

GWYNEDD & YNYS MÔN LEARNING PARTNERSHIP PROJECT DEVELOPMENT - KEY MILESTONES

1. Geographical Pathfinder Scheme (2006-2007)

Welsh Assembly Government holds its Geographical Pathfinder Scheme consultation for change to Post-16 learning arrangements in the Arfon area of Gwynedd & Ynys Môn.

Crucially this establishes, for the first time, the idea of cross LA working to deliver improved services in the learning and skills field;

Area consultation comes to an end Feb 2007, with a favoured area option around Formal Consortium and joint-working in order to plan and deliver the age 16-19 curriculum.

The need was also highlighted for specific work to be undertaken to understand what is meant by a consortium and joint-working in terms of post-16 education and training, and to define the parameters

2. New Strategic Direction for Post-16 Learning (2008)

Welsh Assembly Government establishes its new direction for post-16 education and training in Wales through 2 strategic documents:

- *Transforming Education and Training Provision in Wales – Delivering Skills that Work for Wales* (Sept 2008)
- *The Learning and Skills Measure (Wales) 2008*

In a nutshell these documents set out the national agenda for transforming post-16 learning through:

- Requirement to set up area learning partnerships;
- Focus on collaboration rather than competition, thus engendering efficiency through reducing wasteful duplication – across post-16 sectors and providers;
- Driving up standards;
- Increasing course choice for learners both in academic and vocational courses through an Area Curriculum (setting a statutory minimum number of 30 courses, 5 vocational);
- Ensuring a close fit between the Area Curriculum and the requirements of the local labour market – requirement of both schools and colleges.

3. Initial Action Research – Identification of requirements for successful joint-working (2008-2009)

This work was commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to study and identify practical aspects of joint-working that would also be relevant for other areas, with Gwynedd & Ynys Môn proposing itself as the study area. The work was undertaken by CYNNAL

An important finding of this work was that to be successful joint-working had to be placed on a formal and more established footing rather than operating on an *ad-hoc* or goodwill basis. It noted the need for an arrangement with a legal basis, and a professional cross-LA boundary team to support such a consortium.

4. Establishment of the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn Learning Partnership (2009)

The Partnership was established in 2009 in response to the new national strategic agenda, and specifically to develop a collaborative model for the area, building further on the work undertaken on joint-working following the Geographical Pathfinder Scheme – with the area now confirmed as the whole of Gwynedd and Ynys Môn.

Membership of the Partnership is on a representational basis, and drawn from the Secondary School Heads and FE Colleges as well as both Local Authorities, and CYNNAL.

5. Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) – Setting the Direction for the Area (2009-2010)

Following the clarity on the national strategic direction (2008), a SOP was developed by the Partnership and submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government in March 2009.

A feasibility and options study (funded by the Welsh Assembly Government) was then undertaken by the Partnership in order to identify the types of options within the consortium/joint working continuum that would be available and feasible for the Gwynedd and Ynys Môn area. This work was undertaken by external consultants, FE Associates, and completed in April 2010.

The study identified the need for a formal strategic arrangement and put forward the idea of a Planning and Commissioning Body.

As key stakeholders and members of the Partnership the Secondary School Heads' view was that a separate external body would not be in the best interests of the area, and that the policy objective of joint-working and full collaboration across all delivery bodies would be best furthered by an alternative collaborative model.

The stakeholder voice was important to the Partnership and further work on collaboration and protocols for joint working was undertaken by the Secondary Heads' through their professional meetings, and meetings with both Local

Authorities, and additional specific studies were commissioned by the Partnership to support the work.

6. Strategic Outline Case (SOC) (2010-2011)

The strategic direction for the area, informed by the foregoing studies noted above, was formalised through the SOC presented to the Welsh Government in June 2011.

External consultants were provided by the Welsh Government to all areas under this process in order to ensure robustness, and the final options as regards the form of collaboration were put through the stringent 5 Case Treasury Model tests. The finding was for formal collaboration with a strategic overview arrangement.

7. Learning Partnership Workshop : Post-16 Commissioning Model (June 2011)

The workshop looked in detail at the policy requirement for change, data for the area in terms of projected numbers of learners, current duplicated groups/ courses, post-16 funding in Gwynedd and Ynys Môn and economic opportunities including projected local growth and high value sectors.

Against this background the Workshop confirmed the aspirations of the SOC in terms of what success would look like for Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, and went to the heart of the shape of a local collaborative and strategic overview arrangement and the parameters needed to achieve that success.

The Post-16 Model has been developed as a result of this Workshop.

8. Welsh Government's Response to the Area SOC

The initial response was received in August 2011, with some further elucidation requested. Following answers received by the Partnership, the Welsh Government confirmed their support for the strategic direction and intentions on 29 November 2011

9. Meeting with all Secondary Heads in Gwynedd and Ynys Môn (January 2012)

A meeting of all Secondary Heads of both counties was held on 30 January 2012. Support was given by all Secondary Heads to the Post-16 Model, the ESF bid and also to co-operating further on the formulation of the MoU that will serve as the formal contractual document for the collaboration arrangement.

10. Local Services Board (February 2012)

The proposals for a local collaborative model with a strategic overview arrangement, and the ESF bid, were discussed at the joint meeting of both Gwynedd and Ynys Môn LSBs on 23 February 2012, receiving full support. The LSB has indicated the importance of this work through its wish to work closely with the project, and to receive regular progress reports.

11. Meeting with all Secondary Heads in Gwynedd and Ynys Môn (11 July 2012)

A further discussion was held on a revised Consortium Model, and on the draft contents of the Memorandum of Understanding as the formal contractual document binding all partners into the Consortium.

12. Submission of Business Plan to WEFO (ESF Bid) (August 2012)

Following the detailed developmental work and discussions held the Business Plan stage of the European bid was completed and presented to WEFO.

13. Meeting with Representatives of all Governing Bodies (24 October 2012)

Details of the revised Consortium Model, the Planning, Delivery and Monitoring Cycle and steps were discussed together with the draft Memorandum of Understanding, and a timeframe for addressing any questions and coming to a joint-decision was agreed.

14. Addressing Questions by Governing Bodies (December 2012)

A variety of questions were received, and addressed by Christmas 2012, with a very positive response from the governing bodies of schools and Grwp Llandrillo-Menai.

15. Letters of Intent

Letters of intent to join the Consortium were received in January 2013.

16. Gwynedd Council Cabinet Meeting (19 February 2013)