

**Community, Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee**  
**15 November 2023**

**Subject: UPDATE ON THE ARFOR 2 PROGRAMME**

**THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-**

Scrutinise progress being made in relation to the Arfor 2 programme

**Reason(s)**

The Arfor 2 programme provides opportunities to support the economic regeneration of Carmarthenshire whilst contributing to the growth of the Welsh language.

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-**

Cllr Hazel Evans, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Leisure, Culture & Tourism

**Directorate: Chief Executive**

**Name of Head of Service:**

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**Report Author:**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Subject: Update on the Arfor 2 programme

#### **Background**

Based on the success of the first Arfor programme, a further £11 million has been secured from Welsh Government until March 2025 to help strengthen the economic resilience of the Welsh language strongholds. Arfor 2 will support communities to prosper through economic interventions which will also contribute to increasing opportunities to see and use the Welsh language on a daily basis.

The Arfor 2 programme is being led by Gwynedd County Council and will continue to work across the four counties of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire.

The key strategic objectives of Arfor 2 are:

- To create opportunities for young people and families (under 35 years old) to stay in or return to their indigenous communities – supporting them to succeed locally by engaging in enterprise or developing a career.
- To create enterprising communities within Welsh-speaking areas – by supporting commercial and community enterprises that aim to preserve and increase local wealth by taking advantage of the identity and unique qualities of their areas.
- To maximise the benefit of activity through collaboration– to ensure that good practice and lessons learnt are shared and that there is on-going monitoring to ensure continuous improvement.
- Strengthen the identity of communities with a high density of Welsh speakers – by supporting the use and visibility of the Welsh language, encouraging a sense of place and local loyalty.

#### **Workstreams**

Of the total £11 million secured for the entire programme, Carmarthenshire has been allocated £1,182,770 million to deliver the Cymunedau Mentrus programme as a third-party grant opportunity with other targeted workstreams being delivered by external organisations following procurement exercises undertaken by the lead partner on behalf of the region.

The Arfor II programme consists of five targeted workstreams which have been developed to deliver a range of interventions aligned with the programme's strategic aims:

- **Llwyddo'n Lleol – £3,000,000**  
Menter Môn, in partnership with Menter a Busnes, has been appointed to deliver a programme which aims to provide opportunities across the region to encourage young people to return to the area and to deter youth migration.

- **Cymunedau Mentrus /Enterprising Communities - £1,182,770 per local authority**  
The Authority has been allocated £1,182,770 to deliver this workstream at a local level. The purpose of the Cymunedau Mentrus fund is to develop Welsh Language Spaces that offer a natural environment for people to work and socialise through the medium of Welsh. Businesses and community organisations can apply for financial support to achieve this objective with the fund supporting both capital and revenue costs. A list of approved projects is included at Annex 2.
  
- **Challenge Fund -£2,600,000**  
Menter a Busnes has been awarded the contract to deliver this element of the Arfor programme which aims to seek innovate solutions to the challenges that the region faces in terms of youth migration, economic opportunities with the sustainability of the Welsh language being a key consideration. Applications can deliver at either a local or regional level.
  
- **Bwrlwm - £300,000**  
This element extends upon the Bwrlwm Arfor project from the pilot programme which saw the creation of a digital platform, showcasing local entrepreneurs, community projects and case studies thus creating a digital Welsh space. Lafan Cymru have been awarded the contract to deliver this workstream and will build upon the work already undertaken as well as develop key initiatives that further encourage the use of the Welsh language within business and across our communities.
  
- **Monitoring and Evaluation - £200,000**  
Following on from the recommendations of the Arfor 1 programme, monitoring and evaluation is a key part of the programme alongside ensuring that the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language is further understood. Wavehill has been appointed to develop a monitoring framework to be used across the workstreams to evidence the impact of the programme.

Further details in relation to the above workstreams are provided in the main report (Annex 1)

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?</b>	<b>YES</b>
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## IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

**Signed:** Jason Jones Head of Regeneration, Digital and Policy

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## **1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities**

The Arfor 2 Programme provides an opportunity to draw down additional investment which will help deliver against some of the County's key strategic objectives.

The objectives of the Arfor programme are:

- to create opportunities for young people and families (under 35 years old) to stay in or return to their indigenous communities, supporting them to succeed locally by engaging in enterprise or developing a career.
- to create enterprising communities within Welsh-speaking areas, by supporting commercial and community enterprises that aim to preserve and increase local wealth by taking advantage of the identity and unique qualities of their areas.
- to maximise the benefit of activity through collaboration, to ensure that good practice and lessons learnt are shared and that there is on-going monitoring to ensure continuous improvement.
- strengthen the identity of communities with a high density of Welsh speakers, by supporting the use and visibility of the Welsh language, encouraging a sense of place and local loyalty.

All of the above are aligned with the county's existing strategies and plans including the Economic Recovery Plan, Local Innovation Strategy, Wellbeing Assessment, and the South West Wales Regional Economic Delivery Plan and Corporate Strategy.

The Programme will support the objectives of the Wellbeing & Future Generations Act by targeting interventions which aim to ensure that the Welsh speaking communities of the County remain vibrant and sustainable communities.

The proposals are also in line with the objectives of Cymraeg 2050 in terms of increasing the use of the Welsh language, as well as creating favorable conditions for the Welsh language to flourish.

## **2. Legal**

Gwynedd County Council will act as the lead body for the Arfor 2 programme, as per the previous programme. A legal agreement between the four counties was established for the first phase of the Programme and has been reviewed and updated for this current programme.

The Authority is responsible for the delivery and management of the 'Cymunedau Mentrus/Enterprising Communities' work package at a local level. This includes assessing and approving local project applications and entering into funding agreements with third parties. Grant funding letters have been approved by CCC Legal team.

### 3. Finance

Overall accountability for the Programme rests with Gwynedd County Council as lead Authority.

The Authority we will be given direct responsibility for the delivery of the Cymunedau Mentrus third-party grant offer. Carmarthenshire County Council's allocation is £1,182,770.

A dedicated officer will be employed to undertake the necessary fund administration, fully funded by the programme. Grant management processes and procedures will be established to ensure that the funding is managed in accordance with the fund requirements. This will involve the establishment of funding agreements with third parties as well as the establishment of procedures for processing payments, monitoring of financial spend, audit requirements.

### 4. Risk Management Issues

A programme level risk management process has been developed by Gwynedd County Council as lead Authority to ensure that risk is assessed and managed at all levels.

A specific risk register will be maintained for the Cymunedau Mentrus/Enterprising Communities work package with appropriate mitigation measures identified.

### 5. Staffing Implications

To ensure the effective delivery of the Programme at a local level, a dedicated officer will be recruited which will sit within Economic Development with the associated staff costs being recovered wholly from the Arfor programme.

In addition, an additional officer has been seconded into the team to provide dedicated support to help increase the use of the Welsh language within local businesses. The officer will provide support to applicants as well as helping them achieve Cynnig Cymraeg status.

<b>CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED</b> YES	
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### Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Arfor programme documents, including approval letter from Welsh Government.		Held digitally