

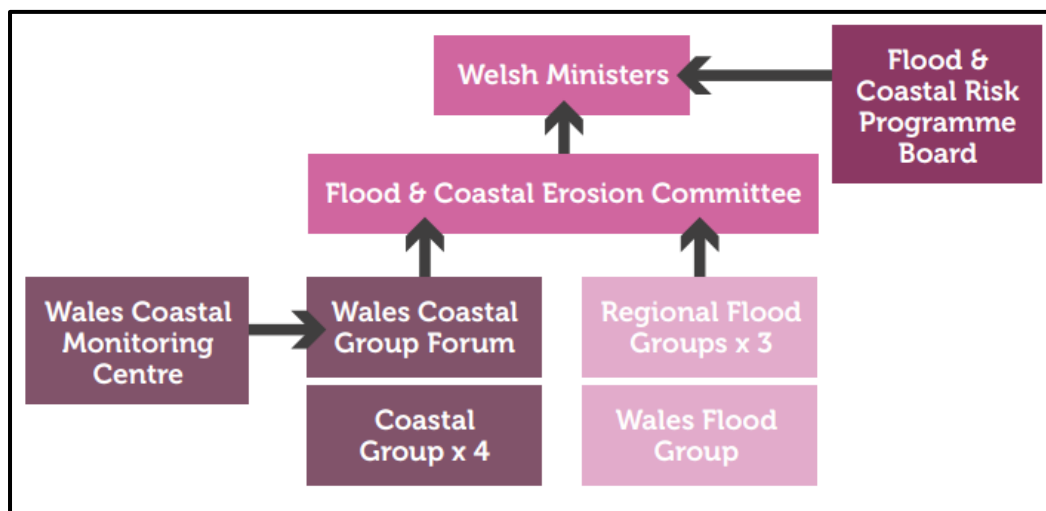
CYNGOR GWYNEDD – Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Collaboration Plan Approval (Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones
Relevant Officer:	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC
Date of Meeting:	20 February, 2024

1.	DECISION SOUGHT
1.1	Give Gwynedd approval to continue to work with and devote resources to the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre.
1.2	Delegation of authority to the Head of the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department in consultation with the Head of the Legal Department to approve the Collaboration Agreement.
2.	THE REASON WHY THE CABINET MUST MAKE THE DECISION
2.1	The purpose of this report is to receive confirmation of Gwynedd's contribution as a Board Member of the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre, to present the Collaboration Agreement drawn up by the Consortium and to formally accept it.
3.	INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE
3.1	Improving cohesion and consistency in coastal monitoring and data collection underpins decisions on flood risk management and coastal erosion in Wales and is a priority of the National Flood and Erosion Risk Management Strategy in Wales.
3.2	In 2018, the go-ahead was received from the Welsh Government to re-establish the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre (WCMC). The main purpose of the Centre is to monitor the physical change of the Welsh coast and therefore to produce a standard and cost effective coastal monitoring programme on behalf of the Welsh coastal Local Authorities. In addition, the centre is responsible for producing evidence that underpins flood and coastal erosion risk management decisions.
3.3	The WCMC is funded entirely by the Welsh Government. It provides key information in monitoring physical changes on the entire Welsh coast. This is done by dividing the coastline into work packages and ensuring that recurring surveys are carried out by tendering the work to contractors/surveying companies, and then analysing the results. Through Gwynedd Consultancy (YGC), Gwynedd is one of the these contractors.

3.4	Coastal Local Authorities are defined as Risk Management Authorities with statutory functions according to the Flood and Water Management Act (2010). These responsibilities include inspecting and maintaining coastal defences, and monitoring beach levels and the pattern of any changes that are essential to determine the threat level to our defences over time.
3.5	WCMC staff are employed by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The Centre is managed by a board of three coastal Local Authorities (Vale of Glamorgan, Conwy and Gwynedd) as well as the Welsh Local Government Association. As part of the board leading WCMC, Gwynedd Council contributes and influences its strategic direction on behalf of all Welsh coastal Local Authorities within a national regime (see Figure 1)

Figure 1.



3.6	Those organisations have been working together since 2019 and wish to formalise this relationship to ensure continuity of monitoring services. The aim is to establish and improve a national network of constant coastal monitoring to improve strategic decision making and avoid assumptions and uncertainties.
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4.	THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION
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4.1	Gwynedd's coastline covers 180 miles, with around 15 miles protected by structures owned by the Council. These defences are primarily located to protect our communities, and their age and condition vary widely from location to location. Reliable coastal data is vital for the Council to be able to recognise long-term patterns and prepare to protect our communities for the future.
4.2	YGC as a contractor to WCMC provides staff to carry out the coastal surveys within Gwynedd, and also assists in Ceredigion and Anglesey as resources allow. This generates income of approximately £35k annually and also improves the skills of YGC staff, who can then use those skills on other projects on behalf of the Council. YGC has also assisted WCMC to invest in appropriate inspection equipment which is also available for work programmes except for coastal monitoring.
4.3	Maintaining this income stream provides a solid basis to enable YGC to extend surveying capacity into the future, not only on our coast but generally as an integral part of project development needs wherever they are.

4.4	If the agreement is approved, YGC will not be forced to compete for the work.
4.5	By contributing to the management of WCMC Gwynedd Council demonstrates an ambition to be at the forefront of coastal management in Wales, for the benefit of all Gwynedd residents.
4.6	It was the legal teams of all Local Authorities who started the work of drafting the WCMC board agreement. Over time, however, it became clear that it would be better to have an independent, external legal position in formulating the text of the agreement. Due to Covid, there was a delay before the final version was presented to the Local Authorities. Although there is little risk associated with co-operating with other like-minded Local Authorities, it is now necessary to formalise the agreement in order to comply with each Authority's contract procurement rules. The Collaboration Agreement was drawn up on behalf of the parties and Gwynedd Council is now seeking approval to sign that agreement.
5.	NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE
5.1	Remain a WCMC Board Member, confirm Gwynedd Council's acceptance of the collaboration agreement and delegate authority to the Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department in consultation with the Head of Legal Department to approve any future changes in the agreement on behalf of the Council.
6.	VIEWS OF STATUTORY OFFICERS
	<p>Chief Finance Officer:</p> <p>I am satisfied that the decision sought will not create a commitment for additional resources – where there is reference in the decision sought to devoting resources, this refers to the service's current resources. I welcome the intention to formalise the arrangements, as outlined in the report.</p> <p>Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>I am satisfied with the propriety of the recommendation.</p>