held with the headteachers in terms of their provision, but obviously it had been a greater challenge to evaluate the quality of what had been happening, because of the circumstances. The work programme for the next two terms would address this, and it was hoped that

this could be done jointly with the schools, to assess the quality of the provision and provide them with tailored support. This had been agreed jointly between the six directors in north Wales in terms of the way forward.

- It was agreed that the situation was very frustrating for some parents, especially if they were not involved in education. There had been especially outstanding examples of the guidelines provided to parents by schools and GwE had also sought to support this by formulating provision and general guidelines for the schools to use and adapt as they wished.

RESOLVED to accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

6. POST-16 EDUCATION INFORMAL ENGAGEMENT

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Education detailing the informal engagement process with stakeholders on Post-16 Education in Arfon.

The Cabinet Member set out the context explaining that his intention was for the discussion to be opened to the public. If there had been any allegations made in the past regarding decisions having already been made, he was eager for the Council to go out with a clean slate, and that the meetings should be transparent, open, objective and also possibly innovative. He welcomed the fact that the discussion had started in Arfon, and he welcomed the ideas that had come to hand. Some schools had been more involved in the discussion than others, and there was a responsibility to ensure that every school was participating. He referred specifically to the mature input of the pupils of Ysgol Tryfan and Ysgol Brynrefail at one meeting, which had left quite an impression on him. He added that historically, provision had been fragmented, and there was an opportunity now to seek consistency across the county, and secure the best provision in the interest of the pupils.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations. It was noted that there was concern that any changes could weaken the Welsh language, and there was an appetite to improve learning through the medium of Welsh because of the current weaknesses.

In response to questions from members, it was noted:-

- That the Cabinet's request was for the service to look at the provision in Arfon in the first instance. It was emphasised that there was a wish to build on the apparent strengths of the post-16 system and that the discussion was currently focused on Arfon schools. The informal meetings had been very interesting, and the discussions had been mature on many options, ranging from minor changes to the existing system to a sixth form centre for all pupils. It was emphasised that the Department did not have any specific plans at the moment, and that the responses needed to be analysed before reporting to the Cabinet. It was added that the evidence demonstrated clearly that standards were not consistent across Arfon schools. There were inconsistencies within individual schools as well, e.g. a few subjects or fields were not performing as well in some schools, and there was a wish to strengthen this. Intentionally, at the Cabinet's request, no options had been proposed, as the aim was to see what the public thought were the best options. Some good proposals had been received, and the Department was processing the responses before going back to Cabinet with a number of ideas that merited further discussions.
- It was noted that the quality of the education was the main priority that had been highlighted in the sessions, along with the importance of ensuring that this experience would be available to all learners. Other apparent themes included the

Welsh language and Welsh medium and bilingual education provision. Also, in light of this period, there had been significant discussions on technology. The general opinion was expressed that face-to-face learning was the best educational experience any learner could get, but that the digital learning element could support that face-to-face learning.

- We had a robust system in terms of the Welsh language in Gwynedd, however there was a perception among a cohort of learners and their parents that the Welsh language was a disadvantage as a medium for learning STEM subjects, despite there being no evidence to support this. If anything, the truth was to the contrary, and the Department was eager to have the Welsh language as a central principle throughout the discussions. It was acknowledged that there were inconsistencies in Gwynedd in terms of academic courses and partnership vocational courses that were currently being offered, and it was believed there were deficiencies in terms of the Welsh language also, but the review would ensure that we had an appropriate provision for our learners in their chosen language, be that Welsh or English. It was added that the Department was very eager to promote a prominent place for the Welsh language in the post-16, along with the quality and consistency of the quality of education and experiences the children were receiving.
- It was acknowledged there was doubt as to whether the Department was engaging with a clean slate, but it was emphasised that the intention of the review as a whole was to look at the provision throughout all of Gwynedd, to learn lessons from what had happened in Meirionnydd and Dwyfor, and to strengthen the provision. This had been done at the Cabinet's request as the power of the Education Authority and the Council was specifically over those schools where the sixth form was located, namely in Arfon, and the intention was to look to strengthen that provision first. In light of the review, it was intended to look at any lessons learned, because, although the Authority was not directly responsible for tertiary provision, we had a moral responsibility to achieve everything we could for every learner in Gwynedd. The Government had authorised spending £18 million in the field, with a substantial portion of this money coming from investment from Gwynedd Council through an asset management plant. It was important that this money was being spent, and no matter what the solution, it was considered that it would be possible to make effective use of the money to strengthen the provision.
- That it was difficult to say with certainty what the timetable of the process would be until there was confirmation on the Welsh Government Election in May. Should there be no election, it was possible that a report could be submitted to the Cabinet around April with the findings of the engagement process, however otherwise, the timetable would slip due to the pre-election period.

RESOLVED to accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

7. DEVELOPING THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND TOURISM TAX

The Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community and the officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Economy and Community inviting the committee to scrutinise the steps taken thus far to formulate the draft visitor economy principles and the steps proposed to draw up the Gwynedd Sustainable Visit Economy Plan 2030.

The Cabinet Member set out the context by noting that the visitor economy was an important part of the county's economy, with a large number being employed in the industry

directly and indirectly. However, as Covid struck the industry, it had become apparent that the Council had to revisit its principles in the field. There had been a significant change in the way we perceived the visitor economy. Previously, everyone had been viewing the visitor as central to any visitor economy, by now however, the opinion was that the residents of Gwynedd should be central to any principles around the visitor economy, and this had been at the forefront of developing the principles. If the people of Gwynedd saw the benefit and that the visitor economy was acceptable to them, this then fed through to the visitor's experience. It was noted that a workshop had been arranged for all Gwynedd councillors on 2 March, 2021 to submit the draft principles, with the intention of submitting them to the Cabinet before the end of March to be adopted in draft form to consult on them with the people of Gwynedd.

The Leader agreed that developing these principles was a significant change of direction for the Council. We saw last year what 'unsustainable' tourism was, and this was the type of tourism that damaged the environment, and had a bad impact on communities. Stating that we were setting a new direction was very important. It was believed that the industry was also seeing the need to reflect our society much better, and the principles formed the basis for the type of support and direction the Council had given the industry. Meetings with the industry had demonstrated that tourism was an important industry for our people, although there was a perception that it was owned by others. The pandemic had demonstrated that rural areas such as Gwynedd were by now very nearly fully reliant on tourism, and this was a motivation to continue with the work of seeking to create a much more varied economy. Although Gwynedd was getting £1.3 billion through the industry, Gwynedd's household income was among the lowest in the country, and there was a need to develop a hospitality industry that provided good careers and good employment. Examples of this already existed, and there was a need to work to improve the quality of the industry in Wales.

The Leader then referred to a letter of response from the National Park to the Council's decision to urgently research the possibility of charging visitors who visited parts of the park. He noted that the letter stated that it would be entirely impossible to charge people for going to Snowdon's summit, but that this did not prevent us from looking at other ways of generating income. The Park's plan to create a transport system in the areas of Snowdon and Ogwen was an example of this, and there was an opportunity here, not only to create a better environment, but also to create a low carbon public transport system that would serve local people as well as visitors. It was very much hoped, following the members' workshop, that it would be possible to hold an open conference to hold a discussion on all of these matters, and to elevate some of the questions that arose.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and make observations. During the discussion, the following observations were noted:

- That the sub-principle of *'Maintaining and Respecting our Environment'* suggested that things would be kept as they were, rather than being developed and improved.
- There was a need to educate visitors to respect our communities and the officers were thanked for their efforts in this field.
- It was possible to overreact to the situation as the number of visitors to the area would fall once the pandemic was over.
- Not everyone was looking forward to seeing tourism return to the area after the lockdown period, and by sending the message out asking people to respect the area, they should also seek to change the mind-set of local people so that they understood that Gwynedd's economy was reliant on tourism.
- That tourism was intertwined with all communities in Gwynedd, and not in the main holiday destinations only.
- The idea of looking at examples of successful sustainable tourism in other countries, and to tailor them for Gwynedd's communities was welcomed.

- There was a need to be innovative to benefit from tourism.
- There was a need to find a balance that was fair to everyone, but also put the people of Gwynedd first.
- There was a need to understand what was meant by 'unsustainable' tourism and there was a danger that what was currently taking place would spoil our communities.
- There was a need to ensure work that paid well in the field of tourism in Gwynedd in order for local people to remain in their communities.
- There was concern that parts of the county would face more difficulties this summer as people who were used to going overseas could decide to come here for their holiday.
- There was a need to force motor home owners to stay in specific sites, rather than parking on the roadsides.

In response to the observations and questions from members, it was noted:

- The principles, by adopting them, would be principles for the whole Council. A significant number of visitors had visited parts of Gwynedd last summer, and there had been very good collaboration across the entire Council to prepare for what could happen again this summer.
- It was agreed that the use of the word '*Maintain*' in the sub-principle '*Maintain and Respect our Environment*' suggested that things were perfect as they were, and there was a need to consider the wording in the report that would go before the Cabinet. It was also noted that there would be an opportunity to make this kind of observation at the members' workshop and during the consultation in due course.
- That it was intended to allocated some time at the start of the members' workshop to identify the main matters that arose last year and to explain how the Environment, Highways and Municipal and Economy and Community Departments, along with different agencies, intended to respond to that for the forthcoming season in terms of matters such as illegal parking, motor homes, litter, beach management, destination management in general and how to facilitate access and the flow of people within destinations, etc. It was further noted that work had been completed last summer in twenty destinations in terms of securing arrangements for distancing, signage and ensuring that local residents and visitors respected the regulations, and it was intended to build on this work for the coming season. Work was also taking place between departments to plan ahead and bids had been submitted to the Government for additional funding to support the work. It was intended to send out messages of safe enjoyment of the area for the season ahead and to encourage responsible behaviour. It was explained there had been no work to promote the area last year, rather, there had been a focus on working with the Police, the National Park and the Health Board in terms of responsible behaviour and responsible destination. It was intended to build on this this season and carry out significant work on changes to the Snowdonia Mountains and Coast website and use it as a platform to share information. There was also further work afoot by the Maritime Service in terms of responsible behaviour messages along the coast, in light of several cases of difficulties in some locations last summer. There was also work taking place to share information with the private sector to highlight matters in terms of regulations and grants and sharing good practice.
- This Council did not contribute to North Wales Tourism. It was funded by its members, but a large number of those members came from Gwynedd.
- It was agreed that we had to bring the communities with us, and as an example of this, reference was made to Dolan, a joint project between Dyffryn Nantlle, Dyffryn

Ogwen and Blaenau Ffestiniog, looking at the benefit that tourism brought to the community. Also, it was considered that developing the relationship between some of the main attractions and their local communities was a way of getting the communities to see the possible benefits. Consideration was also given to the possibility of formulating a community and business ambassadors scheme, as a way of making the people of Gwynedd understand what was exceptional about our area, as a means for them to convey these aspects to the visitors, as well as having an understanding of them themselves.

- There was recognition that the STEAM model (Scarborough Tourism Economic Assessment Model) was not perfect, but this was the model used by the Government to allocate additional grant funding to the Council each year based on the increased population during the summer months. It was also used by several councils in Britain, and internationally, and despite its faults, it offered an element of consistency as so many used it. The model looked at the visitor numbers and the value trends, but there may be a need to look at a different measure, and there was recognition that there was a need to review how this worked. It was added that the initial projections for 2019/20 showed a reduction of 50%-60% in economic benefits and the visitor numbers, although obviously the numbers that had visited the area over summer months was high, with fewer going overseas due to the pandemic. In terms of moving forward, it was important to expand the series of measures to include additional performance measures that would assist in realising the vision of placing the residents of Gwynedd at the centre.
- That the process of developing the principles recognised the fact that tourism was embedded in all parts of life in Gwynedd, and it was also hoped to incorporate the principles of the regeneration framework that would be developed for Gwynedd. It was further noted, in terms of good practice across the world, that the Department was about to commission Dr Terry Stevens, an Expert in Sustainable Destinations and Tourism to advise whether the principles were fully in sync with sustainable tourism and which measures could be developed to measure the success of those principles in future. He would also advise the Department on good practice in other areas, the visiting trends over the next ten years, and how to communicate with developing markets. It was added that Dr Stevens could be invited to address the conference in March on what was happening internationally in the field of tourism.
- That discussions were taking place between the Environment and the Highways and Municipal Departments and the National Park to seek to identify the best means of responding to the problems that were arising with motor homes. There were short-term answers, such as communicating the message and erecting signs and height restrictions in car parks along with more long-term solutions, such as introducing bylaws and enforcement. It was intended to share the matters and the implementation responsibilities for the next season, and the Environment Department would be leading on this element, with input from the Economy Department.

RESOLVED to accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 3.00pm.

CHAIR