
JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE 28/05/21

Present:

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Cllr Richard Dew, Cllr John Griffith, Cllr Kenneth P Hughes, Cllr John Arwel Roberts, Cllr Robin Williams

Gwynedd Council

Cllr Anne Lloyd Jones, Cllr Gareth Griffith, Cllr John Pughe Roberts, Cllr Paul Rowlinson, Cllr Gareth Roberts, Cllr Berwyn Parry, Jones Cllr Owain Williams

Officers:

Robyn Jones Legal Services Manager (IACC), Dewi Francis Jones Chief Planning Officer (IACC), Gareth Jones (Assistant Head, Environment GC) Rebeca Jones (Planning Policy Manager (JPPS), Heledd Jones (Team Leader - (JPPS) and Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager (GC)

1. ELECT CHAIR

Cllr Richard Dew was elected as Chair of the Joint Planning Policy Committee for the period 2021 - 2022

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR

Cllr Gareth Griffith was elected as Vice-chair of the Joint Planning Policy Committee for the period 2021 - 2022.

3. APOLOGIES

None to note

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note

5. URGENT BUSINESS

No urgent items were received.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the Committee held on 12 March 2021 were accepted as a true record.

7. THE JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE'S FINAL ACCOUNTS

A report was presented by Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager), which responded to a statutory requirement under Section 12 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, to report specifically on the annual statement of accounts of the Joint Planning Policy Committee. As the turnover of the Service is lower than £2.5m, it is considered to be a smaller Local Government Body, and as such is required to complete an accounts statement return provided by Audit Wales to meet the statutory requirements.

Reference was made to Appendix 1 that included the out-turn report and explained the final position of the Service's revenue income and expenditure for 2020/21. It was highlighted that the budget could be seen in the first column, with the expenditure in the second column. The overspend or underspend was shown in the third column. It was noted that the expenditure for 2020/21 was £49,239 lower than the available budget, and therefore the required contribution from Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils could be reduced to £218,326 each, which was a reduction of over £24,600 compared to the budget. It was further noted that the reserve fund would not need to be used.

In examining the figures per heading in detail, the impact of Covid-19 and the lockdown was evident on the figure and the various headings within the budget, as staff worked from home, which was a consistent picture across the Councils.

It was noted that the accounts had already been sent to the attention of the External Auditors, Audit Wales. An amended version would only be presented to the Committee on 24 October 2021 if there was a need to make any amendments following the audit. The Joint Planning Policy Committee was asked to accept and approve the accounts for 2020/21, and the Chair was asked to sign the electronic form on page 12.

Matters Raised

- The monthly overspend of £48,000 was questioned, as it appeared to be exceptionally high.
- It was noted that the figures appeared to be reasonable, and that the financial impact and implications were obvious, namely the fact that staff were working from home, and that office costs and travelling costs were reduced. Furthermore it was noted that good use had been made of the Service's resources (staff), in order to maintain specific work tasks.
- It was noted that the balance appeared to be high, and the reason for this was questioned.
- It was acknowledged that significant expenditure would be required to undertake the Plan review, and it was asked whether consideration should be given to increasing the budget.
- A question was asked about why the language of communication on the Annual Return had been chosen as English. 3 Response
- It was confirmed that the £49,000 was an underspend over the year (not an overspend), and as a result, the financial contributions from both authorities had been lower.
- The observation was noted.
- It was explained that the balance had accrued over the years, and that this was one reason why it appeared to be high. Nevertheless, these funds were a reserve that could contribute to future expenditure. This was specifically relevant when considering the budget that would be necessary to review the Plan, and also when considering the savings that the Service needed to find.
- It was confirmed that the existing budget would not be sufficient to fund the review of the Plan, and that both authorities would have to find adequate funding

to contribute financially to the necessary budget.

- The Councillor was thanked for drawing attention to the chosen language, and it was confirmed that it was an error that would be corrected, as the correspondence between the Council and Audit Wales was conducted in Welsh.

Decision

The 'Revenue Income and Expenditure Account 2020/21 and the 'Annual Return' for the year ending 31 March 2021 were accepted and approved. The Chair agreed to sign the accounts electronically, confirming that they had been approved by the Joint Planning Policy Committee.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 11.00 am

CHAIRMAN