



JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Joint Planning Policy Committee

10:30 17 June 2022

Virtual Meeting

Present:

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Cllr Neville Evans
Cllr John Ifan Jones
Cllr Dafydd Roberts
Cllr Ken Taylor
Cllr Robin Williams

Gwynedd Council

Cllr Anne Lloyd Jones
Cllr Gruffydd Williams
Cllr Paul Rowlinson
Cllr Dafydd Meurig
Cllr Rhys Tudur
Cllr Dafydd Davies

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)
Bob Thomas	Team Leader (JPPS)
Ffion Madog Evans	Senior Finance Manager (GC)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Cllr Robin Williams was elected as Chair of the Joint Planning Policy Committee for the period 2022-2023.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Cllr Dafydd Meurig was elected as Vice-chair of the Joint Planning Policy Committee for the period 2022-2023.

3. APOLOGIES

Cllr June Jones

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

None to note.

5. URGENT ITEMS

No urgent items were received.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the Committee held on 4 February 2022 were accepted as a true record.

7. FINAL ACCOUNTS FOR JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

A report was presented by Ffion Madog Evans (Senior Finance Manager), that responded to a statutory requirement under Section 12 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, to report on the annual statement of accounts for the Joint Planning Policy Service. As the Service's turnover was less than 2.5m, it was regarded as a smaller Local Government body, bearing this in mind there was a requirement to complete a statement of accounts form provided by Audit Wales to meet the statutory requirements. It was noted that Gwynedd Council was the Lead Authority with the responsibility of undertaking the responsibility of calculating, reporting and auditing the accounts.

It was highlighted that the arrangements of reporting on accounts follows a tight timetable - with a requirement that this is completed before the end of May. As it was the election year, this was not possible. Although the accounts had been completed, authorised by the Head of Finance and presented to the Auditors before the end of May, this was the first opportunity to report to the Committee.

Reference was made to Appendix 1 which included the out-turn report and explained the final position of the Service's income and revenue expenditure for 2021/22. It was highlighted that the budget could be seen in the first column with the expenditure in the second, then it was possible to audit the over-expenditure or under-expenditure in the third column. It was noted that the expenditure for 2021/22 was £40,185 less than the budget available, and therefore it was possible to reduce the required contribution for Gwynedd and Anglesey Councils to £223,000 instead of £243,000 as was determined in the budget, which was a reduction of £20,000 on the original budget.

Looking in greater detail at some of the expenditure headings, the main points to be noted were:

- That there was an over-expenditure of £10,755 on wages due to the increase of 1.75% in inflation which was finalised late in the financial year.
- Transport - the picture in 2021/22 was consistent with the picture in 2020/21, with the impact of Covid obvious in terms of less travelling and more virtual meetings.
- A small expenditure also on costs of running the Service compared to the budget.
- Significant under-expenditure associated with the process of preparing the plan.
- Savings target of £10,000 which remains unrealised for some years now. Need to consider trying to cancel it from the savings, e.g. on transport costs, to get rid of the savings target.

It was noted that the accounts had previously been sent to the attention of External Auditors, Wales Audit Office. Only if there were changes following that audit would the accounts be re-submitted to the attention of the Committee for approval.

The Joint Planning Policy Committee was asked to accept and approve the accounts for 2021/22 and that the Chair signs the electronic form on page 15 of the pack.

Matters Raised

- Appears that there was a significant amount in reserve. If there was no need for as much money in reserve, was it possible to transfer that money to other Departments where it was really needed.
- The underspend linked to the process of preparing the Plan was questioned and it was asked if that was because there was an expectation that the process of Reviewing the Plan would have started by now.
- Also with the money in reserve, if the Councils decided to prepare Plans separately would the money in reserve be split between the Councils.
- The benefit of holding virtual meetings was noted in terms of the Councillors' time and the financial savings.

Response

- It was confirmed that the funds had accumulated over the years of under-expenditure. Half was Anglesey's fund and half was Gwynedd's. The accounts changed over the years and that was often based on the step that was reached in association with preparing the Plan. The costs at the end of the process of preparing the Plan were higher especially during a period of holding a public Inquiry. Further, recently use had been made of the Service's internal expertise rather than commissioning a piece of external work. Need to keep in mind there would be additional costs associated with the process of creating a new Plan.
- In terms of the under-expenditure for last year, it was important to have the Finance in reserve in order to respond to needs and possibly commission external work if needed.
- It was confirmed that this would be the arrangement.
- The observation was noted.

Decision

The 'Revenue Income and Expenditure Account 2021/22' and the 'Annual Return' for the year ending 31 March 2022 were accepted and approved. The Chairman agreed to sign the accounts electronically, confirming that they had been approved by the Joint Planning Policy Committee.

End