ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

This statement meets the requirement to produce a Statement of Internal Control pursuant to Section 5 of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulation 2014.

Part 1: SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council agreed on 15 June 2010 to establish a formal joint working arrangement for the provision of the Planning Policy Service for both Authorities. It was agreed that the Joint Planning Policy Committee would be formed as a formal cross boundary decision making body.

The Joint Planning Policy Committee is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Joint Planning Policy Committee is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk and adequate and effective financial management.

Part 2: THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Joint Planning Policy Committee is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authorities that are part of the Joint Planning Policy Committee to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Joint Planning Policy Committee's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework described above has been in place at the Joint Planning Policy Committee for the year ended 31 March 2015 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

Part 3: THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

3.1 Membership

The Joint Planning Policy Committee has been established in accordance with requirements set out in the Local Government Act 1972 under section 101, section 102(1) (b) (power for two or more authorities to appoint a joint committee), section 103 (expenses incurred by a joint committee defrayed between the authorities), section 104 (disqualification for membership of a joint committee as per normal local authority rules) and section 105 (disability for voting on account of interests in contracts etc.).

There are 14 members, with 7 members from Gwynedd Council and 7 members from Isle of Anglesey County Council.

3.2 Functions

The Joint Planning Policy Committee fulfils the following on behalf of Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council:

- to agree and finalise the Gwynedd and Môn Deposit Local Development Plan
- to agree and finalise report on consultation responses and (where appropriate) amendments to the Gwynedd and Môn Deposit Local Development Plan
- to adopt Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of an Adopted Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Môn
- to advise upon the formulation of the Gwynedd and Môn Delivery Agreement, Strategic Options and Preferred Strategy
- to formulate the Gwynedd and Môn Deposit Local Development Plan
- to formulate and consider Consultation Responses to the Deposit Local Development Plan
- to receive and accept the Planning Inspector's Report
- to have responsibility for the monitoring and review of the Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Môn
- to have responsibility for advising on oversight and review of externally funded programmes not within the remit of the Committee but material to the work undertaken by or on behalf of the Committee and shared resources. This will include (but is not limited to) providing responses to Local Development plans in neighbouring Planning Authorities and consultation documents in respect of National Planning Policy and advice documents.
- to oversee and receive reports on the Joint Planning Policy Unit
- to formulate Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of an Adopted Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Môn
- to appoint any panel or working group in order to assist the Committee to fulfil its functions

3.3 Structure, Roles and Responsibilities

In order to assist it in carrying out its functions, the Joint Planning Policy Committee has established the following:

- Joint Project Board
- Joint Planning Policy Unit
- Joint Local Development Plan Panel

Each of these has a specific role within the governance arrangements of the Committee.

Joint Planning Policy Unit

A Formal Agreement was signed between the two authorities on 13 October 2011 to establish formally a Joint Planning Policy Unit. Gwynedd Council is the Host Authority, and the agreement for the establishment of the Unit states that both authorities would support the Unit through the TUPE transfer of staff to Gwynedd Council. Gwynedd Council is also responsible for providing financial management and administration of the Unit.

Staff appointments to the Unit are made in accordance with the policies and procedures of Gwynedd Council, but in consultation with the Joint Project Board.

In terms of day to day operation, therefore, the Joint Planning Policy Unit works within Gwynedd Council's Governance Framework.

Joint Project Board

The Joint Project Board is a internal group of Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council officers. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Joint Project Board:

- Provides strategic input into the work of preparing the joint Local Development Plan (LDP) and ensures that the Joint Planning Policy Unit adheres to the timetable stated in the Delivery Agreement
- Takes a strategic overview of the work of the Joint Planning Policy Unit and makes operational decisions in relation to the service provided by the Unit to both Authorities.

In doing so, the Joint Project Board:

- Ensures that the strategic objectives of Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council are fed into the process of preparing the joint Local Development Plan (LDP).
- Accepts, and provides comments on the reports submitted by the Planning Manager (Joint Planning Policy Unit) and the Senior Manager, Environmental Service (Gwynedd Council), on the work of preparing the joint LDP and on the Unit's work in general, including any operational issues that are likely to attract the wider service provided by the Unit.
- Ensures that progress with the work of preparing the LDP is in accordance with the timetable and details included in the Delivery Agreements approved by the Welsh Government.

Joint Local Development Plan Panel

The Joint Local Development Plan Panel is an internal group of Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council Elected Members. Its main purpose is to consider and provide an opinion on intermediate documents, including documents that provide the conclusions of public consultation or public participation periods in order to facilitate the work of adhering to the timetable in the Delivery Agreement

Its objectives are:

- To consider draft documents at intermediate stages in the process of preparing the Joint LDP in order to identify other issues or options for inclusion in the draft documents before they are published as a basis for stimulating discussion and public participation in them, e.g. vision of the Joint LDP, alternative strategies for the Joint LDP area, consideration of the draft scoping report for the Sustainability Assessment, in accordance with the Community Involvement Scheme in the Delivery Agreement.
- To receive, and take account of comments from the public and any group / stakeholder forum during the statutory public consultation or public participation.

3.4 Service Standards

In accordance with the agreement for establishing the Joint Planning Policy Unit:

- Gwynedd Council acts as the Host Authority for the Unit.
- The Unit is accountable to the Joint Planning Policy Committee, and ensures that advice given to the Committee is competent and compliant with current Law and good practice. The Planning Manager maps out the proposed meetings of the Joint Planning Policy Committee as part of a Work Programme, ensuring circulation of information in accordance with established standards of Gwynedd Council, as the Host Authority
- The work by the Unit for the preparation of a single Local Development Plan has the input of the Joint Local Development Plan Panel and the meetings of this Panel are mapped out as part of the Work Programme, with information circulated in accordance with the established standards of Gwynedd Council, as the Host Authority.
- The Unit undertakes the tasks required for preparation of the single Local Development Plan, in accordance with the Delivery Agreement agreed by the Welsh Government.
- The Unit reports to the Joint Project Board, in accordance with the Project Board's Terms of Reference.
- The Unit engages in full and timely exchange of information with customers within the Authorities and externally, in accordance with the established standards of Gwynedd Council, as the Host Authority.

Part 4: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Joint Planning Policy Committee has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, any reference within the head of internal audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

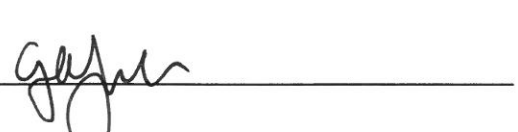
- As Gwynedd Council is the host authority of the Joint Planning Policy Committee, reviews of the effectiveness of the Local Code of Governance, Constitution and system of internal control of that authority will also incorporate the basis of the Joint Committee's governance.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the **review of the effectiveness of the governance framework** by the Joint Planning Policy Committee, and that the arrangements **continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework**.

Part 5: SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

The processes outlined in previous sections of this statement describe the methods used by the Council to identify the most significant governance issues that need to be addressed.

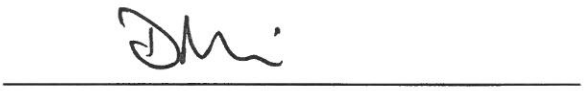
The Joint Planning Policy Committee does not believe that any such issues have arisen during the assessment of its governance arrangements that warrant attention in this Annual Governance Statement.



Gareth Jones

[SENIOR MANAGER – PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL, GWYNEDD COUNCIL]

DATE: 26.06.15



Councillor Dafydd Meurig

[CHAIRMAN - JOINT PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE]

DATE: 26.06.15