

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at the Council Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely on Thursday, 5 September 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Marc Davies (Chairman), Councillors Gwyn Wigley Evans (Vice-Chair), Shelley Childs, Gethin Davies, Meirion Davies, Chris James, Maldwyn Lewis, Sian Maehrlein, Ann Bowen Morgan & Carl Worrall.

**Also in attendance:** Councillors Elizabeth Evans, Rhodri Evans & Gareth Lloyd.

**Cabinet Members present:** Councillor Keith Henson.

**Officers in attendance:** Rhodri Llwyd, Corporate Lead Officer, Highways and Environmental Services; Phil Jones, Corporate Manager, Highways Services; Alan Haird, Project Manager, Coastal Defence Schemes; Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer, Democratic Services; Lisa Evans, Standards and Scrutiny Officer & Neris Morgans, Democratic Services Officer.

(10.00am-10.53am)

**1 Apologies**

Councillors Wyn Evans and John Roberts apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

**2 Disclosures of personal interest (including whipping declarations) Members are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Members Code of Conduct. In addition, Members must declare any prohibited party whip which the Member has been given in relation to the meeting as per the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.**

There were no disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests (including whipping declarations) from Committee Members.

**3 Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme - Members Update**

Councillor Keith Henson (Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services and Carbon Management) provided the Committee with an update on the Aberaeron Coastal Defence Scheme. Ceredigion County Council (CCC) has been procuring the coastal defences at Aberaeron since September 1995 and commissioned a considerable number of studies and reports from several consultants.

An initial phase of the coastal defence scheme along North Beach was completed in 2009, and in relation to the construction works, CCC submitted a Full Business Case to Welsh Government (WG) and obtained approval of the FBC on 28 July 2023 together with confirmation of funding of £1,943,548 from the Coastal Risk Management Programme. A report was presented to Ceredigion County Council's Cabinet on 4 July 2023, seeking approval *'to confirm agreement to enter into a contract with the preferred Contractor*

*pending discussions regarding tender prices, funding allocation and formal approval of the Full Business Case from Welsh Government’.*

Following a procurement process, via a mini competitive tender, drawn down from existing civil engineering framework, and in accordance with Cabinet minute 41 from 4 July 2023, the contract was awarded to BAM Nuttall Ltd on 31 August 2023 with a delayed occupation date of 4 December 2023. BAM took occupation of the site as programmed and set up their compound before commencing construction works in January 2024.

An overview of the following as presented in the report was provided:

- Project Governance
- Project Overview & Progress Update
- Progress Update
- Programme & Budget

At the time of compiling the report, the Project Board were generally satisfied with the progress of the works, and that adequate and sufficient governance was being afforded to the project.

Members were provided with the opportunity to ask questions which were answered by Officers present and Councillor Keith Henson. The main points raised were as follows:

- Members congratulated all involved with the scheme’s progress and expressed an interest in visiting the site prior to its completion; Officers agreed to arrange a suitable date.
- It was noted that rocks from Norway had been used for the scheme, as they were typically much larger than the rocks produced by quarries in Wales and also more readily available in the required quantities and were used for similar schemes across the United Kingdom. In addition, by transferring the rocks by sea, it reduced the damage to roads and disruption to the public.
- The development of Aberystwyth’s Coastal Defence Scheme was at the Outline Business Case stage and would be submitted to WG in November 2024. If Members had any comments, they were encouraged to respond to the public consultation currently open until 8 October 2024.
- The Project Board’s Membership included a cross-section of Officers from various services across the local authority. The Highways and Environmental Service had developed the scheme from the outset with input from services such as Planning and Ecology and would hold management and maintenance responsibility for it following completion.
- Officers praised the Project Manager and the contractors as everyone worked proactively together to ensure there was limited impact on the budget and the scheme when any changes were implemented. No request for an extension of time had been received to date and the focus was on avoiding too much of a slippage and a second summer of construction.
- The requirement was to design a scheme with a construction lifespan of 50 years, however, Aberaeron’s scheme had a 100-year lifespan.
- A formal lesson learned meeting would be held with the Project Team following the completion of the works to aid with future schemes, and the

Project Manager had provided reassurance that he would create a Lessons Learned document too.

Councillor Elizabeth Evans, Local Member for Aberaeron and Aberarth Ward thanked the local authority and WG for investing in Aberaeron, and to all involved for their work to date, including the Officers who updated her on the progress. She also thanked the contractors for their exceptional communication with the public and for their support during the recent spring tide. She looked forward to discussing the relaunch of Aberaeron Harbour with Officers in due course.

The Chair echoed Councillor Elizabeth Evans's words.

It was AGREED to note the governance arrangements and progress being made on the Coastal Defence Scheme at Aberaeron, in order that Members are kept informed of progress.

**4 To confirm the Minutes of the previous Meeting and to consider any matters arising from those Minutes**

It was AGREED to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024.

Matters arising:

- i. Councillor Gwyn Wigley Evans noted that he was present at the meeting, despite his name not being included on the minutes.
- ii. Councillor Ann Bowen Morgan stated that she had sent her apologies for the meeting.
- iii. It was noted that both the Street Pay and Display Car Park Review proposals and the On-street Charged for Parking Proposals - Aberystwyth Promenade would be presented to the Committee following public consultation, prior to consideration and final agreement by Cabinet.

**Confirmed at the Meeting of the Thriving Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 October 2024**

**Chairman:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_