

Contents

Agenda	2
4 - Minutes of the last meeting	8
5 - Rural Agenda Scrutiny Investigation Draft Final Report	14
Contents	15
Foreword	16
Summary	17
Main Findings	17
Main Recommendations	19
Full Report	21
Aim	21
The Evidence considered	21
Findings	23
Recommendations	33
Acknowledgements and Further Reading	37
Appendix 1 - Gwynedd's Response to the Rural Development Plan	39
6 - Collaboration - the Future of Public Services	46
Appendix 1	48
7 - Savings Programme	54
8 - Scrutiny Investigation Report - Sustainable Procurement	57
Appendix 1	70
Appendix 2a	71
Appendix 2b	72
Appendix 2c	73
Appendix 3	74
Appendix 4	82



Gwasanaeth Democraidd
Democratic Service
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Cyfarfod / Meeting

**PWYLLGOR CRAFFU CORFFORAETHOL
CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Dyddiad ac Amser / Date and Time

**10.00AM, DYDD IAU, 27 MAWRTH, 2014
10.00AM, THURSDAY, 27 MARCH, 2014**

Lleoliad / Location

**SIAMBR HYWEL DDA,
SWYDDFA'R CYNGOR, CAERNARFON**

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(DOSBARTHWYD / DISTRIBUTED 20/03/14)

PWYLLGOR CRAFFU CORFFORAETHOL CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

AELODAETH/MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (9)

Y Cynghorwyr / Councillors

Elwyn Edwards

Aled Evans

Selwyn Griffiths

Charles Wyn Jones

Dyfrig Jones

Dafydd Meurig

Michael Sol Owen

Mair Rowlands

Gareth Thomas

Annibynnol / Independent (4)

Y Cynghorwyr / Councillors

Lesley Day

Trevor Edwards

Eryl Jones-Williams

Eirwyn Williams

Llais Gwynedd (3)

Y Cynghorwyr / Councillors

Gweno Glyn

Simon Glyn

Jason Humphreys

Llafur / Labour (1)

Y Cynghorydd / Councillor

Gwynfor Edwards

Rhyddfrydwyr Democrataidd / Liberal Democrats (1)

Y Cynghorydd / Councillor

June Marshall

Aelodau Ex-officio / Ex-officio Members

Cadeirydd ac Is-Gadeirydd y Cyngor / Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council

Aelodau eraill a wahoddir / Other invited members

Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Dyfed Edwards – eitemau / items 5 a/and 6

Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Peredur Jenkins – eitem / item 7

Y Cynghorydd / Councillor John Wynn Jones – eitem / item 8

RHAGLEN

1. YMDDIHEURIADAU

Derbyn unrhyw ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb.

2. DATGAN BUDDIANT PERSONOL

Derbyn unrhyw ddatganiad o fuddiant personol.

3. MATERION BRYD

Nodi unrhyw eitemau sy'n fater brys ym marn y Cadeirydd fel y gellir eu hystyried.

4. COFNODION

Bydd y Cadeirydd yn cynnig y dylid llofnodi cofnodion y cyfarfod diwethaf o'r pwyllgor hwn a gynhaliwyd ar 16 Ionawr, 2014 fel rhai cywir (copi ynghlwm).

Noder – amcan yn unig yw'r amseroedd a nodir isod

5. ADRODDIAD YMCHWILIAD CRAFFU AGENDA WLEDIG Aelod Cabinet: Y Cyngorydd Dyfed Edwards

Ystyried adroddiad y Grŵp Ymchwiliad Craffu (copi ynghlwm).

10.05am – 11.00am

6. CYDWEITHIO / DYFODOL GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS Aelod Cabinet: Y Cyngorydd Dyfed Edwards

Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Strategol a Gwella (copi ynghlwm).

11.00am – 11.45am

7. Y RHAGLEN ARBEDION Aelod Cabinet: Y Cyngorydd Peredur Jenkins

Ystyried adroddiad yr Aelod Cabinet Adnoddau (copi ynghlwm).

11.45am – 12.30pm

**8. ADRODDIAD YMCHWILIAD CRAFFU CAFFAEL CYNALIADWY
Aelod Cabinet: Y Cyngorydd John Wyn Jones**

Ystyried adroddiad y Grŵp Ymchwiliad Craffu (copi ynghlwm).

12.30pm – 1.00pm

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declaration of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

4. MINUTES

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the last meeting of this committee held on 16 January, 2014 be signed as a true record (copy attached).

Please note that the times noted below are estimates only

5. RURAL AGENDA SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION REPORT Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfed Edwards

To consider the report of the Scrutiny Investigation Group (copy attached).

10.05am – 11.00am

6. COLLABORATION / THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfed Edwards

To consider the report of the Head of Strategic and Improvement (copy attached).

11.00am – 11.45am

7. SAVINGS PROGRAMME Cabinet Member: Councillor Peredur Jenkins

To consider the report of the Cabinet Member Resources (copy attached).

11.45am – 12.30pm

8. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION REPORT
Cabinet Member: Councillor John Wyn Jones

To consider the report of the Scrutiny Investigation Group (copy attached).

12.30pm – 1.00pm

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, 16.01.14

Present: Councillor Simon Glyn (Chairman)
Councillor Dyfrig Jones (Vice-chairman)

Councillors:- Lesley Day, Elwyn Edwards, Trevor Edwards, Aled Evans, Gweno Glyn, Selwyn Griffiths, Jason Humphreys, Charles W.Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, June Marshall, Dafydd Meurig, Michael Sol Owen, Mair Rowlands and Eirwyn Williams.

Officers present: Geraint George (Head of Strategic and Improvement Department), Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

Present for item 3 below:-

Councillor Peredur Jenkins (Cabinet Member for Resources)
Dilwyn Williams (Corporate Director)

Present for item 4 below:-

Dyfed Edwards (Leader)
Trystan Pritchard (Senior Partnerships Manager)

Apology: Councillor Gareth Thomas.

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

2. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 14 November 2013 as a true record.

3. SAVINGS STRATEGY

Cabinet Member: Councillor Peredur Jenkins

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Resources addressing a series of matters raised by this committee in relation to the implications of the latest financial situation on the Savings Strategy.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer their observations. During the discussion the following main matters were highlighted:-

- (1) The Cabinet Member for Resources responded appropriately to a series of questions relating to the technical elements of the report, such as the credibility of the figure of £3.578m referred to in paragraph 2.3 of the report, the actual performance against the 2013/14 savings target and the financial projections.
- (2) It was noted that paragraph 3.8 of the report referred to working on a system for establishing what the Council's priorities were (in order to establish where cuts could

- be made) and it was enquired who would participate in the discussions and what would be discussed. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources noted that these discussions had not yet taken place but that a system was being established to discuss this. It was also emphasised that any potential cuts would be discussed in detail with all Gwynedd members and residents.
- (3) The importance of ensuring that the Council engaged with all cohorts of the public on any potential cuts was emphasised. It was noted that the poorest and most vulnerable people within society were those least able to bring their opinion across and they also were the ones who would suffer the most by losing Council services.
 - (4) Concern was expressed by the local member that the transport service to Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug had been cut without any warning at the end of last term. The Council had not consulted with him on the matter and the Cabinet Member for the Environment was of the opinion that the cut should not have taken place until next September. The Chairman suggested that the shortcomings in the Council's consultation procedures should be aired at the end of the discussion.
 - (5) It was asked whether the priority was to protect jobs within the Council or to protect services. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources noted that the priority was to provide a service to the people of Gwynedd and that the jobs had to match those services.
 - (6) It was noted that the Council was facing a situation of having to review its Financial Strategy and the very significant cuts meant that jobs were under threat and services were being compromised, and the Council's method of dealing with this was a very important consideration. There would be a need to consult with the unions should the jobs be deleted and there was a need to consult with the public also, given that some people would be harder to reach than others. All the power was currently in the hands of the chief officers and the Cabinet Members and they had to find a method of empowering the remainder of the members to be part of this procedure, also extending the procedure to include all elements of the different needs taxpayers had in the context of the services. It was essential that this committee had the opportunity to scrutinise what kind of plans would be developed during the next months in order to involve this committee and the remainder of the elected members, also including a wide range of groups and bodies within the county in a meaningful way. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources suggested that the initial seminars that had been arranged for the members would show the way. He also expressed his hopes that the Council would be inclusive in everything it did regarding the savings regime and the cuts we were faced with. He added that it may be difficult to get the majority of the population to hold that conversation, but the groups supporting residents who needed help and the councillors themselves, as the people who were nearest to the population, had an important role in supporting the entire procedure of consulting on any savings.
 - (7) It was suggested that people did not know what went on at the Council nowadays as the press no longer sent journalists to Council committees to take notes, rather, they relied on press releases, which presented the arguments from the Council's perspective only.
 - (8) It was suggested that public meetings and seminars were not the best way of engaging with those people who were hard to reach. There was a need to think of creative ways of going out to the people e.g. by attending community groups, schools, speaking to young people and using social media.
 - (9) It was noted that we should refrain from using communication with the public as an excuse to avoid making decisions.
 - (10) It was noted that there was a danger of spending a lot of money on engagement and it should be borne in mind that people elected councillors to represent their opinion.
 - (11) It was suggested that town / community councils could be used to gather information.

- (12) It was noted that it was not easy to measure the impact of realising savings, however cutting the service of a social worker / classroom assistant from three hours to an hour, for example, would suggest a reduction in service, which in turn suggested the impact. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources noted that he would expect this work of evaluation to be done during the process of submitting the savings proposals, but this was not an easy matter. The member noted further that a way to measure the impact of cuts had to be found and suggested that receiving more complaints from members would be an indication that there was a decline in services. The Corporate Director agreed with the observation regarding the impact and noted that attempting to consider whether there had been an effect after the saving had been implemented was extremely difficult and raised questions regarding the benefit which can be set against the cost of attempting to do that (as many factors other than the input of resources could influence performance). He noted that it would be better to ensure that the implications were clear from the start and should a plan be presented before them, where the impact was not clear, that it should be sent back to the department with a request for further information.
- (13) A member suggested that some specific things could be measured, such as street cleanliness and appearance noting that she received more and more complaints regarding the bin collection service. In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources noted that the members had a responsibility to draw the relevant heads of department's attention to such problems.

4. PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE ANGLESEY AND GWYNEDD SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dyfed Edwards

Submitted – the report of the Leader outlining the progress towards establishing a Single Integrated Plan for Gwynedd and Anglesey as assurance was needed that the interests of the people of Gwynedd were protected.

The Senior Partnerships Manager provided a summary of the unit's function.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer their observations. During the discussion the following main matters were highlighted:-

- (1) It was noted that the Council had recently been criticised by the Assembly for being too introverted regarding the partnerships and that a report from Mantell Gwynedd had also been scathing regarding the way the Council dealt with third sector partnerships. The Single Integrated Plan mentioned many desirable things such as developing strong communities in Gwynedd and Anglesey and ensuring sustainable services, but where was the evidence of this? There was no reference in the report either to third sector partnerships and it was noted that some charities such as Pwllheli Youth Scheme had no relationship at all with the Council. In response, the Senior Partnerships Manager explained, in terms of the structure that existed under the Local Services Board, that there was third sector representation from that level down along with third sector representation on the thematic groups. The 'Establishing the Links' project also provided support officers for the Local Services Board in the third sector in each county. Although he shared the third sector's frustrations regarding implementing the agenda, he was confident in the liaising. In response to a further question, the Senior Partnerships Manager referred to the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Cartref Bontnewydd as examples of third sector partnerships that receive financial support or similar from the Council, and he noted that he could provide a full list for the member should he wish so. The Leader added that the links with the third sector was taking place on a Gwynedd level as an individual council also.

- (2) It was noted that paragraph 1.3 of the plan noted that the potential developments in terms of a new nuclear power station in Anglesey were '*exciting*', but that it could be argued that these developments were also '*frightening*'. In response the Leader noted that for want of a better word that the development was sure to create 'excitement', be that negative or positive excitement.
- (3) It was suggested that the joint plan with Anglesey would lose some of its value should the Government decide to merge Gwynedd and Anglesey with Conwy.
- (4) It was noted that although the philosophy and the values of the report were excellent on paper, it would be very difficult to realise the vast number of ideals contained within it. The report referred to the squeeze and talked of empowering individuals to be less dependent on the state placing the responsibility on individuals and groups to deliver their own outcomes. Referring to the work being undertaken by Gysda, it was emphasised that the report should not be used as an excuse to close a hostel for the homeless during this period of cuts without creating the mechanism to eradicate homelessness in the first place. The same principle was true in the context of other important services, such as homes for the elderly / children. In response, the Leader noted there were apparent tensions between continuing to maintain the system and going a step or two further and considering what could unlock an individual's potential. The aim at all times was to avoid creating any dependency, to unlock people's potential and to assist them in developing to become full members of society. Much work and investment was needed to do this. It would not happen overnight and there was a need to sustain people in the meantime.
- (5) It was suggested, that although closing e.g. leisure centres, was much less extreme than closing a homeless hostel, it was likely to cause less uproar, and councillors were responsible for standing up for the people who were in greatest need of Council services, rather than those who could shout the loudest. The Leader agreed with this observation and noted that the Council had a role to play to be firm and clear and to try to do what was right, not necessarily what was popular, in order to create a better society.
- (6) It was suggested that the Council did not do justice for the people of Gwynedd by entering into a local partnership with Anglesey. Reference was made to the North Wales Procurement Partnership as an example of unsuccessful collaboration and concern was expressed that the local element would be lost through collaboration across two counties. In response, the Leader noted that the Council had experienced difficulties in working in partnership on many levels and it could be a battle and could be difficult for many reasons. However, whilst the Government did encourage the Council to work in partnership, they had to make the best of the situation and endeavour to get the best possible outcome for the people of Gwynedd. In response to a further enquiry, the Leader emphasised that he was not at all uncomfortable with the partnership and that he was optimistic towards the collaboration. He added that the obstacles had to be acknowledged, but in acknowledging and understanding those obstacles, there was a greater chance of success. He noted that they should not be worried, despite the evidence of past problems. A plan had been agreed between both counties and the challenge was to build on that firm foundation and seek to undertake work that would make a difference to the people of Gwynedd and Anglesey.
- (7) A wish was expressed to see more being done to raise hopes in terms of the economy, especially in south Gwynedd. In response the Leader noted that he fully agreed with the emphasis on the economy and what a strong economy could mean for those areas. He explained that the emphasis of this plan was on the partnership work, but Gwynedd, as a county, had to address the matters affecting the rural economy, mainly in Dwyfor and Meirionnydd. Also, it was essential to ensure, in bringing Gwynedd and Anglesey together, that the needs of all communities in both areas were met. The work should be addressed in a positive and optimistic manner, and this in itself could have a positive impact on those the Council worked with. He

suggested that there was a role for the scrutiny committee to monitor the work and he referred to projects in the care field and the environment field as examples of successful collaboration on a county level in the past.

- (8) Concern was expressed that Westminster Government intended to put the work of decommissioning of the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Powerstation to one side between 2012 and 2021. It was noted that the hundreds of local workers employed on the site would be likely to leave the area rather than wait for the work to return in five years' time and it was enquired what pressure could be applied between Gwynedd and Anglesey to try to keep the site open. In response, the Leader noted that the Council was in regular discussions with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, and that they did seek to apply pressure for the work to continue and also to maximise the Trawsfynydd site as an important employment site, not only for the south of the county, but also the whole of the county.

5. THE COMMITTEE'S FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2013-14

Submitted – the latest version of the work programme.

Referring to item A6 – Planning Committee Arrangements, the Member Support and Scrutiny Manager noted that a special meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee had been convened on 7 February to look at the new requirements that were being introduced in terms of the planning arrangements across Wales and that members of this committee would be welcome to attend as observers. It was noted that the meeting date conflicted with an urgent meeting of the Cambrian Railway Conference.

In relation to item A13 – Registering second homes as businesses, the Member Support and Scrutiny Manager suggested that the Head of Finance Department provide the members with further guidance on this matter in a seminar to be arranged for 31 March.

The shortcomings in the Council's procedure of consulting with members in light of the local member's observation that the transport service to Ysgol Gynradd Llanrug had been cut without any warning at the end of last term were discussed. Many members referred to similar shortcomings in their wards. Some members were in favour of setting the matter on the agenda of the next committee meeting and to invite the Head of Customer Care Department and the Cabinet Member for Customer Care there to expand on the arrangements that could be put in place to ensure that this type of situation would not arise again. Other members were not of the opinion that this was a committee matter, and it was in fact an operational matter. The committee had already had the opportunity to ask the Head of Customer Care Department and the Cabinet Member regarding the Council's Engagement Strategy last September and they were of the opinion that there was no point in placing the matter back on the agenda every time a problem arose. The Member Support and Scrutiny Manager noted it was timely for the committee to track the implementation of the recommendations submitted to the Cabinet Member for Customer Care following the discussion on the Engagement Strategy at the committee meeting in September, especially having been given to understand that the Cabinet was considering the strategy at its meeting on 28 January.

RESOLVED to track the Council and the Public – Engagement item at the next preparatory meeting on 18 February by:-

- **Looking at the content of the strategy being introduced;**
- **Looking at what the response has been to date from the Cabinet Member;**
- **Consider whether the Head of Customer Care Department / Cabinet Member for Customer Care should be invited to address some specific matters at the next meeting of the committee on 27 March.**

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12.40pm.

Rural Agenda – Draft

What is the current provision in the County to improve social inclusion and how can it be improved?

Final Draft Report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2014

A Scrutiny Investigation by a group of Corporate Scrutiny Committee members

Contents

Foreword	3
Summary	4
Main Findings	4
Main Recommendations	6
Full Report	8
Aim	8
The Evidence considered	8
Findings	10
Recommendations	20
Acknowledgements and Further Reading	24

Foreword

This report presents the main matters highlighted by the Scrutiny Investigation into the Rural Agenda – Providing Services for the consideration of the Council Leader.

Following the elections for Gwynedd Council in May 2012, the elected councillors were asked which matters were causing their electors the most concern. It became apparent that the matter of maintaining services across the County in a challenging period was causing some concern for the citizens of Gwynedd. It was a matter of interest to members of the three scrutiny committees.

The Investigation was established by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2013, and this Report is submitted for the attention of the Scrutiny Committee on 27 March 2014. The main matters raised by the scrutiny members are addressed in the new Strategic Plan for 2013-17 – Supporting the people of Gwynedd to thrive in difficult times. Considerable emphasis is placed on the matters in question in Priority CC2 – Reducing the Impact of Poverty and Deprivation and Priority CC3 – Promoting Sustainable Rural Communities. I would like to thank the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, as the executive officer of these priorities, for their contributions to the Investigation.

The procedure of scrutiny members undertaking independent scrutiny investigations is still in a developing phase. In order to improve the evidence base for the final report, additional work was commissioned to hold Focus Groups in three areas across the County (from the 18 areas in Gwynedd that score very low in terms of Access to Services in the WIMD (2011) assessment). This work was pivotal when reaching the conclusions and recommendations that are submitted for the consideration of the Council Leader.

We came to a relatively obvious, but significant, conclusion, namely that we consider that the whole of Gwynedd is a 'rural area', although parts of the County are more populated than others. The most important factor is *how many people are affected* and not the *density* of deprived population. This is true for Gwynedd and the whole of Wales. Therefore, it was considered that conveying the main messages of the Investigation to the Welsh Government as well as the Council Cabinet was completely relevant. I am grateful to the Arfon Assembly Member for attending a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to receive the Report and to listen to our observations.

Finally, it is my pleasure to thank my fellow members of the Scrutiny Investigation and the officers for their valuable contributions and support along the way.

Councillor Elwyn Edwards

Chairman
Rural Agenda Scrutiny Investigation

March 2014

SUMMARY

MAIN FINDINGS

- 1.1** In the short, medium and long term, the most important element in terms of maintaining social inclusion and access to services is maintaining an economy that is as prosperous as possible and employment across the County.
- 2.1** There is a responsibility on Gwynedd Council and the Welsh Government to collaborate effectively when planning and providing statutory and non-statutory services for residents across the County.
- 3.1** It is neither practical nor sustainable to provide all Council services in the traditional manner, and holding a constructive and thoughtful dialogue with the Third Sector and Communities in Gwynedd is essential if quality bilingual services are to be maintained across the County.
- 4.1** There is no clear evidence to show that access to shopping services is causing serious difficulties to those questioned in rural areas, but being unable to have convenient access to some basic materials is a matter of concern for some.
- 5.1** Those questioned did not have positive experiences of using public services. However, it was not evident whether or not a number of those questioned were regular users of public transport services.
- 6.1** On the whole, banking services are not available in the countryside outside the main centres such as Pwllheli and Bala.
- 7.1** Considerable differences were discovered between the three areas (Meirionnydd, Arfon and Dwyfor) in terms of access to health services, with serious concerns by those questioned in Pen Llŷn in particular in terms of the safety of the service on weekends.
- 8.1** No specific concerns were noted about Gwynedd Council's education provision through the schools. There was a feeling that support services for pupils in schools had improved and that small and large schools had advantages and disadvantages.
- 9.1** There is a community spirit in the three areas in question. A number of various activities that took place in the communities were noted although some villages were more active than others.
- 10.1** Evidence was obtained from the Focus Groups that those present were aware of increasing pressures on the Council and other organisations to provide services with fewer resources.

Although there is a willingness to consider receiving services in alternative ways, people were unclear regarding what was on offer.

- 11.1 The extent of the situation's severity in this field or how it could be resolved is completely unclear. Certainly, there is a need to examine this element carefully.**
- 12.1 A role could be developed for Community Councils, wherever possible, to provide banking/post/medical services in public houses/village halls once a week.**
- 13.1 There are examples of successful plans that increase inclusion in Gwynedd. We have limited our work in this field to list 'specific plans' to improve inclusion and to obtain opinions at the focus groups. It is unclear how successful these initiatives have been. Those who contributed to the focus groups were aware of some schemes and praised them.**
- 14.1 We note examples of good practice outside the County. Again, we have not been able to assess how successful these schemes were in terms of increasing inclusion, but we deem that addressing them when developing specific schemes will be of benefit.**

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

Engagement

- 15.1 The Council's new Engagement Strategy is a good starting point and there is a need to ensure that Cabinet Members give priority to gathering opinions and evidence from citizens and to carefully consider the impact on service users in rural areas when planning and providing services.

The Economy

- 15.2 You are required to agree with the Welsh Government on the direction and implementation of the Economic and Spatial Strategy for Gwynedd and Anglesey as a starting point to fund structures (to include highways and transport) as the main driver to plan access to services across the County.

Alternative Services

- 15.3 The Welsh Government needs to clearly show what is the way forward as soon as possible. The Investigation obtained some evidence that the residents of Gwynedd are willing to consider changes to their services, but there is a need to step up the pace to alleviate fears and to plan and provide high quality services in alternative ways.

Shop Locally Services

- 15.4 Target private and third sector businesses that currently operate in the communities to support them to develop a convenient shopping service as a focal point for the local community, with the aim of them becoming self-supporting by 2016 before the end of the Council's Strategic Plan's lifespan in 2017. Then, you can undertake a detailed assessment in order to establish the way forward for Gwynedd's subsequent Strategic Plan.

Transport

- 15.5 There is a need to plan public transport on two tiers:
- TIER A: To agree with the Welsh Government on Service Centres across the County and regionally, by planning public transport to connect Gwynedd's main population locations.
- TIER B: The Council needs to re-design services from the populated main centres to rural areas. In accordance with the reference in the Williams Report, we deem that this work is the role of the new community councils and that three innovative

schemes should be undertaken instead of a group of councils showing a willingness to act on this between now and 2016. Then, a detailed assessment should be undertaken of the three schemes.

Health in Pen Llŷn

- 15.6 The Welsh Government needs to provide a temporary urgent solution to the local residents' opinion about the lack of safety of the health service in Pen Llŷn on weekends.

Realistic Expectations

- 15.7 Undertake further research to see whether there is evidence that maintaining health and other services 'from afar' creates more intensive health problems or other difficulties in the medium and long term for service users. If evidence of this comes to light make an appropriate provision to mitigate the impact when planning services.

Build on Good Practice

- 15.8 Build on the care provision that exists in Gwynedd to improve access to services by identifying and assessing the quality of services that are currently provided by the Third Sector and Private Sector across the County. Plan alternative services over a period of three years or more by providing appropriate guidance and support.

Aim of the Investigation

To identify examples of successful plans to increase inclusion in Gwynedd.

To note and consider examples of good practice outside the County.

To submit recommendations to the Council Leader to act on directly or as a partner to improve inclusion.

The Evidence considered

The following were appointed by the Communities Scrutiny Committee as members of the Investigation Group:

- Councillor Lesley Day
- Councillor Elwyn Edwards
- Councillor June Marshall
- Councillor Gareth Thomas
- Councillor Eirwyn Williams

Agreement was reached on the main categories for the Focus Groups.

A presentation was given by the Information and Research Manager on the context. At a meeting with the Council Leader and the Leader of the Strategic Plan Project (Harry Thomas, the Chief Executive), agreement was reached on the way forward with the investigation.

Here is a summary of the work of the investigation:

Date	Gathering Evidence
20.02.2013	Informal meeting to discuss the scope of the brief
18.04.2013	To elect a Chair, and to agree on the brief and the work programme
04.06.2013	To consider the presentation of the Information and Research Manager on a detailed analysis of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 'Access to Services' zone in the context of Gwynedd.
23.07.2013	To consider the List of Stakeholders
07.10.2013	Focus Group with the people of Llandderfel and Llanuwchllyn 1

	and 2 areas.
09.10.2013	Focus Group with the people of Tregarth and Mynydd Llandygai and Pentir 2 areas.
10.10.2013	Focus Group with the people of Aberdaron, Botwnnog, Tudweiliog, Llanengan, Llanbedrog and Abersoch areas.
24.01.2014	The Investigation Group considering the findings deriving from the focus groups.
	General research into good practice in Gwynedd and in areas outside Gwynedd throughout the period of the Investigation.

Findings

The Economy

- 1.1 **In the short, medium and long term, the most important element in terms of maintaining social inclusion and access to services is maintaining an economy that is as prosperous as possible and employment across the County.**
- 1.2 In the context of Gwynedd and west Wales in general, the fact that the Gross Domestic Product is 75% below the UK average is a huge challenge especially in the current economic climate.
- 1.3 When developing the 'Rural Development Plan for 2014-2020', the Welsh Government and the UK Government need to consider in detail how vulnerable the economic situation is in rural areas.
- 1.4 It is essential that any potential financial support to develop and maintain the economy is used appropriately in the County. A clear and agreed Economic Strategy is required that co-ordinates appropriately with the Local Development Plan for Gwynedd and Anglesey.¹
- 1.5 In the same manner, there is a need for slick and appropriate collaboration between the Welsh Government, the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Services Board and the Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils not only to co-ordinate services but also to maximise the economic value of the public pound for the benefit of Gwynedd residents and communities.

The public sector in Wales spends £4.3 billion per year. This is a substantial driver that could give a key boost to move the rural economy forward between 2014 and 20.²

Responsibilities

- 2.1 **There is a responsibility on Gwynedd Council and the Welsh Government to collaborate effectively when planning and providing statutory and non-statutory services for residents across the County.**

¹See Appendix 1 – Gwynedd's Response to the Rural Development Plan

²Welsh Government Website – [eProcurement Services across the Welsh Public Sector](#)

2.2 A very simple, yet very complicated point! To this end, the recent publication of Sir Paul Williams' Report on the work of the [Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery](#) (January 2014), reiterates this.

2.3 It is worth noting that the Williams Report is a thorough consideration of local service planning and delivery. Yet again, it is difficult to conclude that even this Commission has managed to answer one of its main objectives:

'Propose an optimal model of public service governance and delivery in Wales...'

2.4 Therefore, it is worth noting at the start that we also failed to reach an unambiguous conclusion regarding the best model for service planning and delivery in Gwynedd, but there are many examples of good practice that deserve our attention.

2.5 One unclear element in this piece of work in some services is to identify the relationship in the grey area between statutory and non-statutory services from the customer's perspective and the significance of this to the Council and its partners in terms of directing resources.

2.6 Indeed, it is unavoidable that the Council, when planning services in the context of the continuous reduction in resources from the Welsh Government faces increasingly challenging situations in terms of securing access to services for the residents of the County.

2.7 The *Williams Report* gives some attention to these elements from both directions – a reduction in resources and managing the demand for services. This is a central theme in the Council's current strategic work and is covered under the heading *'The Gwynedd Way'* submitted to the full Council on 23 February 2013.³

2.8 Obtaining clarity from the Welsh Government regarding their support to this new way of working is essential to purposeful service planning for Gwynedd citizens in the coming years. If planning or delivering a non-statutory service leads to a reduction in demand, then it could be considered that this in reality is 'wise expenditure' of 'statutory' resources in a 'non-statutory' field. The matter is addressed specifically in the Gwynedd Council Strategic Plan 2013-2017 under Priority DT5 – Reducing the Demand on Services through Prevention and Early Intervention.⁴

One simple example of this would be to spend on keeping citizens healthy and preventing illness.

2.9 Recommendation 7 of the [Williams Report](#) (p350) suggests that potential flexibility will be available to achieve this:

The Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales must:

- *Consider the need to secure citizen-centred outcomes directly when legislating;*
- *Review existing legislation to ensure it simplifies public-sector decision-making rather than imposing undue constraints on it or creating complexity, and either repeal such provisions or clarify their meaning and interaction.*

³ ['The Gwynedd Way – Results of Sustainable Service in a Challenging Period'](#). Gwynedd Council Meeting 28/2/13

⁴ [Gwynedd Council Strategic Plan 2013-2017](#), page 51, Priority DT5

- 2.10 It is recommended to focus on obtaining clarity on this without delay.
- 2.11 Some specific observations were received from the residents at of some of the focus groups held across the County which showed that some of Gwynedd’s residents were aware of the need to provide services in a different way.

Here are some comments from the Llŷn Peninsula regarding obtaining a balance between avoiding health problems rather than curing diseases:

The health profession is starting to come around to getting people healthier rather than treating diseases – starting to prescribe exercise etc.

Easier said than done – difficulty in persuading people to live healthier lives rather than problems in relation to awareness.

Need to start with children – clubs and concessions etc. in order to get them into good habits in terms of keeping healthy.

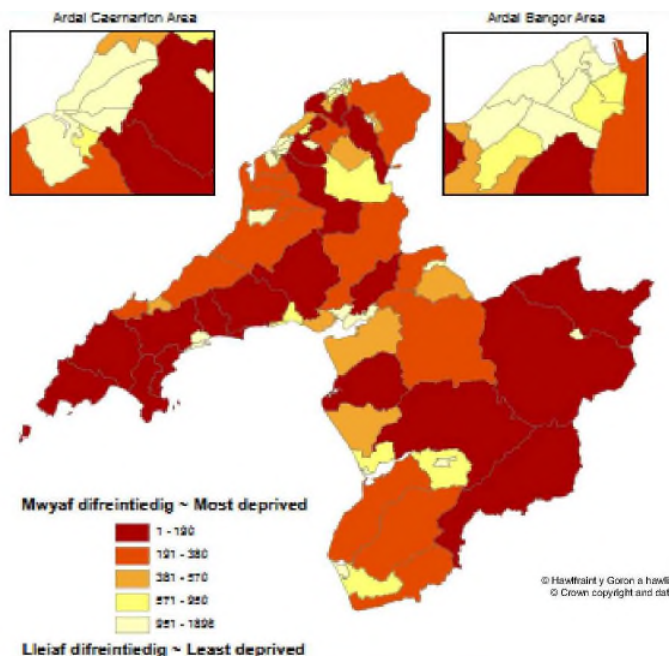
Change in Services

- 3.1 **It is neither practical nor sustainable to provide all Council services in the traditional manner, and holding a constructive and meaningful dialogue with the Third Sector and Communities in Gwynedd is essential if quality bilingual services are to be maintained across the County.**⁵
- 3.2 The background to the discussion on facilitating access to services was presented by the Council’s Information and Research Manager. Consideration was given to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation which aims to provide a general illustration of deprivation across Wales.
- 3.3 The Index considers 8 different elements (zones) that are considered as contributors towards the population’s deprivation at various degrees. These eight elements (zones) are the standards and levels of: Income, Employment, Health, Education, Community Safety, Physical Environment, Suitable Housing and Access to Services.

WIMD Zones	
Income	23.5%
Employment	23.5%
Health	4%
Education	14%
Access to Services	10%
Community Safety	5%
Physical Environment	5%
Housing	5%
Overall Index	100%

⁵ [Gwynedd Council Strategic Plan 2013-2017](#), Page 42, Priority CC3

- 3.4 Although each of these elements contribute towards social inclusion, the decision made by the members of the investigation was to focus on the last element – Access to Services.
- 3.5 This does not mean that the other seven elements are less relevant in terms of social inclusion. Indeed, the members of the investigation are of the opinion that all elements tie-in together and influence each other. Note in particular the due high weighting placed on income level and the level and standard of employment as the two main elements in relation to maintaining and improving social inclusion. It was considered that more longer term planning would be required and possibly a regeneration in the economic climate to be able to impact on substantial improvements in these fields.
- 3.6 It was considered that more effective influence could be had on the other elements in the medium term. Therefore, in order to focus on a specific field, the emphasis in the remainder of this report will be on a detailed analysis of the observations made in the focus groups. It cannot be alleged that these groups provide a full picture of the situation in their areas; however, they provide a useful snapshot of people’s perceptions in their communities of access to services.
- 3.7 After receiving an analysis from the Research Unit of the access to service zone, it was discovered that eighteen areas in Gwynedd were considered as amongst the most deprived in Wales. It was decided to select 8 of these areas grouped in 3 different locations to hold focus groups with local residents, namely the areas of Llanuwchllyn and Llandderfel; Tregarth and Mynydd Llandygai and Pentir 2; Aberdaron, Botwnnog, Tudweiliog, Llanengan, Llanbedrog and Abersoch.



- 3.8 The Welsh Government is currently consulting on the indicators for the next Index of Deprivation (end of 2014). They are proposing to change the 'travel time' indicator which is based on a combination of using a bus and/or walking. Implementing this change would mean that the measure would be similar to the methods used in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to calculate 'access to services'.⁶
- 3.9 24 people came together for the three events, and thus it was possible to air the matters better than could be done by conducting a questionnaire.

Focus Groups

Here is a summary of the main observations made in terms of the impact on the Citizen.

Basic Shopping Services

- 4.1 There is no clear evidence to show that access to shopping services is causing serious difficulties to those questioned in rural areas, but being unable to have convenient access to some basic goods is a matter of concern for some.
- 4.2 The items in small shops are usually more expensive and there is less choice. It is not possible for small shops to keep a stock of fresh foods, so the main value of small shops is to keep a stock of preserved goods and possibly some milk and bread.
- 4.3 In order to have sufficient choice and better prices, the citizens questioned said that they shopped in supermarkets or online and received home deliveries by the supermarket vans.
- 4.4 A food selling van which travels to villages is a good idea and is possibly a business opportunity that could be encouraged.
- 4.5 A successful example was noted where a local public house offered a service which provided basic foodstuffs, electrical goods, gardening equipment and the Daily Post.
- 4.6 A negative element of shopping in supermarkets and medium-sized shops was that the social and friendly element was lost. It is likely that losing this social interaction will lead to broader problems such as loneliness and ill-health.
- 4.7 Some felt that maintaining small shops required a community commitment which meant being prepared to pay more for items in order to ensure that the service continued. Others were of the opinion that unless the business could compete then it was unsustainable, and that supporting such business could place pressure on the more profitable shops in the towns which maintained local employment.

⁶ [Welsh Government Consultation](#) – Proposed Indicators for WIMD 2014

Transport

- 5.1 Those questioned did not have positive experiences of using public services. However, it was not evident whether or not a number of those questioned were regular users of public transport services.
- 5.2 It was noted that the frequency, times and routes of bus services caused difficulties; and sometimes, a lack of buses meant that there was no room on them and that they would pass by without picking up passengers.
- 5.3 The customer care of some drivers was lacking, in particular towards young people and passengers that could not provide the exact fare for a ticket.
- 5.4 Although those questioned had not used the 'O Ddrws i Ddrws' service, one noted that she transported people as a favour. It was suggested more broadly that better use would be made of resources to provide more community transport services with the third sector and CIL De Gwynedd rather than running bus services that usually run empty.
- 5.5 There was concern that the Council's parking fees were incomprehensibly expensive.
- 5.6 Some considered that young people were as needy in terms of the need to travel free of charge as older people and the elderly.
- 5.7 The provision of safe cycle routes was fragmented – better links with the villages were required.
- 5.8 The information for timetables was not easy to obtain.
- 5.9 There was a need to coordinate with the needs of pedestrians and tourists.
- 5.10 Create a system for people who travelled regularly in their own cars to offer an informal service to assist people to be mobile.
- 5.11 Develop a system of arranging transport to central hubs in order to get the customers to the buses and provide people with mobility without competing with public transport.

Financial Services

- 6.1 On the whole, banking services are not available in the countryside outside the main centres such as Pwllheli and Bala. It was noted that the service had also disappeared from some towns such as Cricieth. The main impact of this is that it is not possible to:
 - withdraw cash
 - pay money into bank accounts
 - check bank account balances

- 6.2 It was noted that an ATM grant scheme had been running for a period of time in Sarn Mellteyrn, but the service had been terminated when the grant ended. In some locations, it is possible to withdraw cash with a card from the Post Office.
- 6.3 The lack of cash withdrawal facilities was causing considerable concern for the Pen Llŷn Focus Group. The need to travel to Pwllheli to withdraw cash meant that it was more likely that rural residents would go to the town to withdraw cash and then shop, leading to even less expenditure in the small rural shops.
- 6.4 Those who were questioned had little interest in using online services. The convenience of being able to withdraw comparatively small amounts of money (£5) at a time was important to some. In addition, the element of trust in dealing with people face to face gave peace of mind to some.
- 6.5 The Post Office came to Llanuwchllyn Hall for two hours every Tuesday. Older people use this service to receive their pension. A concern was noted that people who reached pension age were now forced to receive a direct payment into their bank account.

Health Services

- 7.1 Considerable differences were seen between the three areas (Meirionnydd, Arfon and Dwyfor) in terms of access to health services, with serious concerns by those questioned in Pen Llŷn in particular in terms of the safety of the service on weekends.

Llanuwchllyn and Llandderfel Areas

- 7.2 There was a feeling that the service at Bala Surgery was convenient.
- 7.3 Travelling to Llangollen, Penrhyndeudraeth or Ruthin for dental services was convenient.
- 7.4 Travelling to Wrexham to the hospital was not convenient on public transport.

Tregarth and Mynydd Llandygai and Pentir 2 Areas

- 7.5 Mixed response to online and over the phone medical services.

Aberdaron, Botwnnog, Tudweiliog, Llanengan, Llanbedrog and Abersoch.

- 7.6 Serious concerns by the residents of this area regarding the protection of health service provision on weekends. The standard is fine but the lack of information and access to service is a cause for concern.
- 7.7 Although holding consultations in dispersed and rural locations, e.g. village halls, public houses or a room in a house was a possibility, sometimes there was a need to maintain confidentiality by going to a central neutral location.

- 7.8 Using public transport to reach appointments conveniently was a problem.
- 7.9 The role of community nurses and leisure services in health promotion was welcomed.

Education

- 8.1 **No specific concerns were noted about Gwynedd Council's education provision through the schools. There was a feeling that support services for pupils in schools had improved and that small and large schools had advantages and disadvantages.**
- 8.2 Although young people left full-time education with good qualifications, there were insufficient opportunities to use them locally for employment.
- 8.3 In terms of the provision of evening and occasional classes, there was a feeling that the activity and support from the Workers Education Association and Coleg Harlech to hold courses was disappearing.

Socialising

- 9.1 **There is a community spirit in the three areas in question. A number of various activities that took place in the communities were noted although some villages were more active than others.**
- 9.2 The opportunity to extend the use made of some buildings that were a central location for activities by offering services from there such as a shop or post office was noted.
- 9.3 Numerous observations were received in Pen Llŷn regarding the Leisure Centre in Pwllheli. There were strong feelings regarding the need for the Centre to engage better with the area's residents.

Demand for Services and Expectations

- 10.1 **Evidence was obtained from the Focus Groups that those present were aware of increasing pressures on the Council and other organisations to provide services with fewer resources. Although there is a willingness to consider receiving services in alternative ways, people were unclear regarding what was on offer.**
- 10.2 People's expectations of services on the whole are sensible and moderate. One of the most obvious features noted was the fear about the future of the services as the financial pressures increased. To this end, there were signs that the residents shared the concerns of Council members and other organisations that planned and provided services.
- 10.3 There was a need to develop the engagement work and information sharing further, not only in terms of the planning but also in terms of having convenient access to information about

the services offered. This would be a means to improve ownership of the services and to profile them more effectively.

- 10.4 In addition, people's understanding of the 'Gwynedd Way' concept that was submitted in the Council's Strategic Plan was encouraging.
- 10.5 One specific element that requires detailed attention soon is the negative risk of providing online and telephone based services on vulnerable individuals.

Transport

- 11.1 **It is completely unclear what is the extent of the situation's severity in this field or how it could be resolved. Certainly, there is a need to examine this element carefully.**
- 11.2 One element of this suggests that this is the most important part in terms of ensuring access to services. It could be argued that this is the starting point for planning services.
- 11.3 On one hand you have the option of restricting the number of public transport routes substantially and increase the frequency of journeys. Then you could seek funding from another source to fund the third sector / community councils to maintain the on-call service at a reduced cost to collect passengers to reach specific bus stops on the routes.
- 11.4 On the other hand, you have the necessity of having private car transport, and you could consider an initiative for car owners to transport passengers who do not have a car to services.

Multi-purpose Centres

- 12.1 **A role could be developed for Community Councils, wherever possible, to provide banking/post/medical services in public houses/village halls once a week.**
- 12.2 Village halls or another suitable building should be developed as the heart of the community by running various services from them. Although there would be costs associated with this, this was the way forward and there would certainly be people from the community who would be willing to give some of their time to help such a venture.
- 12.3 People do not know what is going on, who these people are or who to contact and this could be a role for the community councils.

Good Practice in Gwynedd

- 13.1 There are examples of successful plans to increase inclusion in Gwynedd. We have restricted our work in this field to list a small number of various types of schemes to improve inclusion and to obtain views at the focus groups. It is unclear as to how successful these enterprises are. Those who contributed to the focus groups were aware of some schemes and praised them.

Comprehensive list:

<http://mantellgwynedd.com>

Here are a few interesting examples:

<http://www.oddrwsiddrws.co.uk/>

<http://www.cildegwynedd.co.uk/>

<http://www.caban-cyf.org/>

<http://www.canolfan-talysarn.org.uk/>

<http://www.institiwtcorris.org.uk/cymraeg/welcome/index.php>

Good Practice outside Gwynedd

- 14.1 We note examples of good practice outside the County. Again, we have not been able to assess how successful these scheme were in terms of increasing inclusion, but we deem that addressing them when developing specific schemes will be of benefit.

The list of plans and groups that operate across Wales and beyond is enormous. It is comparatively easy to gain access to basic information about them on the Web.

Here are some of our favourites:

<http://www.cydcymru-egni.com>

[Pub is the Hub \(Cadwyn Clwyd\)](#)

[Torfaen Footpath Volunteers](#)

[Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Voluntary Ranger Service](#)

<http://www.wheelstowork.org/>

<http://www.whitmore.village.uk.net/newsletter/newsletter2.html#rural>

Recommendations

We note recommendations for the Council to act on directly and as a partner to promote better inclusion by facilitating access to services. We consider that the Welsh Government is one of the key partners, along with local and regional partners.

Engagement

- 15.1** There are good examples of organisations in the public, third and private sectors that plan and provide services with a view of putting the customer first. However, it is evident from the Investigation's work that we do not have a clear picture of the requirements of the residents of Gwynedd as a whole in terms of facilitating access to services. We are of the opinion that there is a need to undertake significant further work to create a clear profile of the current situation across the County.

Engagement is needed and meaningful consultation, where appropriate, with residents and service users when planning and developing services on a strategic level and on a level of providing services on a day to day basis.

Use networks that already exist if they are appropriate rather than making special arrangements for engagement.

Plan carefully and ensure that you provide sufficient time for preparing prospective service providers, service users and residents when planning services.

The Council's new Engagement Strategy is a good starting point and there is a need to ensure that Cabinet Members give priority to gathering opinions and evidence from citizens and to carefully consider the impact on service users in rural areas when planning and providing services.⁷

The Economy

- 15.2** There are no clear signs that Gwynedd's vulnerable economic situation is likely to improve substantially in the short or medium term. There will be a need to converge any public or other financial resources effectively in order to maximise their value within the County.

You are required to agree with the Welsh Government on the direction and implementation of the Economic and Spatial Strategy for Gwynedd and Anglesey as a starting point to fund structures (to include highways and transport) as the main driver to plan access to services across the County.

Alternative Services

⁷ [Gwynedd Council Engagement Strategy 2013-2017](#)

- 15.3 It is inevitable that the increasing financial pressure on public services means that the nature of services will change. The Council has already addressed this in its Strategic Plan and the need to act has arrived.

The Welsh Government needs to clearly show what is the way forward as soon as possible. The Investigation obtained some evidence that the residents of Gwynedd are willing to consider changes to their services, but there is a need to step up the pace to alleviate fears and to plan and provide high quality services in alternative ways.

15.4 **Shop Locally Services**

There is no evidence to show that people in rural areas have great concerns in relation to access to shops. However, the weaknesses in terms of the opportunity to socialise by shopping in the local community create a difficult situation and could possibly lead to more stress and health problems. In addition, obtaining easy access to cash is difficult.

This is an example where early intervention to prevent more serious and costly problems later on could be beneficial and an effective use of scarce resources. It's possible that supporting small private business and social enterprises that are already up and running would be an effective way of implementing the 'Gwynedd Way' in this case.

Target private and third sector businesses that currently operate in the communities to support them to develop a convenient shopping service as a focal point for the local community, with the aim of them becoming self-supporting by 2016 before the end of the Council's Strategic Plan's lifespan in 2017. Then, you can undertake a detailed assessment in order to establish the way forward for Gwynedd's subsequent Strategic Plan.

Transport

- 15.5 A number of valuable messages were received by the Focus Groups about the importance of transport as the main factor in terms of ensuring equal access for all to services.

There is a fundamental complexity in this field, mainly because of the 'necessary' use of cars in order to live a 'normal' life according to the usual practices of the twenty-first century in a 'developed' society such as Wales.

In our opinion, in the short and medium term, there is a need to consider that the use of a personal vehicle or the vehicle of a relative or a friend in Gwynedd communities is a vital requirement in order to ensure equal and fair access to services across the County.

Furthermore, we are of the opinion that public transport services that can address the needs of more residents in some communities cannot be maintained. Consequently, there are serious implications. We are of the opinion that people are not treated fairly in terms of ensuring access to services in Gwynedd.

In addition, more flexibility is needed in terms of planning the public transport services in order to support economic development.

There is a need to plan public transport on two tiers:

TIER A: To agree with the Welsh Government on Service Centres across the County and regionally, by planning public transport to connect Gwynedd's main population locations.

TIER B: The Council needs to re-design services from the populated main centres to rural areas. In accordance with the reference in the Williams Report, we deem that this work is the role of the new community councils and that three innovative schemes should be undertaken instead of a group of councils showing a willingness to act on this between now and 2016. Then, a detailed assessment should be undertaken of the three schemes.

Health in Pen Llŷn

- 15.6 The observations received in relation to health services demonstrated quite different situations in the three areas in question. With this in view, we consider that further consideration should be given to the situation in Pen Llŷn at once. (See Recommendation 15.7).

In the Llanuwchllyn-Bala area the main issue that was highlighted was the need to improve the access to regional health services in Wrexham. (See Recommendation 15.5 above).

Although the provision of health services in the Pen Llŷn area is already being considered by the Welsh Government as part of the future re-organisation plans, we consider that the clear evidence obtained from concerns about the safety of the weekend provision is a matter that should be formally submitted to the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government needs to provide a temporary urgent solution to the local residents' opinion about the lack of safety of the health service in Pen Llŷn on weekends.

Realistic Expectations

- 15.7 In the Pentir area the potential of creating difficulties 'down the line' in terms of providing 'online' services was identified. We did not obtain clear evidence of this in this Investigation. However, we consider that this is a matter that should be discussed carefully as it could lead to serious implications in terms of re-designing online services and undertaking health assessments over the phone etc.

One of the main positive elements from the Investigation was the fact that those who participated in the focus groups were fully aware of the need to change and plan and provide services in different ways. It is time to act and to be innovative.

One of the essential elements for planning and providing services in alternative ways is the need to use technology and new developments in an effective manner. However, it is vital that people have faith in the new arrangements and that we take advantage of the opportunities to improve services by providing them using alternative methods.

Undertake further research to see whether there is evidence that maintaining health and other services ‘from afar’ creates more intensive health problems or other difficulties in the medium and long term for service users. If evidence of this comes to light make an appropriate provision to mitigate the impact when planning services.

Build on Good Practice

- 15.8 At the beginning of the Report it is noted that this is merely a snapshot of the situation of access to services in Gwynedd. Unfortunately, we have not been able to give careful consideration to the current provision across the County.

We understand that you are in the process of mapping the general provision of social enterprises in Gwynedd and you will be considering this when planning to improve the sustainability of services.

This work will be valuable in order to identify the nature, form and quality of the current provision. Historically, Gwynedd pioneered with some elements of alternative services by social enterprises through successful collaboration with the Central Government. The Vanguard Scheme in the field of people with learning disabilities in the last century was a good example of this.

The desire to be enterprising and innovative continues to be evident in Gwynedd communities.

Build on the core provision that exists in Gwynedd to improve access to services by identifying and assessing the quality of services that are currently provided by the Third Sector and Private Sector across the County. Plan alternative services over a period of three years or more by providing appropriate guidance and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following for providing evidence, valuable support and their willing cooperation:

The local residents of the areas of Llanuwchllyn/Llandderfel, Tregarth, Mynydd Llandegai and Pentir 2, Aberdaron, Botwnnog and Tudweiliog, Llanengan, Llanbedrog and Abersoch

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Harry Thomas, Chief Executive

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Background documents

Gwynedd Council Strategic Plan 2013-17

Rural Development Plan 2007-13

Rural Development Plan draft 2014-2020

Joseff Rowntree Investigations

Deep Rural Localities, Wales Rural Observatory, October 2009, Getting the Measure of Rural Deprivation in Wales – May 2012 – Commissioned by the Local Government Data Unit on behalf of WLGA Rural Forum

Rural Health Plan – Improving integrated Service delivery across Wales – Welsh Government

Wales Transport Strategy (2008)

Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities (2007)

Economic Development and the Welsh Language (2006)

Making the Connections

National Survey for Wales 2012-13

Improving Rural Services – Service Priority, Accessibility and Quality in Rural Scotland – May 2006 – Scottish Executive

Exclusive Countryside? – Social inclusion and regeneration in rural areas, Mark Shucksmith, July 2000, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Fresh Fields – Rural social care: Research, policy and practice agendas, Gary Craig and Jill Manthorpe, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000

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**LEADER 2014–2020
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO FORM A LOCAL ACTION GROUP (LAG)**

Proposed name of LAG	GWYNEDD Local Action Group
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Section 1: Operating Area / Geographical Wards

The Proposed Operating area to be covered by Local Action Group (LAG): Gwynedd

The black outline on the map below clearly indicates the boundaries of the proposed area. As indicated by the map below, Gwynedd is a large rural area that is 2,535 square kilometers in size in geographical terms. It is the second largest County in Wales and represents 12% of the total area of the country.



APPENDIX 1

A total of 71 wards make up the area/county of Gwynedd. All the wards are listed in the table below, and a map of the wards can be found as Attachment 1.

1	Aberdaron	36	Llanbedr
2	Aberdyfi	37	Llanbedrog
3	Abererch	38	Llanberis
4	Abermaw	39	Llandderfel
5	Abersoch	40	Llanengan
6	Arllechwedd	41	Llangelynnin
7	Bala	42	Llanllyfni
8	Bethel	43	Llanrug
9	Bontnewydd	44	Llanuwchllyn
10	Botwnnog	45	Llanwnda
11	Bowydd a Rhiw	46	Llanystumdwy
12	Brithdir & Llanfachraeth / Ganllwyd / Llanelltyd	47	<i>Marchog (Service Centre)</i>
13	Bryn-crug / Llanfihangel	48	<i>Menai (Bangor) (Service Centre)</i>
14	Cadnat	49	Menai (Caernarfon)
15	Clynnog	50	Morfa Nefyn
16	Corris / Mawddwy	51	Nefyn
17	Criccieth	52	Ogwen
18	Cwm y Glo	53	Peblig
19	<i>Deiniol (Service Centre)</i>	54	Penisarwaun
20	Deiniolen	55	Penrhyndeudraeth
21	<i>Dewi (Service Centre)</i>	56	Pentir
22	Diffwys a Maenofferen	57	Penygroes
23	Dolbenmaen	58	Dwyarin Porthmadog
24	De Dolgellau	59	Gorllewin Porthmadog
25	Gogledd Dolgellau	60	Porthmadog – Tremadog
26	Dyffryn Ardudwy	61	Gogledd Pwllheli
27	Efailnewydd / Buan	62	De Pwllheli
28	<i>Garth (service Centre)</i>	63	Seiont
29	Gerlan	64	Talysarn
30	<i>Glyder (Service Centre)</i>	65	Teigl
31	Groeslon	66	Trawsfynydd
32	Harlech	67	Tregarth & Mynydd Llandygai
33	<i>Hendre (Service Centre)</i>	68	Tudweiliog
34	<i>Hirael (Service Centre)</i>	69	Tywyn
35	Llanaelhearn	70	Waunfawr
		71	Y Felinheli

The whole of Gwynedd has been designated as rural by the Welsh Assembly Government for the purpose of the Rural Development Plan for Wales, with only the central areas of the city of Bangor designated as a service wards for a wider rural area.

The County has an outstanding natural and built environment, which has been recognised by many international awards and designations, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty status in Llyn, and National Park Status across much of the county. 67.5% of the land within Gwynedd is located in the Snowdonia National Park, the largest national park in Wales.

APPENDIX 1

Therefore whilst we propose that the whole of Gwynedd is considered an eligible area for LEADER activity during the 2014-2020 programme, particular emphasis will be placed upon activities regenerating those areas outside the Service Centres. This more rural area of Gwynedd is mainly characterised by a wide area of open countryside, rugged mountain terrain and a scattered villages.

Rationale

It is recognised that as a predominantly rural county, it is frequently a rather academic exercise to attempt to separate rural matters from those that affect the whole of the County. As an area which is largely rural and which continues to be dependant upon traditional economic activity, the need for investment in rural development is acute. A clear and proven demand for local funding has been demonstrated by the uptake of the local provision within the Objective 1 period between 2000 and 2006 and the current Rural Development Plan Programme (2007-2013), we are keen to ensure that further funding is available locally.

With continued cuts being made to Local Authority budgets/services and other sources of funding, rural communities in Gwynedd are facing a significant challenge if they are to flourish and continue to provide a sustainable location for businesses and communities alike. Any future investments will be looked upon as a long term investment to ensure we develop a resilient and enterprising communities here in Gwynedd. This should be a strategic and integrated approach across the whole of Gwynedd and as such a Local development Strategy should be applicable to the whole of Gwynedd.

Section 2: Population (minimum 10,000 / maximum 150,000)

The figures for the population of Gwynedd following the census in 2011 is **121,874**.

The Service Centre wards have a total population of 16,358 (13% of Gwynedd's total population) in comparison to 105,516 of the rural wards (87% of Gwynedd's total population).

Section 3: Indication of Proposed Themes to be covered by the Local Action Group

Themes covered by the Local Action Group and the development of a Local Development Strategy will be considered part of a broader strategic context. The Economic Ambition Board for North Wales have already established strategic priorities for North Wales as a whole, with priorities have been identified on a more local level through the extensive research and consultation process undertaken in the development of Gwynedd Council's Strategic Plan for the period 2013-2017. Particular emphasis therefore will be given to ensure that any proposed themes and the development of a Local Development Strategy, will have a clear alignment with these regional and local strategic priorities. In addition, securing integration with other EU funds will also be a priority to ensure that the outcomes of the LEADER process can be referred to further sources of funding or support.

All five themes proposed by Welsh Government are of importance to Gwynedd, therefore we do not at this point in the process wish to exclude any themes, however we are aware that with reduced funding it will be important to target support at the right investment to ensure that

APPENDIX 1

Gwynedd's local communities can meet the challenges ahead in future years.

A workshop was held in Gwynedd on 9 January 2014 with members of the current Partnership and LAG, as well as additional key partners and stakeholders. The aim of the workshop was to gain an initial guidance on the proposed themes to be covered by the Local Action Group In Gwynedd by using the LEADER funds.

The workshop identified all five themes relevant and important to Gwynedd, with particular interest noted by those attending in 'adding value to local identity and natural and cultural resources' and 'renewable energy on a community level'.

Whilst the workshop provided us with an initial lead on the proposed themes that could be covered by the Local Action Group, it is also important to remember that the workshop is also part of the wider picture. The development of a Local Development Strategy would enable us to engage further and more broadly with partners and key stakeholders in order to confirm the specific themes and activities proposed in the area for the period 2014-2020. An additional consultation process has also taken place in preparing the recent National Park and the AONB Management Plans. Information regarding potential themes collated as part of this process will also be used and considered when developing and confirming the themes within Gwynedd's LDS.

Particular consideration will also be given to the additional opportunities that Gwynedd's local outstanding natural environment can offer, including the Snowdonia National Park. In this respect emphasis would be given on collaboration with adjoining Local Action Groups to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach.

Section 4: Priority needs in the area (including high level aims and objectives)

As mentioned above specific priority needs in Gwynedd have already been identified as part of Gwynedd Council's Strategic Plan (2013-2017). These priorities have been identified following extensive research, consultation and assessments of varied data, in which Gwynedd Economic Partnership took part. This led to a collection of data and key information that provided a sound evidence base, which in turn were used for identifying a set of priorities for the area.

The higher level aim, as noted in the Council's Strategic Plan (2013-2017) is to **ensure the best for the people of Gwynedd today and tomorrow**. Listed below are the priority needs and objectives identified within two specific categories:

Economy:

- Strengthening business resilience and retaining the benefit locally
- Improve the quality of jobs and wage levels
- Improving the access the work and addressing barriers

Stronger Communities:

- Promoting the Welsh language
- Reducing the effects of poverty and deprivation
- Promoting sustainable rural communities
- Promoting community pride and responsibility

APPENDIX 1

The above clearly align with the objectives to tackle poverty and economic growth, which has been recognized by Welsh Government as a key priority in the delivery of the Rural Development Plan. The research and consultation undertaken in the development of the Council's Strategic Plan will also provide a sound basis for the development of the Gwynedd LDS.

In addition, in preparation for the development of the Gwynedd LDS an independent, objective review of Gwynedd's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in an economic context has been undertaken. During the workshop held on the 9th January (as mentioned in section 3 above) initial feedback on the validity of the SWOT, as well as an early indication of themes, were discussed. The analysis of the SWOT will also be used to inform the development of the Gwynedd LDS.

Section 5: Partners and Engagement Strategy

Current Structure:-

We currently have two steering groups in Gwynedd co-ordinating Axis 3 and 4 of the Rural Development Plan activities; namely the Local Partnership (Gwynedd Economic Partnership)_and the Local Action Group (the Partnership's Rural Development Sub Group). This structure will be revisited in light of the fact that these two roles are no longer required during the next programme period at a local level.

Proposed Future Structure:-

Therefore we anticipate that the constitution and the membership of both groups be reviewed in order to establish one steering group. It will be this group that will propose itself as the 'Local Action Group' for the 2014-2020 period.

Once Welsh Government guidance on the composition and function of LAGs for the 2013 – 2020 programme period is confirmed. It is proposed to establish a shadow LAG under the auspices of the current Partnership to ensure that potential members are involved in the initial discussions and developments of the LEADER programme. Members will be drawn from the current Partnership and LAG, as well as an open process to recruit new members in order to draw on specific expertise.

In compliance with guidance given by Welsh Government, the Local Action Group will have a multi sectoral approach. Members of the groups will be made up from representatives of the private, community/voluntary and public sectors. Please note that the public sector as a whole will represent a minority in the LAG's membership with over 51% of the membership made up of the private and community sector.

A public workshop session with key stakeholders and partners has already been held on the 9th January 2014 in order to receive an initial feedback for this exercise. Further workshops and general consultations will be held during 2014 as the Rural Development Plan for 2014-2020 is finalised. This will be part of the wider engagement strategy with members of the current Partnership and LAG members, key stakeholders, partners as well as other organisations and the public to provide further input into the development process and ensure the Gwynedd LDS is widely supported.

APPENDIX 1

Section 6: Estimated Costs to prepare Local Development Strategy

We currently estimate that a maximum of £50k would be required for the preparatory costs to develop the LDS. The work would include the following:-

- Capacity building & networking to prepare a Local Development Strategy
- Training for local key stakeholders & partners
- Additional studies of the area (should this be necessary)
- Consultancy costs
- Administrative Costs (including translation, coordination of the work)

Subject to approval, £40k towards the above work has potentially been identified through the current Lead Body Running Costs for Axis 4 under the 2007-2013 programme. Further guidance and approval from WG in order to submit a Project Amendment Form (PAF) and move funds between costs headings would be required.

Gwynedd Council would also consider contributing an additional £10k towards the costs whether it be financial or in kind (i.e. staff costs). This would be agreed and confirmed if successful in round one.

Section 7: Estimated Costs to Implement a Local Development Strategy

The principle of a joint approach to the co-ordination and delivery of the Rural Development Plan across North Wales has been discussed and agreed by the Heads of Economic Development of the six counties of North Wales under the auspices of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board.

It is intended to strike a balance between:

- a. maintaining the integral requirement to ensure LEADER is led and delivered by Local Action Groups drawn from within local communities, by means of a Local Development Strategy which reflects each area's unique needs and opportunities;
- b. fully exploiting opportunities to align and co-ordinate activities where there is a common interest between areas *and* take advantages of economies of scale to minimise the administration costs associated with the delivery of the RDP

Each area will maintain an individual LAG and LDS in accordance with the EU Regulations and Welsh Government guidance, but the management and administration of the programme (i.e. running costs) will be undertaken by a single lead body operating across more than one LAG / LDS area. The implementation of the programme (i.e. animation costs) will operate primarily within an each individual LAG / LDS area, although it may be feasible to undertake some animation activities across more than one LAG / LDS area where a common theme / community of interest emerges (or where there is a cross border spatial designation e.g. the Snowdonia National Park). An outline graphical representation of this approach is enclosed as Attachment 2.

The single lead body will be accountable to each individual LAG in relation to the delivery of the programme in each area.

APPENDIX 1

In North West Wales (Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy) preliminary discussions on this joint approach have already been held involving the three local authorities and Menter Môn as the LAG/lead body in Anglesey with agreement on the approach in principle and with a view to one of the organisations potentially undertaking the 'lead body' function.

On the basis of an assumption of three LAGs / LDS' in North West Wales with a single lead body (undertaking central administration / management and local animation / delivery). We believe that the following are reasonable initial estimates of the cost to implement an LDS:

Running Costs (management of the implementation of the LDS - operating costs, personnel costs, training costs, costs linked to public relations, financial costs, costs linked to monitoring and evaluation of the strategy) 10%

Animation Costs (animation of the LDS – facilitation of exchange between stakeholders, provision of information, promotion of LDS, support potential beneficiaries to develop operations and prepare applications) 15%

Note: It must be noted that there are minimum thresholds for the resources required for the viable delivery of the programme, in particular in relation to the running costs. Should the indicative allocations for the areas be low the proportion of funds required for running cost will increase; conversely a larger indicative allocation may allow the running costs to be further reduced (and redirected to the animation function) as the administrative requirement in relation to the management of EAFRD funds is not directly proportional to the money available.

Section 8: Additional Information

Attachment 1 – Map of Gwynedd's Rural Wards

Attachment 2 – Representation of the Operational approach

Further information and guidance on completing this form is available on the Welsh Government website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/ruraldevelopment/rural-development-plan-for-wales-2014-2020/?lang=en>

Please complete and return this form either by post to Scheme Management Unit, Welsh Government, Rhodfa Padarn, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. SY23 3UR, or electronically to ruralprogrammes@wales.gsi.gov.uk **no later than 31 January 2014.**

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	27 MARCH, 2014
TITLE	COLLABORATION / THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES
AUTHOR	Geraint George, Head of Strategic and Improvement Department
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Dyfed Edwards
What needs to be scrutinised and why?	The Council's response to the Williams Commission report and the implementation timetable, if known
Is there anything else the Scrutiny Committee needs to do?	No – As we require definite guidance from the Welsh Government on its response to the report
What are the next steps?	No specific steps

1. The Williams Report is a substantial document with the full report (with appendices) being 347 pages long and the summary report 106 pages long. It contains a thematic analysis of the challenges that face the public sector in terms of dealing with the weaknesses of the existing systems and how prepared it is to face the future. It contains 62 recommendations.
2. The main focus in the Press and Media has been on the changes to the number of councils but the report itself stresses that the recommendations should not be implemented selectively. Rather, it is argued that it is a package of recommendations which need to be implemented together.
3. The report is limited to some extent by the remit given to it; however, it offers an analysis of the situation of public services in Wales and the need for change in the future although it does clearly miss one obvious opportunity of considering the integration of Health and Care Services. There is a risk that the discussions around the merger of councils will mean that the other important messages in the document are missed.
4. Appendix 1 of this report offers an initial rough assessment of some of the main messages and recommendations in the report, how they could affect the Council and suggests a possible response that the Council could consider in due course should the recommendations of the Commission report be implemented. However, these are comments on the Commission report and we will have to wait for some guidance from the Government before deciding what will require attention.

5. Two general matters are highlighted. Firstly, are there any initiatives within our work programmes on a strategic or departmental level that we wish to suspend for the time being as they would probably be things that would not bear fruition until after any reorganisation and would therefore be the subject of discussion and co-development with possible partners in order to set the foundation for any new council.
6. Secondly, the new councils would certainly face a huge challenge. The structural change offers an opportunity to improve; however it is only an opportunity. If the opportunity is not taken, by developing new methods of working, the future of the new councils would be very dark with fewer resources and deterioration in the standards of services from the customer's perspective. There is also an opportunity to use the reorganisation as a genuine opportunity to hold a "big conversation" to redefine the role of local government in public services.
7. In terms of the timescale, there is some uncertainty at present but it appears that the key dates are as follows:-
 - Easter 2014 (at the latest) – The Williams Commission's original target for the Welsh Government, Local Authorities and key stakeholders to agree on a proposed programme for the merger of Councils, with a Transformation and Implementation Board set up to co-ordinate everything
 - Summer 2014 – An aim which has recently been announced by the First Minister to agree on the map in order to encourage early voluntary mergers
 - May 2016 – The next Welsh Government Elections – Since no political consensus has been secured in Cardiff Bay to drive this forward, it appears at present that any reorganisation proposals would have to be part of the parties' manifestos in the Assembly elections
 - May 2017 – The likely date of the next proposed elections of Welsh Councils – an opportunity to hold elections for any new shadow council. The elections were planned for May 2016; however, an order has been prepared to postpone them until May 2017. This order has not yet been issued.
8. To date, and despite copious observations and discussions on the matter, the Council has not been called to express a viewpoint. In this current period of uncertainty, I suggest that the Council's viewpoint is that it is open to discussions with the Welsh Government and any partners regarding the reorganisation of services in a way which offers results, efficiency and value for money for residents.

1. FIELD / THEME - COMPLEXITY

WILLIAMS ANALYSIS	WILLIAMS RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS / POSSIBLE RESPONSE
<p>(i) There is a suggestion to reduce the abundance of specific grants as the current system creates a negative “grant culture” and creates complexity in terms of financial management arrangements which does not add value (It is suggested that this should be operational by 2016/17)</p>	<p>5. We therefore recommend that funding arrangements must be simpler and focused on achieving outcomes. By the end of the 2016-17 financial year, all specific grants which the Welsh Government pays to other public sector bodies must be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in unhyphenated funding; or • Subject to much clearer and outcome-focused conditions which ensure specific • grants are spent in a way that contributes to national or local outcomes; or • Retained in their current form in genuinely exceptional cases only(paragraph 2.33) 	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – This is something that Local Government in Wales has been calling for, for years. This type of freedom in England has enabled local authorities to more easily cope with a level of savings which has been higher than those in Wales. It is a shame that the report leaves the door open for some specific grants but this is unavoidable due to the nature of the relationship between national and local government (there are further comments on this under Section 5 about performance management and in response to Recommendation 54 specifically).</p>
<p>(ii) It is suggested that organisations which have a clear focus on outcomes should have more autonomy on grants which they receive (It is suggested that this is operational by the start of 2015/16)</p>	<p>6. We therefore recommend that, by the start of the 2015-16 financial year, the Welsh Government must set out how recipients of each specific grant can earn greater autonomy in their use by demonstrating their ability to deliver positive outcomes through strong performance. (para2.34)</p>	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – Strengthening the Council’s discipline on focusing on outcomes for citizens is becoming more and more important. It is a matter of opinion as to the extent of our success with the opinion of our auditors being a factor.</p>
<p>(iii) The argument for structural merger between Health and Social Services was refused. The opinion is that it is possible to integrate without doing so and that the current mission statements are a step in the right direction.</p>	<p>17. Urgent action is required to ensure that seamless, integrated and high-quality health and social services are provided across Wales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local authorities and LHBs must immediately prepare clear and robust plans for integrating their services; • These must include detailed proposals, milestones, targets and outcomes for • Improved and integrated delivery for all 	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – The “mission statements” on collaboration and integration are light on specific plans at present. <u>RECOMMENDATION</u> – It is suggested that specific integration schemes should be called for. In doing so, it could facilitate practical discussions should the Health Boards structure their management arrangements to recognise the authorities’ boundaries.</p>

	<p>relevant services. The Welsh Government must monitor their implementation; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If these proposals are not implemented well or quickly enough, the Welsh Government must consider directing local authorities and local health boards to integrate, either using existing powers or those in the Social Services and Wellbeing Bill, if enacted. (paragraph 2.66) 	
<p>(iv) Collaboration and partnership working is inconsistent and complex as suggested by the Beecham Report. However, the current encouragement for collaboration and partnership working has not borne fruition and the partnership pattern is overly complicated.</p>	<p>21. We therefore recommend that local partnership structures must be radically streamlined and made more effective. To do so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All local service boards (LSBs) must ensure that they themselves fulfil and manifest the criteria we set out for effective partnership working; • All LSBs must maintain a single register of local partnerships; • All LSBs must overhaul local partnership structures to bring them into line with these criteria and with the clearer national and local priority outcomes which we also propose. This should begin immediately and conclude within one year of those priorities being articulated. Partnerships which compound complexity or do not add value should be disbanded; and • Single Integrated Plans must also reflect these outcomes and identify the main cross-sectoral pressures and pinch points which need to be addressed; they must set out clearly the actions which need to be undertaken, by whom and by when (paragraph 2.107) 	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – It would be possible to build on the work that this Council and Anglesey Council has done through the Partnership Rationalisation Project in order to confirm the focus for the work of the Local Services Board and agree on strategic objectives that everyone works towards. (NB This is a challenge when dealing with regional bodies which work to different objectives).</p>
<p>(iii) It is said that the “shared services” partnership in the Health Service has been successful and that it is a model for various</p>	<p>22. We therefore recommend that, building on the achievements of NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership, a single shared services operation</p>	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – Given the failure to realise any of the “shared services” improvements through collaboration work across north Wales, it is doubtful whether it will</p>

services including employment and human resources, procurement, legal, insurance and risk, audit etc. (It is suggested that this must be in place by the end of the 2016/17 financial year)	must be established to provide back office functions and common services across the public sector by the end of the 2016-2017 financial year. The Welsh Government must co-ordinate and oversee its development and establishment. (paragraph 2.116)	succeed on a national level, certainly within the type of timetable proposed. There might be an opportunity to consider collaboration across authorities again when any reorganisation comes about as the structure will be broken down and recreated in any case, but it is doubtful whether this is possible across each one of the services noted.
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2. FIELD / THEMES – SCALE AND CAPABILITY

WILLIAMS ANALYSIS	WILLIAMS RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS / POSSIBLE RESPONSE
(i) The capacity arguments for the challenge ahead, cost and overheads and the importance of maintaining boundaries which already exist are strongly in favour of creating larger establishments through mergers.	23. We therefore recommend merging the 22 local authorities we have into larger units. This should be done by amalgamating local authorities already in existence rather than re-drawing boundaries. (paragraph 3.72)	<u>COMMENT</u> – There is an argument as to whether the new units the report suggests are large enough and amended proposals might go to this direction. The report’s argument for working within existing boundaries is a pragmatic one rather than logical.

3. FIELD / THEME – GOVERNANCE, SCRUTINY AND DELIVERY

WILLIAMS ANALYSIS	WILLIAMS RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS / POSSIBLE RESPONSE
(i) Good scrutiny is a crucial element of any governance arrangement. Work on what is good scrutiny has been in the pipeline. BUT there are fundamental weaknesses in the existing scrutiny arrangements and they must be developed.	31. We recommend therefore that the importance, status and value of scrutiny must be prioritised, continually sustained and reinforced. To support this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All elected members, independent members, non-executive directors, and officers must acknowledge the importance and value of scrutiny in improving services for people and organisations in Wales. The independence of scrutiny must be strongly asserted and 	<u>COMMENT</u> - Agree, but there are capacity problems (in terms of members and officers) facing every Council in particular with dwindling resources. <u>RECOMMENDATION</u> – The work on good scrutiny characteristics completed recently in Wales is a starting point but we must move forward. It is suggested that there should be collaboration with the Public Scrutiny Centre possibly to move on from those characteristics to practical proposals for improving the quality of scrutiny on individual council level.

	<p>protected as must its essentially constructive and positive nature;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive members, non-executive directors, and officers, must similarly acknowledge the value of scrutiny in helping them to deliver services better. They must publicise and explain their decisions clearly, and invite scrutiny of them, including pre-decision, willingly and openly. They must also acknowledge and respond to scrutiny reports promptly and in good faith; and • As part of raising the stature and profile of scrutiny, and engaging citizens, there must be increased visibility of the outputs and outcomes from local government scrutiny. (paragraph 4.47) 	
<p>(ii) Local Services Boards and others need to have clear and definite plans about the difference they want to make (It is recommended that the Welsh Government introduces the new governance model by 2015)</p>	<p>36. The Welsh Government, in consultation with LSB members, must reform LSBs so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have clear, ambitious and realistic purpose and vision; • By 2015 there is a national single, robust, governance model in place which is equitable and transparent and which ensures that decisions are based on identifiable responsibilities and actions, joint rights and obligations, creating clear accountability for delivery; • They are empowered to take significant and meaningful decisions which will contribute to attaining their purpose and vision; and • They comprise senior representatives from each organisation who have relevant authority and influence. (paragraph 4.66) 	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – There is an opportunity for the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Services Board to take advantage of the fact that it has already been rationalised to move on soon to agree a definite and clear vision for its work and to show clearly what difference it will make to citizens.</p>

4. FIELD / THEME – LEADERSHIP, CULTURE AND VALUES

WILLIAMS ANALYSIS	WILLIAMS RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS / POSSIBLE RESPONSE
(i) Public sector officers require a set of values	<p>50. We therefore recommend that in order to drive this change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new public service leadership and development centre must establish a time limited project to promote and embed a consistent set of public service values; • These values must be developed within two years through a collaborative and meaningful process involving staff from across public service organisations and at all levels; • Once agreed, the leaders of all public service organisations in Wales should adopt these as the core values to which any local or sector specific variations are added; and • The public service leadership and development centre must use values-based development as a principle of all training and development opportunities, demonstrating the shared values in all aspects of learning. (paragraph 5.96) 	<p><u>COMMENT</u> – The idea of common values is to be welcomed and it would be good to see a national move to this direction with a similar focus to the work of the Council’s Gwynedd Way placing the citizens at the centre of everything</p>

5. FIELD / THEME – PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

WILLIAMS ANALYSIS	WILLIAMS RECOMMENDATIONS	COMMENTS / POSSIBLE RESPONSE
(i) There are robust examples from other countries (e.g. New Zealand) and a clear focus on national and local levels (It is	54. We therefore recommend that, by the end of 2014, the Welsh Government must bring greater clarity and distinction between different measures,	<u>COMMENT</u> – There is room to have a new national pattern of performance indicators which is clear and coherent along the following lines:-

<p>suggested that the Welsh Government ensures better clarity on this by the end of 2014)</p>	<p>indicators and targets in use. At the national level, performance measurement and management should focus on what needs to be done, not on how it is done. So in particular, these reforms must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw out clearly the key outcomes and priorities the Welsh Government wishes to see delivered; and • Create more streamlined and consistent ways of measuring service performance below that, without prescribing the detailed measurement of operational and delivery matters. (paragraph 6.65) 	<p>a) A small number of indicators determined on a national basis b) A number of indicators which are the subject of discussion and agreement between the Assembly and the councils and their partners c) A number of other key indicators agreed by individual councils</p> <p>NB b) and c) should be subject to local discussion with citizens</p>
<p>(ii) Proposals to encourage performance amongst local partners should be developed</p>	<p>55. We recommend that the Welsh Government develops and concludes high-level agreements with each local service board, setting out how the board and its members will contribute to national strategic outcomes while also addressing local needs and priorities. (paragraph 6.80)</p>	<p><u>RECOMMENDATION</u> – An early decision should be sought to see whether this will be implemented or not. If it will be, the Local Services Board should be encouraged to look at determining key indicators for the area so that the local partners are ready for any national discussion.</p>

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Scrutiny Committee - Corporate
DATE OF MEETING	27 March 2014
TITLE OF ITEM	Savings Programme
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Peredur Jenkins

1. Background and context

- 1.1 As part of the Council's Financial Strategy we are projecting a funding gap of around £50m over the four year period 2014/15 – 2017/18. With an assumed council tax increase of 3.5% and savings already being found, this will leave around £34m to be found.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee is reminded of the strategy referred to by the Cabinet to the Council in the meeting on the 6th March which anticipated meeting the gap through:

Council Tax Policy	Consider increase in the Council Tax in the 3.5% - 5% range
Schools Budget	Consider setting a target for the schools budget based on what is practical
Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery	Consider whether there will be any savings arising from reorganisation which we can depend upon and take into account
Efficiency Savings	Maximising the efficiency savings that can be achieved
Service Cuts	Figure remaining

- 1.3 This report outlines the process of finding the efficiencies / demand management element, noting the targets per department I am recommending to the Cabinet and the process to follow thereafter.

2. Basis of the savings target

- 2.1 Work has been completed to identify potential opportunities for efficiency and demand management savings per department.
- 2.2 The result of that work is outlined in Appendix A and there will be a presentation by the Corporate Director detailing how we came to those figures in the meeting.

3. The proposed process

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Committee comments will be presented verbally to the Cabinet in its meeting on the 1st of April prior to the approval of the targets per department.
- 3.2 The departments will present their proposals by the end of May when detailed work will be carried out before presenting them to the Scrutiny Working Group to scrutinise and challenge the proposals before presenting them to the Cabinet for approval.
- 3.3 With this in view, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-chairs Forum agreed in its meeting on the 24th January to establish a working group from their midst (i.e. the Scrutiny Committees, Democratic Services Committee and the Audit Committee) to meet as required.
- 3.4 There will be an opportunity for all members to present their comments and / or concerns to the relevant Chair as required for them to be given attention in the working group. This enables the working group to be inclusive in their role with their fellow members to scrutinise the effect of the proposals.
- 3.5 While remembering that we are looking at efficiency / demand management proposals at this point the effect on results to citizens should be less than that we would see in any cuts regime.
- 3.6 The Working Group will be responsible for ensuring that the implications of the proposals are clear and highlight any considerations that should be brought to the Cabinet's attention in relation to the effect on the people of Gwynedd before presenting them for decision by the Cabinet.
- 3.7 The Working Group will meet as required between July and October 2014.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to scrutinise the basis of the targets and offer any comments on the proposed process before I present to the Cabinet.

BASIS FOR THE SAVINGS TARGET 2014 - 2018

	Education £'000	Human Resources £'000	Finance £'000	Democracy and Legal £'000	Economy and Community £'000	Customer Services £'000	Social Services - Children	Social Services - Adults	Housing	Leisure £'000	Highways and Municipal £'000	Regulatory £'000	Strategic and Improvement £'000	Gwynedd Consultancy £'000	Management Team £'000	Corporate £'000	Total £'000
1. Efficiency																	
a) 1% per year (3 years from 2015/16)	284	70	45	61	125	167	386	1405	72	147	433	252	64	29	48	0	3588
2. Specific Efficiency areas																	
a) Central Services	0	0	485	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	0	0	525
b) End to End Social Services																	
- Children's Service ¹	0	0	0	0	0	0	965	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	965
c) Strategic Reviews																	
- Leisure	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Highway Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1000	0	0	0	0	0	1000
- SEN	1200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1200
- Economic Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ch) Telecare	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	351	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	351
d) Good Practice Research			See above								See below						0
dd) Comparative Spend	0	0	0	0	80	0	250	0	79	801	237	463	0	79	0	0	1989
3. Strategic Efficiency areas																	
a) Management Layers	40	47	98	12	63	96	55	218	16	32	411	88	88	236	0	0	1500
b) EDRMS ⁴	15	15	27	9	22.5	28.5	30	33.3	9.1	31.1	25	30	22	26	0	0	201
c) Ffordd Gwynedd (The Gwynedd Way) - people centred	18	70	129	43	52	157	195	216	40	9	69	182	69	43	68	0	1160
ch) Procurement ²	21.1	7.3	6	11.5	18.1	23.1	3.5	10.2	4.1	67.9	383.7	13.2	5.1	4.2	4	4.4	587.4
4. Corporate Management Team adjustment																	
- Cabinet report 11/03/14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	480	0	480
- target of at least 15% for Central Services	0	217	0	150	0	104	0	0	0	0	0	0	104	0	0	0	575
- target of at least 12% for front line services	0	0	0	42	182	144	0	2375	115	0	0	136	0	0	0	0	2994
Service Total (exc. Demand Management)	1578	426	790	329	543	720	1885	4609	335	1088	2559	1164	392	417	600	4	17115
Managed Efficiency Budget	9602	2843	3930	2320	4524	6715	14277	48365	2666	4957	27719	9701	2614	1278	2113	0	143624
Target as % of the budget	16.4%	15.0%	20.1%	14.2%	12.0%	10.7%	13.2%	9.5%	12.6%	21.9%	9.2%	12.0%	15.0%	32.6%	28.4%	0.0%	
5. Demand Management Schemes³		0	0	0	0	200	1000	2195	0	0	1250	0	0	0	0	0	4645
Service Total (inc. Demand Management)	1578	426	790	329	543	920	2885	6804	335	1088	3809	1164	392	417	600	4	21760
Managed Efficiency Budget	9602	2843	3930	2320	4524	6715	14277	48365	2666	4957	27719	9701	2614	1278	2113	0	143624
Target as % of the budget	16.4%	15.0%	20.1%	14.2%	12.0%	13.7%	20.2%	14.1%	12.6%	21.9%	13.7%	12.0%	15.0%	32.6%	28.4%	0.0%	

¹ - Potential savings of £2.7m over 10 years

² - The basis for the target will be reviewed at the end of the first year

³ - Figure to be confirmed

⁴ - Total figure shown is net of costs

Scrutiny Investigation Report

Sustainable Procurement

Final Version 0.4

Commissioned by the Cabinet Member – Councillor John Wynn Jones

Investigation Members

Councillor Mair Rowlands (Chair)
Councillor Aled Evans
Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams
Councillor Dafydd Meurig
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Officers

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Report

1. Executive Summary
2. Context
3. Purpose of the Investigation
4. Main Activity of the Investigation
5. Reporting back to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee
6. Findings in Accordance with the Scrutiny Investigation Brief
7. Other findings for the Cabinet Member's attention
8. Other matters for the Cabinet Member's attention

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Performance Measurements 2012/13
- Appendix 2a Expenditure within County Boundaries (Local Spend) % (10/11)
- Appendix 2b Expenditure with small and medium enterprises (%) 2010/11
- Appendix 2c Expenditure within North Wales – 2010/11
- Appendix 3 The main findings of the Scrutiny Investigation and the main relevant findings of Gwynedd Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
- Appendix 4 Further reading

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Delivering procurement activities in a responsible and sustainable manner while maximising opportunities to make the best possible use of the Council's expenditure in order to improve economic, environmental and social performance within the County is a priority for Gwynedd Council.
- 1.2 This is reflected in the Council's Strategic Plan for 2013/17. The Council's vision in the field of economy is to improve the opportunities for people to live, work and succeed locally in Gwynedd. One of the priorities within the field is to strengthen business resilience and to keep the benefit local. Procurement is a field the Council has influence over and at the moment, approximately 40% of the Council's procurement takes place within the County.
- 1.3 This Investigation was commissioned by the Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration to focus on the field of sustainable procurement and a brief was agreed that would look in particular at the suitability of policies; compliance with those policies; the impact of packaging work on contracts worth less than £50k; good practice in the field.
- 1.4 The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the Report:
 - i. **There should be agreement on the Council's ambition for the field of sustainable procurement and simple and clear policies and guidelines should be developed for staff to realise this across the Council based on good practice.**
 - ii. **Procurement arrangements should be developed that are suitable to deliver the Council's ambition in the sustainable procurement field and to ensure commitment to those arrangements on the highest level.**
 - iii. **Existing good practice should be built upon within the Council to identify more opportunities for services to collaborate on procurement and to maximise the potential benefits.**
 - iv. **A comprehensive register of all the Council's tendering opportunities should be established in order to ensure better overview of the field.**
 - v. **Suitable and meaningful measures should be developed in order to measure the financial impact of the Council's expenditure and the impact on Gwynedd residents.**
 - vi. **The training arrangements of staff involved with procurement should be reviewed to secure a full understanding of the commitment, active compliance and better identification of the opportunities available for the benefit of Gwynedd residents.**
- 1.5 During the Investigation, its proceedings became much broader as the members identified related matters, which in their opinion were key in terms of the quality of procurement in general but which also influenced arrangements for sustainable

procurement. Despite being outside the Investigation's original brief, the following additional recommendations are also submitted to the Cabinet Member:

- vii. The role of the Corporate Procurement Unit should be defined more clearly within the Council's procurement arrangements in order to secure the best from the resource and to strengthen the Council's procurement arrangements.**
- viii. It should be checked whether or not the Council's current devolved arrangements are the most suitable to realise the Council's ambition in the field**
- ix. A review should be undertaken of the use of the Welsh language within the Council's procurement arrangements in the context of the *Awarding Public Service Contracts and the Welsh Language* document and any recommendations should be included within the new Procurement Strategy and the Sustainable Procurement Policy and arrangements developed to monitor compliance.**

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2. Context

2.1 The Council originally adopted a Sustainable Procurement Policy in 2006 and the [Policy](#) was subsequently reviewed in 2011.

2.2 The aim of the Policy is to

Deliver procurement activities in a responsible and sustainable manner and to maximise opportunities to make the best possible use of the Council's expenditure in order to improve economic, environmental and social performance within the County.

2.3 The Policy specifically aims to:

- Ensure that procurement activities are held in a way which enables the appropriate suppliers to compete for Council contracts.
- Reduce the environmental impact through better selection and use of goods, services and works.
- Ensure that value for money assessments are based on lifelong costs.

2.4 In looking at the general performance of councils it was seen that Gwynedd's performance in the field has increased and compares well with the majority of Welsh councils. However, there is room for improvement based on the better performance of other councils, such as Pembrokeshire County Council, Carmarthenshire County Council, Cardiff Council and Surrey County Council.

2.5 The concern of the Cabinet Member who is responsible for the field is that opportunities for sustainable procurement are being lost and that needless spending is taking place unless the Council's departments comply with the Policy.

2.6 Based on the abovementioned, a scrutiny investigation was commissioned by the Members to look specifically at this field.

3. Purpose of the Scrutiny Investigation

3.1 Having accepted the Commission, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee agreed that the Investigation should look at the following matters:

- The suitability of the Sustainable Procurement Policy and current arrangements
- Compliance with the policy and arrangements
- The impact, in terms of packaging work, on contracts under £50k
- Identify good practice in terms of policy, within the sustainable procurement field internally and outside the Council
- Propose recommendations on how to improve the Council's performance in this field

4. Main Activity of the Investigation

4.1 The following were consulted:

- i. The Cabinet Member in the field of Economy and Community
- ii. Head of Strategic and Improvement Department
- iii. Two Corporate Procurement Managers
- iv. Sample of five officers who prepare tenders and their documents were observed
- v. A representative from a local consultant company who prepares tenders on behalf of the Council
- vi. Local suppliers, either face to face or via an on-line questionnaire
- vii. The Welsh Language Committee Co-ordinator.

4.2 During the investigation, the Keep the Benefit Local Project was established to realise the ambition of the Council's Strategic Plan in relation to procurement. The purpose of this project is to develop arrangements to target, stimulate and support the county's businesses in order for them to compete for the Council's expenditure contracts. Questions prepared by the Scrutiny Investigation Group on the field of sustainable procurement were incorporated within the departments' self-assessment arrangements and members were invited to observe at those self-assessment meetings.

4.3 An investigation of good practice in the field was undertaken also looking at the performance of other councils and a summary of this work can be seen in Appendices 2a, 2b, 2c and Appendix 4 Further Reading.

Based on 2012/13 data, 40% of Gwynedd Council's expenditure goes to businesses within Gwynedd. This is an increase of 3% since 2010/11 but continues to be lower than Pembrokeshire Council's 45% expenditure within the county in 2010/11. Figures for 2012/13 are not yet available.

4.4 There has been close consultation with the Cabinet Member who is responsible for this field, as well as both Corporate Procurement Managers throughout the investigation and they were invited to a number of meetings. The Corporate Scrutiny Managers also offered guidance to the Group on the various policies, arrangements and regulations in the procurement field therefore facilitating the Group to scrutinise independently.

It has already been noted that the Cabinet Member's concern for the Council's performance in the sustainable procurement field was the reason for this investigation. However, having looked at the data and received evidence, the Investigation's discussions expanded as members identified related issues which were in their view key in terms of the general quality of procurement and which influence sustainable procurement.

Consequently, the Investigation's main findings are more extensive than the original brief and they are presented here for the Cabinet Member's attention. In terms of presenting the report, the recommendations made against the scrutiny investigations and the other recommendations are presented separately to the Cabinet Member.

5. Reporting back to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

- 5.1 The Investigation appreciates that taking any action will be a matter for the Cabinet Member, however, they are eager for the Scrutiny Committee to receive a report in due course from the Cabinet Member on his response to the recommendations.

6. Findings in Accordance with the Scrutiny Investigation Brief

6.1 The Suitability of the Sustainable Procurement Policy

Findings

The Gwynedd Council Procurement Strategy 2008-11 clearly notes the requirement for services to adhere to the Council's Sustainable Procurement Guidelines in order to support services as they define and deliver sustainable requirements.

It became apparent during discussions that officers who procure within the Council generally agree with the general objectives of sustainable procurement, but that there is little awareness and knowledge of the Council's policies in the field and therefore practice is inconsistent across the Council.

Concern was expressed regarding implementing the procurement policy sustainably within general procurement regulations.

In addition to the above, the following points are noted:

- "Unaware of these guidelines but aware of tendering rules. Proceed with the tender work according to experience and tendering rules."
- Some services view the rules to be strict and that it is therefore difficult to implement this policy and that it is not realistic.
- The current policy has dated since the last review in 2011 and does not reflect the priority of Keeping the Benefit Local and refers to structures and practices that no longer exist.
- The transparency of some parts of the Policy was questioned and also the accessibility of the information about the policy and guidelines. "Have examined the Sustainable Procurement Policy and have obtained much information from the OJEU website which was fairly easy to access." "
- Members and officers expressed concern as to the difficulty of finding any information about procurement policies or the Corporate Procurement Unit on the Council's intranet to assist officers.
- The need to place greater emphasis within the document for officers on how to implement the policy in practical terms was highlighted, such as
 - including examples of wording that could be used for clauses within tenders along

with case studies

- better explanation of how to use different weightings to obtain the best contract for the Council

- clarifying the purpose of the Check Lists – whether they are for in-house checks use only or as evidence of performance measuring.

- Lack of clarity on the role of the Corporate Procurement Unit within practice guidelines.

Source of Evidence

- The Sustainable Procurement Policy and Guidelines
- Officers' Meeting
- Research into good practice - "Simple Steps to Environmentally Sustainable Procurement – Putting Policy into Practice", CLASP (Climate Change Local Area Support Programme)
- Sell2Wales website.
- Representative from a Consultant Company

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member

There should be agreement on the Council's ambition for the field of sustainable procurement and simple and clear policies and guidelines based on good practice should be developed for staff to realise this across the Council.

6.2 Current Arrangements

Findings

Gwynedd Council's procurement arrangements are delegated to services and arrangements and procurement practices within those services therefore vary greatly. Procurement capacity and skills also vary greatly within services and units.

The same pattern is reflected in sustainable procurement arrangements across the Council and as noted already with obvious differences in awareness and confidence in this field within services.

- Services' awareness and use of the sustainability procurement check lists to assist them varies greatly
- Better awareness of Procurement Rules and thresholds
- Some departments and units are aware of social clauses and their use from others e.g. North Wales frameworks.
- There was successful use of the sustainable procurement tool for major contracts.
- "Found the large Checklist was more useful than the Sustainable Procurement Checklist."
- Evidence that some officers work according to experience and old practice.
- Some officers prepare tenders regularly but others do it much less often.

- Some Council departments use the more specialised skills of Gwynedd Consultancy and the Corporate Procurement Unit to prepare tenders.
- Some other departments outsource the work of preparing tenders to external consultant companies either due to the complexity of the matter and the specialism needed or as the company is preparing the entire tendering package on their behalf.
- One local consultant company receives only a very short brief orally for preparing tenders. “A verbal request only and it could all fit onto the back of a match box. There is a need for paperwork and specific working for Consultants/experts like us”.
- The Welsh Government encourages Local Authorities to produce Procurement Frameworks and the Property Department is in the process of sending out three year frameworks to the Departments for electrical or plumbing work in schools. The Frameworks list the companies to be used for a period of 3, 5 or 10 years for different work.
- The Welsh Government also encourages Local Authorities to come together to set one large contract, for example, one company to supply computers to all authorities across Wales.
- More research is needed across services to look at opportunities to package the work.
- A suggestion that the Council adheres more strictly to European Union regulations as opposed to other authorities
- Need to promote good practice such as the example of three local companies coming together to win a tender.
- Procurement arrangements in other areas were considered. There is a central procurement arrangement in Surrey County Council and they spend around 90% locally. Cardiff City Council had followed a central procurement procedure such as the one in Surrey County Council, given their successes at keeping the benefit local. Pembrokeshire County Council and Carmarthenshire County Council have relatively central arrangements with officers within the departments.

Source of Evidence

- Meeting with officers who prepared tenders during 2012/13
- Procurement self-assessment meetings with the Council’s main departments
- Representative from a local Consultant Company
- Research

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member

Procurement arrangements should be developed that are suitable to deliver the Council’s ambition in the sustainable procurement field and to ensure commitment to those arrangements on the highest level.

Existing good practice should be built upon within the Council to identify more opportunities for services to collaborate on procurement and to maximise the potential benefits.

A comprehensive register of all the Council’s tendering opportunities should be established in order to ensure better overview of the field.

6.3 Measuring Success

Findings

Current policy notes that the Corporate Procurement Unit collects data to assess the success of the policy but does not specify the measures.

Compliance with the Sustainable Procurement Policy is measured on grounds of the use of the Check Lists. However, it is not a requirement for services to send them to the Corporate Procurement Unit and consequently evidencing the success of the Policy is a challenge to the Unit and the work of finding the data is difficult in terms of time and effort.

Due to this ambiguity, the current measure does not fairly reflect the level of compliance.

- Lack of awareness of the Policy and the check lists inevitably leads to lack of compliance in general.
- The members have expressed concern as to how the Council measures compliance with the Policy due the lack of a comprehensive register of all tendering opportunities within the Council and no requirement for services to send the lists to the Corporate Procurement Unit.

Source of Evidence

- Meeting with officers who prepared tenders during 2012/13
- Procurement self-assessment meetings with the Council's main departments
- Cabinet Member
- Head of Strategic and Improvement Department
- Sustainable Procurement Policy
- The Council's Performance Management Measures

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member

Suitable and meaningful measures should be developed in order to measure the financial impact of the Council's expenditure and the impact on Gwynedd residents.

6.4 Staff Training

Findings

Staff's skills and confidence to operate within the sustainable procurement field varies in terms of capacity, frequency of practice, knowledge and skills.

- The policy encourages the Council's staff to undertake sustainable procurement training however training is not provided within the Council.

- A number of departments and units noted that they need more guidance, training and information in this particular field.
- “the internal procurement course is not sufficiently detailed especially given the type of work the Department is involved with”
- Procurement training has been included in the Council’s training matrix with Staff from the Corporate Procurement Unit holding sessions, namely ‘Basic Purchasing and Contracts’ and a pilot was undertaken of ‘Advanced Purchasing and Contracts’ in June 2013 which includes references to sustainable procurement.
- A number of officers note that they have not received any training recently.

Source of Evidence

- **Meeting with officers who prepared tenders during 2012/13**
- **Procurement self-assessment meetings with the Council’s main departments**
- **The Sustainable Procurement Policy and Guidelines**
- **The Council’s training matrix**
- **The Council’s training register**

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member

The training arrangements of staff involved with procurement should be reviewed to secure a full understanding of the commitment, active compliance and better identification of the opportunities available for the benefit of Gwynedd residents.

7. Other findings for the Cabinet Member’s attention

7.1 Role of the Procurement Unit

Findings

Reference has already been made to the Council’s internal procurement arrangements and the current delegated arrangements and the consequential variation in practice.

The Sustainable Procurement Policy refers many times to the role of the Corporate Scrutiny Unit in this field and asks services to seek advice from the Unit in order to “ensure that the opportunities are not missed and to avoid a risk to the Council in making financial mistakes or damaging its reputation.”

This advice is available from the officers within the Unit who possess specialist procurement skills and vast experience in the field. However the services’ use of this resource is very inconsistent and there is a lack of clarity on what their role entails.

- A procedure of delegated procurement within the Council
- Some services and units work very closely with the Unit and benefit from their expertise

in the field.

- Other services are unclear as to what the Unit has to offer them
- The Corporate Procurement Unit is responsible for gathering data in order to assess the success of the policy
- The lack of a comprehensive register of all procurement opportunities within Gwynedd to facilitate the Unit's work
- Lack of awareness of the work and potential of the Unit's contribution across the Council.
- Very inconsistent use of the Unit across services and opportunities are being missed
- The capacity and skill to procure varies within services and is more vulnerable in some areas within the Council
- "think that there is a lack of legal assistance and feels that other councils receive better procurement assistance. "
- "want more assistance with procurement work and they are of the opinion that it would be better if the work was undertaken on their behalf."
- "there is good support available from the Corporate Procurement Unit."

Source of Evidence

- Meeting with officers who prepared tenders during 2012/13
- Procurement self-assessment meetings with the Council's main departments
- Mae'r Adrannau yn gofyn am arweiniad a hyfforddiant
- Cabinet Member

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member

The role of the Corporate Procurement Unit should be defined more clearly within the Council's procurement arrangements in order to secure the best from the resource and strengthens the Council's procurement arrangements.

It should be checked whether or not the Council's current devolved arrangements are the most suitable to realise the Council's ambition in the field

7.2 Use of the Welsh Language

Findings

Concern was expressed from members during the investigation regarding the use of the Welsh language in the procurement field in general and this is mainly in two fields, namely

- 1 Lack of attention to the Welsh language in the Sustainable Procurement Policy.
- 2 The use of the Welsh language in the field e.g. in tender documents on the Sell2Wales website are all in English only.

The Welsh Language Board published **Advice under Section 3 of the Welsh Language Act 1993** in this field, namely *Awarding public service contracts and the Welsh language*. The purpose of the guidance is to offer advice and support in three fields, namely

- How to consider the needs of Welsh speakers in all aspects of contracting public services.
- Extending the services provided to Welsh speakers.
- Guidance for establishments to ensure value for money when procuring Welsh language services.

Source of Evidence

- **Sustainable Procurement Policy**
- **Welsh Language Board document – “Awarding public services contracts and the Welsh Language”**
- **Equality and Language Policy Officer, Welsh Language Committee Co-ordinator**

Recommendation to the Cabinet Member

A review should be undertaken of the use of the Welsh language within the Council’s procurement arrangements in the context of the Awarding public service contracts and the Welsh language document and any recommendations should be included within the new Procurement Strategy and the Sustainable Procurement Policy and arrangements developed to monitor compliance.

Other matters for the Cabinet Member’s attention

- To undertake an investigation to identify whether or not the Council receives the best value from consultative companies.
- To consider using the skills of qualified staff to prepare tenders rather than sending work out to consultants.
- Ensure that officers prepare a clear commissioning brief before any procurement process commences.
- Ensure a proactive support service for small companies by identifying procurement opportunities for them and awareness of the policy.
- Cyhoeddi cofrestr o holl gyfleoedd tendro’r Cyngor

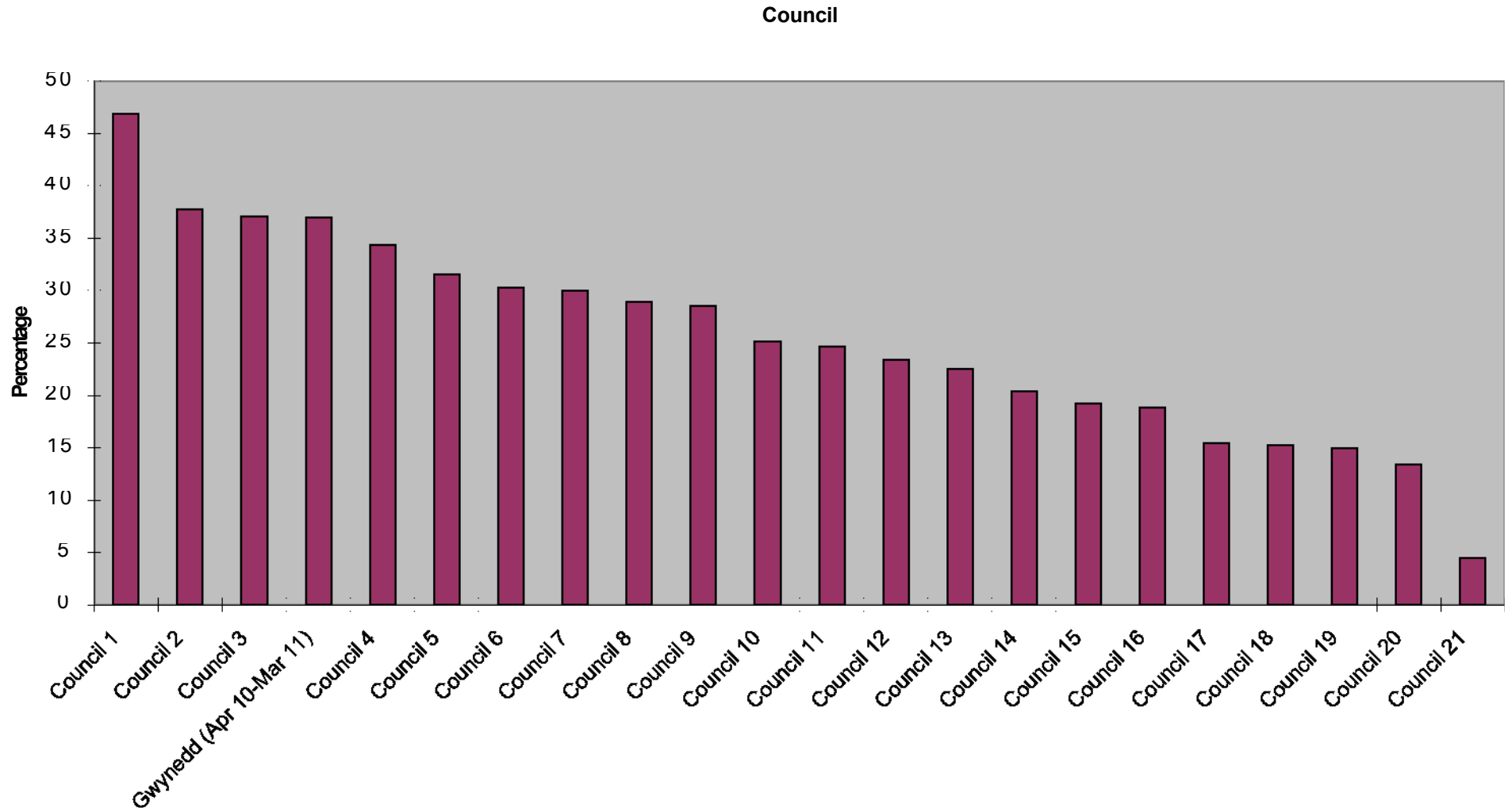
APPENDIX 1.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

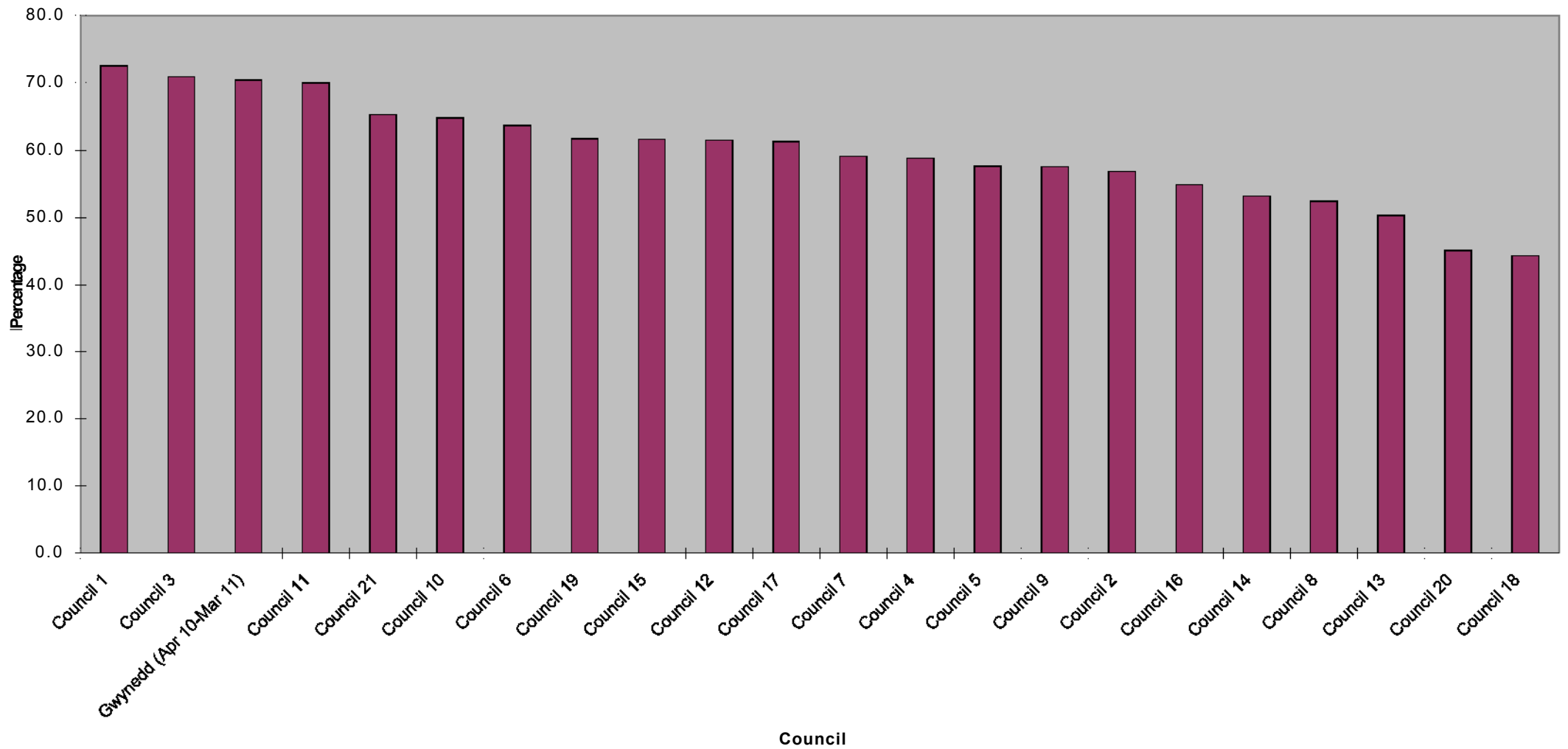
2012 - 2013

Ref:	Description	Target	Performance up to Quarter 4	Notes
	Sustainable Procurement			
A Caff02	% of new contracts (over £500k) that follow the requirements of the Sustainable Procurement Policy (use the Sustainable Procurement Toolkit).	Establish a baseline	63.6%	7 out of 11 have been completed.
A Caff03	% of new contracts (over £50k and under £500k) that follow the requirements of the Sustainable Procurement Policy (use the sustainable procurement checklists).	Establish a baseline	13.2%	87 contracts completed, with 34 receiving an exemption whilst a framework agreement is established. Therefore 7 out of 53
U Caff05	% of new contracts that have used the SQuID.	Establish a baseline	39%	100 contracts completed, with 34 receiving an exemption whilst a framework agreement is established. Therefore 26 out of 66

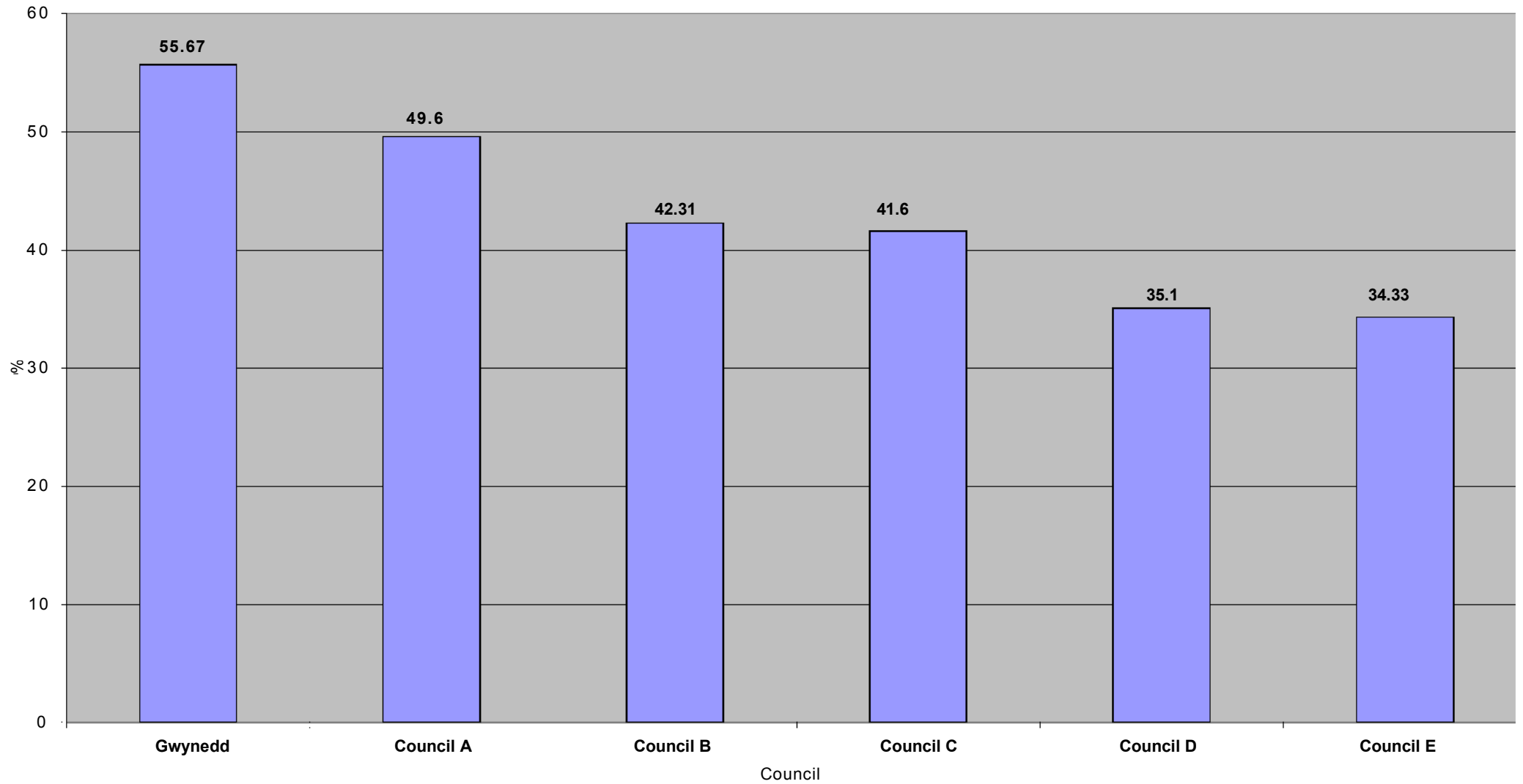
Expenditure within County Boundaries (Local Spend) % (10/11)



Expenditure with Small and Medium Enterprises (%) 2010/11



Expenditure within North Wales - 2010/11



APPENDIX 3.

Sustainable Procurement Scrutiny Investigation - the main findings of the Scrutiny Investigation and the main relevant findings of Gwynedd Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review.

It was found that the main messages from the interviews with the five officers by the scrutiny investigation group were very similar to the messages stemming from the Council's procurement arrangements and processes review.

It was found that a greater number of Council senior officers had attended training sessions between 2005 and 2011, including Heads of Department, Managers and Field Leaders and Core Staff.

APPENDIX 3.

Social Services Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>The individual was unaware of the Sustainable Procurement Policy and Guidance, the Checklist or the Corporate Procurement Unit.</p> <p>The number of officers from the Social Services Department who have received procurement training: 14</p>	<p>The Department was aware that some of the North Wales frameworks had used social clauses in their contracts.</p> <p>The Department was unaware of the policy.</p> <p>The Department needed more information and support on the way forward. Asked whether there was training available.</p>

Highways and Municipal Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>The latest policy is used to prepare a tender.</p> <p>Had attended a 'Purchasing and Contracts' course in 2010.</p> <p>Had examined the Sustainable Procurement Policy and had obtained much information from the OJEU website which was fairly easy to access.</p> <p>He reported that he used the guidelines and went through the hoops to safeguard himself.</p> <p>He did not know about the Checklist.</p> <p>Sometimes, a year or two will pass without him preparing a tender.</p> <p>The work had been sent to external consultants because of its complexity and the expertise required.</p> <p>The number of officers from the Highways and Municipal Department who have received procurement training: 7</p>	<p>There was evidence that the sustainable procurement tool had been used whenever possible.</p> <p>The Department felt that the type of contract they had made it difficult to include sustainability factors.</p> <p>The Department reported that the rules did not allow them to consider social clauses – did not allow requests for local slate.</p> <p>The Department was concerned that local companies did not have such policies (sustainability) in place and consequently opportunities were missed. Furthermore, the Department did not think that there was sufficient turnover in the Council's contracts to expect local companies to have accreditations in place.</p> <p>The Department saw the rules restrictive and consequently wished to increase their understanding so they could be more flexible.</p>

APPENDIX 3.

Regulatory Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
No officers from the Regulatory Department were interviewed.	<p>The Unit was aware of the policies and used them occasionally.</p> <p>Need guidance to prioritise different elements of the policy.</p> <p>Everyone accepted in principle – but it was not realistic.</p> <p>The Unit felt that they needed more training.</p> <p>They had identified the policy but found it difficult to put it in place.</p> <p>The Unit was questioning the true value of using it. Was it a tick box exercise?</p>

Provider and Leisure Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
No officers from the Provider and Leisure Department were interviewed.	<p>The Leisure Centres were unaware of the sustainable procurement policy.</p> <p>It was believed that the industry standards encouraged the use of sustainable goods. The Council's swimming pools had changed from using chlorine to acid which was better for the environment and was cheaper to purchase.</p> <p>There were also similar schemes for heating. Change from electricity to gas, however an increase in gas charges meant that the original savings had diminished.</p>

APPENDIX 3.

Gwynedd Consultancy	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>Two officers from Gwynedd Consultancy were interviewed.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of the Sustainable Procurement Policy and the Sustainable Procurement Checklist.</p> <p>Working according to experience and old habits.</p> <p>Tenders prepared often.</p> <p>A team of officers in Gwynedd Consultancy prepares tenders for all other Council Departments and earn payments for the work.</p> <p>The number of Gwynedd Consultancy officers who have received procurement training: 11</p>	<p>The Department have had experience of the procurement tool and the procurement check list.</p> <p>The opinion was that the tool had questioned the need for procurement.</p> <p>It was felt that the Department had been procuring with social benefits in the past and that 'social benefits' was a new form of branding. This was achieved by means of the key performance indicators – how many local people were being employed? How many were Welsh speakers?</p> <p>The guidance provided by Value Wales had been poor and confusing.</p> <p>They believed that the new arrangements made procurement of plans more open to challenge. Consequently, and to control the risk, the Department had decided in the future that the 'benefits' must be part of the contract and will not be scored as part of the contract. Evaluating the 'benefits' would also be difficult (as part of the criteria). The Department would not be comfortable in awarding a contract on the basis of these 'benefits'.</p> <p>Discussing the term 'Whole life costing' – how is this defined? How is it expected for the Council to measure this? An example: constructing a road of better quality which lasts 20 years against a poor road which needs to be repaired every 5 years.</p> <p>It was believed that the Department's procurement skills had developed from tendering experience over the years.</p>

APPENDIX 3.

	<p>Procurement was not a field / part of anyone's particular function. As part of their job, everyone was required to undertake procurement / commissioning to complete the BEng qualification or similar. Officers attended PASS events, meetings of Construction Excellence etc so that they were aware of developments in the procurement field. The greatest understanding was by the Manager of the Unit, the Business Unit Manager and Assistant Costs Consultant.</p> <p>The Unit Manager noted that the internal procurement course was not sufficiently detailed especially in the type of work the Department was involved with.</p>
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Customer Care (Information Technology) Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>No officers from the Customer Care (Information Technology) Department were interviewed.</p>	<p>The Department has not considered the policy.</p> <p>They are aware of an example where social benefits are possible.</p> <p>The Department considers local companies as providers whenever possible.</p> <p>Some officers in the Department received training three years ago. The Unit is more aware of procurement but do not consider themselves to be experts.</p> <p>There are no arrangements in place for training or to develop the skills of those who order / tender at the moment.</p> <p>The Unit wants more assistance with procurement work and they are of the opinion that it would be better if the work was undertaken for them.</p>

APPENDIX 3.

	<p>The Unit thinks that there is a lack of legal assistance and the Unit feels that other councils receive better procurement assistance.</p>
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NWTRA	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>No officers from NWTRA were interviewed.</p>	<p>It was agreed that the Department made use of social benefits in some of its contracts. For example, NWTRA has utilised social benefits in its contractors' framework.</p> <p>NWTRA has identified the legal context of procurement and makes use of resources within Councils for procurement (Gwynedd mainly). The Department was unaware of any member of staff who had qualified in the field of procurement within the Department.</p>

Training Unit, Human Resources Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>No officers from the Training Unit, Human Resources Department were interviewed.</p>	<p>The Unit was aware of the policy and referred to it but not in great depth. The field does not allow them to be of great influence.</p> <p>E-learning would replace elements of face-to-face learning.</p> <p>The need for bilingual courses assists the Unit to ensure in the main that they have local providers.</p> <p>The Unit is at the forefront of many of the Services because of its contribution in procurement courses. This contribution assists with the understanding of procurement.</p>

APPENDIX 3.

Property Unit	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>No officers from the Property Unit were interviewed.</p>	<p>Four officers from the Unit were seen.</p> <p>Not much response in this respect from the Unit.</p> <p>One officer was aware of the policy. Also, this was as a result of the nature of his field in environmental improvement etc.</p> <p>Another officer had worked with the Procurement Unit on this aspect of the maintenance framework and had completed a sustainable procurement tool and had agreed on the content of social benefits subject to price / duration of the specific work.</p> <p>One officer had attended a basic procurement course but this was aimed at staff with no level of understanding of procurement and, therefore, it was not useful for him.</p> <p>The Unit was aware of the Council's regulations and thresholds.</p>

Economy and Community Department	
Scrutiny Investigation	The Council's Procurement Arrangements and Processes Review
<p>One officer from the Economy and Community Department was interviewed.</p> <p>The officer complies with the Sustainable Procurement Guidance and Policy and completes the check list.</p> <p>The officer makes the most of the</p>	

APPENDIX 3.

<p>Corporate Procurement Unit.</p> <p>The number of officers of the Economy and Community Department who have received procurement training: 9</p>	
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APPENDIX 4.

FURTHER READING

1. **Community Benefits – Delivering Maximum Value for the Welsh Pound 2011 (Welsh Government).** This Guide offers advice on the different approaches that procurers are encouraged to take to deliver added value by the inclusion of community benefits in their procurement activities.
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/improvingservices/better/vm/publications/commbenguide/?skip=1&lang=en>
2. **CLASP (Climate Change Local Area Support Programme)**
<http://www.claspinfo.org/resources>
3. **Implementing Sustainable Procurement: Overcoming Common Problems (EPOW, WRAP + Environment Agency) March 2012.** Includes Examples which demonstrate a real difference in delivering sustainable outcomes through procurement.
<http://www.wrapcymru.org.uk/node/16652>
4. Welsh Government. [Adolygiad J F McClelland](#) CBE.
5. **Local Procurement – Making the Most of Small Businesses.** By the Federation of Small Businesses (UK's leading business organisation)
http://www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=d2655dd4-4fa5-4d9b-b2ca-ba6f05ce4270&groupId=10171
6. **SME – Friendly Procurement. “The Can Do toolkit 2”** Welsh Government, Carmarthenshire and others.
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/housing-and-regeneration/publications/smecando/?lang=en>
7. Carmarthenshire County Council – website explains sustainable procurement clearly, why and how, and the support available for suppliers.
8. Pembrokeshire County Council – website includes Procurement Structure, ‘How to Tender Guide’ which was produced in partnership with the Council, Hywel Dda NHS Trust, National Park, College and Pembrokeshire Housing Association, Contract List and a Forward Contract Plan.
9. A number of reports from local authorities across the country on procurement and sustainable procurement can be seen on the (Centre for Public Scrutiny) CfPS website.
http://www.cfps.org.uk/library?filter=procurement+and+commissioning&filterfrom=issue_name&match_all=true

APPENDIX 4.

10. **Local Government Group / Built Environment: Procurement, Capital and Shared Assets – Productivity Workstream. Response to Spending Review – Quick Wins Strategy.** October 2010. 10 Key Actions – includes examples of best practice across the country.

<http://www.niepbuiltenvironment.org.uk/ThePlaceBasedProductivityWorkstream.html>