
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 26/01/17

Present:

Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair)
Councillor Eirwyn Williams (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, E. Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Wyn Hughes, Elin Walker Jones, Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Ann Williams, Hefin Williams and R. H. Wyn Williams.

Officers: Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Corporate Support Manager), Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager) and Glynda O'Brien (Member Support Officer).

Also in attendance:

For Items 3 and 4 below:

Councillor W. Gareth Roberts
Morwenna Edwards, Corporate Director
Aled Davies, Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department
Rhion Glyn, Senior Business Manager

For Items 5 and 6 below:

Councillor Gareth Thomas, Cabinet Member for Education
Arwyn Thomas, Head of Education Department
Keith Parry, Area Officer
Bethan Eleri Roberts, Performance Management Officer

Others invited:

Alun Charles, External Consultant, for item 6 below.
Ffion Johnstone, Regional Director - West, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, for item 4 below.

Apologies: Councillors Dewi Owen, Peter Read and Gareth A. Roberts, and Rita Price (Catholic Church).

1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

- (i) Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams declared a personal interest in Item 5 - North Wales Population Needs Assessment and that he would withdraw from the Chamber should a specific discussion regarding home care payments be held.
- (ii) Similarly, Councillor Linda Ann Wyn Jones declared a personal interest in Item 5 - North Wales Population Needs Assessment and that she would withdraw from the Chamber should a specific discussion regarding learning disability matters be held.

2. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 17 November 2016 subject to the following:

(a) Item 2 - Statement from the Chair

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd reported that there was no reference in the previous minutes to his dissatisfaction regarding the fact that members were not aware of the intention of the Head of Education to lead on an interim period on a piece of work in relation to recent changes / strengths and weaknesses of GwE's current arrangements. At the previous meeting, the Portfolio Cabinet Member noted that he was aware of the above intention but that it was the Chief Executive's responsibility to address the matter.

In response, the Senior Corporate Support Manager reminded members that the matter had been fully discussed with the Chief Executive at the preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2016, and it had been resolved at this meeting that there was probably an intention to submit a report on the outcomes of work by the Head of Education on GwE to the meeting of the Services Scrutiny Committee in March 2017.

Whilst accepting that an explanation had been received at the preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2016, the Member was strongly of the opinion that the matter should have been fully discussed at a public meeting so that Members and electors were fully aware of the situation.

(b) Item 4 (c) - GwE Report

To correct the second sentence in point (c) to read:

"However, one member felt that this should have already taken place and specific reference was made to four gifted head teachers who had been lost to GwE over recent months within **the catchment area of one school**". - (and not within his Ward as noted in the previous minutes).

3. NORTH WALES POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT DRAFT REPORT

Submitted - a draft report of the North Wales Population Needs Assessment produced in accordance with the requirement of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being provided the background. He was of the opinion that people needed to be encouraged to take responsibility for their health and future early enough in order to make life easier and more comfortable should their health deteriorate. He explained that this could involve moving to smaller houses, moving closer to family etc. in order to receive support whilst living independently. He emphasised that steps needed to be tailored to individuals' needs but that people should think about the future whilst they were still healthy and independent.

In response to the above, a Member disagreed with the above observation. Another Member added that the main problem was the difficulty for individuals to accept that their health was deteriorating and some suffered with dementia with everyone wishing to retain their independence.

Members were given an opportunity to offer observations on the content of the report and the following points were highlighted for further consideration:

- (a) This type of assessment was welcomed but there was concern about the influx of individuals who had retired to European countries who could come to Gwynedd, in light of the European referendum result. Should this happen, it was asked whether or not any provision for this was being considered.

- (b) Learning Disabilities - it was welcomed that the provision was being supported but there was no reference in the document to collaboration with the mental health service.
- (c) Emphasis and assurance should be placed on the language needs of service users
- (ch) The value of volunteers' unpaid contributions should be recognised
- (d) Schemes to develop services and support to tackle loneliness were welcomed but there was concern about the continuation of such schemes in relation to funding them in future. Specific reference was made to the 'Ffrindia' Scheme which appeared to be a success but it was coming to an end; as a result, it would affect those people who had taken advantage of the scheme.
- (dd) In terms of increasing extra care housing provision, an appeal was made for the Service to share information with elected members about future plans.
- (e) In relation to future needs, there was a need to empower communities and as a result that there was an important role to identify ageing individuals. The need to be confident to contact individuals in their communities was added as rural areas did not often receive services from the third sector.
- (f) Engagement - a request was made for details regarding who contributed to the questionnaire that had been sent to users.
- (ff) It should be recognised that provision for children and young people with severe and complex needs was costly. Reference to the needs of the autism spectrum disorder was welcomed and attention was drawn to the need to collaborate with relevant services in this context in terms of provision. Attention was drawn to an increase where a cluster of approximately 10 children had been seen in one area.
- (g) It was asked whether officers were satisfied that the assessment was cross-departmental?
- (ng) Would there be collaboration with extra care housing providers such as Cynefin and specifically on provision in the south of the county?
- (h) Importance of recognising and addressing the matters raised about mental health and there was concern about the need to use acute beds outside north Wales.

A response was received to the above observations from relevant officers as follows:

- An assessment of needs was before the committee and that action plans would be provided in future. As this was the first assessment and that it was based on evidence rather than anecdotal evidence, it was further noted: When it would be reviewed, it was hoped that the Service could fill the gaps and commission in a wiser manner by using information received.
- The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being emphasised that it was a time of financial austerity everywhere with service capacity reducing. Consideration would have to be given to the range of services and volunteer capacity.
- In relation to engagement, information about the number of people who contributed to the questionnaire from Gwynedd would be found and shared with Members.
- The Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department was satisfied with the information but he acknowledged that there were gaps and emphasised that a regional evidence base had been received, and that engagement would continue in future. It was explained that this was the best information that existed at present.
- The well-being assessment concurred to examine what was available in communities and that an emphasis on the care element had been included in the

assessment before the committee. When the above assessment was revisited, it was added that it would be integrated into the population assessment. Further reference was made to the Ageing Well report that had recently been submitted to the Cabinet which specifically referred to well-being elements such as care plans and identified what needed to be done for the future.

- Investing in extra care provision was essential and part of the wider picture but that it depended on contributions from the Government and it was confirmed that the Service did everything it could to secure a share of this money. It was further noted that many areas had been identified across the County in terms of need and certainly areas in the south and west of the County.
- Welsh Government had acknowledged that the work undertaken was comprehensive. It must be borne in mind that it reflected an assessment at a specific period of time and that it was becoming outdated on a daily basis; however, it was ensured that a more local investigation would be undertaken with the intention of integrating the information received into the next assessment to meet more local needs.
- Domestic abuse - it was explained that the Council's Deputy Leader served on a multi-agency Partnership with Anglesey and that it was a main priority for the partnership. It was further suggested that perhaps it would be possible to scrutinise the work of the Partnership above. It was also noted that the Service collaborated with the Police and it was recognised that it was a field that needed to be monitored.
- With regards to the development of new respite care provision at the new Hafod Lon School, it was explained that the Children's Department was working diligently on this development.

Resolved: (a) To approve the report subject to giving detailed consideration to the following elements when preparing local assessments and action plans based on the population assessment:

- (i) Projection of the population and inward migration trends of older people in Gwynedd**
- (ii) Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Autism - need to highlight collaboration with other services**
- (iii) Language Assessment - emphasis on language needs of service users**
- (iv) Recognise the value of volunteers' contributions**
- (v) Engagement - more work required regarding numbers, commissioning plan, proportionate representation from Gwynedd, and empower rural communities**
- (vi) More information regarding abuse against women**

4. FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

Submitted - a report outlining the progress made against the recommendations of the 'From Hospital to Home' Scrutiny Investigation.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being took pride in the work undertaken thus far regarding the recommendations and that some of them had already been achieved.

The observations made by individual Members were responded to as follows:

- (i) that it was premature to evaluate the Llys Cadfan project as work was progressing in two parts and the first part was nearly complete. A further discussion would be held on 6 February 2017 to consider where an investment could be made and it was confirmed that there was an intention to develop such a provision in other locations and, without being specific, that there was evidence of demand, especially in the south of the County.
- (iii) It was explained that Gwynedd did not have a dual registration provision throughout Gwynedd, but that discussions were being held with CSSIW about schemes to address the need that would make a difference to the provision.
- (iv) It was agreed that the language needs of the patient was very important and that the Health Board had begun handing out leaflets on wards asking in which language the patient wished to speak.
- (v) That work and discussions were underway regarding collaborating with surgeries as well as extending the opening hours of Community Hospitals and developing them as hubs.
- (vi) Following a Member's recent experience of the Concerns' Department, the system was explained and it was ensured that formal complaints were addressed.
- (vii) It was assured that an analysis of the £1.3m funding for Intermediate Care would be shared for information with Members of this Scrutiny Committee.
- (viii) In terms of sharing information with nurses / doctors of what was available by the third sector, as part of Ysbyty Alltwen's work, it was explained that staff gathered information but that more work needed to be achieved in this context.
- (ix) In the context of providing packages for patients when they were discharged from Hospital, the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Regional Director - West, assured that she would soon hold a discussion at a meeting with Matrons to verify the situation and what happened when an area nurse was not available.

In response to the observation made regarding language needs, a number of Members further noted that formulating a question correctly was all important and that a bilingual service should be offered as a totally natural part of the service.

It was noted that Dwyfor Surgeries worked well and the observation that the out of hours service would be extended was welcomed.

The opportunity was taken to congratulate the Service on the implementation of the recommendations.

Resolved: To accept, note and thank the officer for the report.

5. ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP MODELS

A slide presentation was received by an Area Education Officer, and he outlined various models for different types of schools for the future.

Model 1 - with a Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, 1 budget and 1 Governing Body

Model 2 - with a Strategic Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, separate budgets and Governing Bodies

Model 3 - with a Strategic Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, separate budgets and 1 Governing Body

Model 4 - with a Strategic Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, 1 budget and 1 governing body in a multi-site all-through school

Model 5 - with a Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, 1 budget and 1 governing body in a single site all-through school

Model 6 - with a Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, 1 budget, 1 governing body in a Lifelong Learning school - multi-site or single site (3 - 18 years old)

Following consideration of the principles, it was noted that no model responded to the requirements of every catchment area and that requirements would need to be considered in the areas. The above models were an attempt to make the role of leading a school attractive bearing in mind the pressures on school leaders and the fact that recruiting school leaders had recently been difficult.

The Cabinet Member for Education referred to an example of model 2 that worked successfully in the Ardudwy catchment area. In terms of timetable, discussions had recently been held with school staff / governors / parents to highlight the recruitment problem and to seek a solution at grass roots level. Applications from Head Teachers to discuss possibilities in some catchment areas had been received and the importance of holding discussions with Area Officers and Head Teachers in order to ascertain requirements locally per catchment area was noted.

Resolved: To accept, note and thank the officer for the presentation whilst looking forward to see the outcomes of local discussions.

6. WELSH-MEDIUM EDUCATION SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION - PROGRESS REPORT

Mr Alun Charles, External consultant, was welcomed to the meeting and he gave a slide presentation on his study on the implementation of the Council's Language Policy in Gwynedd primary and secondary schools and he explained in detail what had led to the recommendations within the report.

During the ensuing discussion, the following observations were highlighted:

(i) Progress Report of the Education Service on the recommendations of the Welsh-Medium Education Scrutiny Investigation:

A Member noted that he had submitted specific questions regarding responses to tracking progress of recommendations deriving from the work of the Welsh-Medium Education Scrutiny Investigation, and that, thus far, he had not received a positive response to:

- Did the Education Service have powers to intervene to ensure that implementation of the Language Policy was strengthened and standardised and how many of these had been used?
- Had all governors received training on the language policy despite the Education Service stating that training had been programmed for Summer 2017?
- It was unclear whether or not steps had been taken in relation to immersion education at Ysgol Ardudwy.
- It was noted that the Council, along with Welsh Government, had given full consideration to establishing a specific Language Centre for the Bangor catchment area; with the potential arrival of Wylfa Newydd in the context of education, and the Welsh language specifically, it is expected that a number of the new workforce will settle in the Arfon area. It was asked how many immersion centres, extra teachers, language centres etc. would be required to mitigate the impact of Wylfa Newydd on the Welsh language, how much would it cost and who would pay?

(ii) External Study:

- (a) Reference was made to the fact that the percentages of Welsh language use was higher in KS2 than KS3. It was suggested that use of the Welsh language needed to

be strengthened when pupils transferred from KS2 to KS3, especially when considering the good work undertaken to use Welsh in KS2 and the Language Centres which was then hindered in KS3 when pupils chose to study subjects / sit examinations through the medium of English.

- (b) A concern that 6th form colleges lost pupils and that some were willing to travel far in order to follow courses through the medium of English which, therefore, hindered the colleges' number of pupils. It was felt that this matter needed to be addressed.
- (c) That consistency was difficult especially for schools located along the coast and that parents tended to send their children to the private sector.
- (d) A need to raise parents' awareness of the advantages of a bilingual society and that children missed out if the Welsh language was not part of the curriculum.
- (e) It was a shame that a rural school in a specific area was in the bilingual category and that a nearby urban school was Welsh-medium.
- (f) Disappointment was expressed at the study as it justified the situation as it was and that an opportunity had been missed as it responded to demography rather than taking advantage of the opportunity to address the problem. The intention of the Scrutiny Investigation was to eradicate the ambiguity of defining schools linguistically. The importance of Welsh-medium learning was noted if one wished to see the language surviving. Reference was made to the percentage of 69% of children studying five subjects through the medium of Welsh when they were 16 years old and should not all children be studying subjects through the medium of Welsh. In terms of learning medium experience, it was felt that children's English would not be better if they studied the subject of History through the medium of English - a good English Department is what would uphold good English standards at schools. Not teaching the subject of History through the medium of Welsh was fatal for the Welsh language and deprived children of an experience. One had to be accountable to the 2021 Census and concern was expressed that should steps not be taken to address the situation and to preserve the language, a reduction in percentages would definitely be seen again and that this result would be disastrous.
- (g) The Scrutiny Investigation asked for a definition of every secondary school in the hope that some could be designated as Welsh specified schools. Of course, it was accepted that this would not mean that children would not learn English but that designated status would be awarded to them for the benefit of the school's experience and ethos.
- (h) That it was important to put pressure on the teaching of vocational subjects through the medium of Welsh as there was a tendency for children not to study through the medium of Welsh at school as they were aware that they could study NVQ, BTEC courses etc. through the medium of English.
- (i) That the study confirmed doubts about the situation of Bangor city. It was felt that Popdy - Bangor Language Centre in itself was not going to respond to Bangor's language problems and consideration had to be given to an immersion centre and look in detail on how to support children to reach the standard.
- (j) It should also be ensured that the linguistic target was relevant for special schools.

Stemming from the above, the Scrutiny Committee, in general, supported proceeding with recommendations outlined in the external study but it was concerned about:

- the slowness of implementing the recommendations of the Welsh-Medium Education Scrutiny Investigation
- that timetable was key and that early further discussions were required about the implications of recommendation 9.1 regarding categorisation of schools

- (iii) **The Head of Education responded to some of the above observations as follows:**

The importance of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Investigation was emphasised, as was the study from the External Consultant which was, in his opinion, a very good milestone towards delivery. It was noted that the policy was sufficiently clear but that some schools defined the policy differently and that national categorisation had been inconsistent and that Gwynedd had not adopted this system. The main actions to be implemented were totally clear as was the need to hold an open discussion in relation to recommendation 9.1 in the study. The external study from Head Teachers was welcomed, as an open discussion on the real situation of schools had been held. It was further noted that there were many good practices in the County and that the majority of other Counties were envious of this authority's position. In terms of moving forward and responding, it was important to offer guidance on a national level of what was meant by "bilingualism". It was recognised that there were challenges in terms of staffing in some individual secondary schools and implementation timetable and discussions had commenced with Bangor University to identify teachers for the future. It had to be realised that there was a shortage of Welsh-medium teachers in the secondary sector.

The recommendation regarding Bangor's situation was welcomed and there was a need to examine what the implications would be especially in light of the industry that would come to Anglesey. The Head of Education was of the opinion that the challenge from the Scrutiny Investigation had been incorporated into the external study and that a discussion on local consistency would be held through contact with the private sector, further education college and bilingual curriculum planning but partners would have to be selected very carefully. The aim was to raise and increase percentages in KS3 which would involve investing in people, curricular provision, and be completely clear on what bilingualism was, and that the experience of attending schools was a Welsh experience that would contribute towards young people living locally naturally and nurturing access to the Welsh language and enabling them to contribute fully to society.

In terms of Bangor city's provision, it was recognised that consideration to the provision and linguistic factor was an essential part of reaching a long-term solution for the city. The importance of opening wider discussions on what type of provision needed to be planned was noted in order to guarantee the future of the language.

With regards to the Language Charter, the aim was for all schools to achieve the Gold Award by next year and that the challenge would be to retain the award and prove that they would build on their successes. It was added that GwE was supportive of the Language Charter with Gwynedd leading across north Wales and that it had been extended to other regions with the intention of rolling it out across Wales.

It was further specified that the report noted an inconsistency, and specific reference was made to recommendation 9.1 which noted that "70% [must] be considered as the minimum contact time with Welsh as a medium for A and B cohorts pupils." The Head of Education was of the opinion that schools would have to push the threshold and that data would increase if this could be reached. However, the co-operation of local members on governing bodies was required in order to be accountable on a local level to ensure an achievement of 70%. It was noted that the Welsh language was a centrally important core part and that many strands needed to be integrated. Gwynedd was in a relatively good position and was lucky in its demography but schemes to improve outcomes and develop for the future would have to be challenged in order to ensure an improvement in the Census. To this end, the recommendations before the committee involved a number of difficult discussions with parents, head teachers, teachers and governors across the county.

Whilst understanding the opinion of the Committee regarding consistency and no linguistic option for parents in terms of provision, there was a risk for schools to slip with a cohort of

parents selecting a different option which would perhaps lead to children leaving the County for education.

The Head of Education suggested that he would welcome holding a session in the form of a workshop with the Scrutiny Committee with an invitation for two or three secondary school teachers and further education partners to discuss how to strengthen and safeguard the Welsh language as well as being fully aware of the implications.

Resolved: (a) To thank the officer for the report and approve all recommendations but to express concern about the implications of implementing recommendation 9.1 on categorising schools, namely

“9.1 Define Gwynedd secondary schools in accordance with the language of the teaching and learning medium under one category, namely bilingual schools. Think in terms of experiences rather than subjects when establishing a balance between use of Welsh and English as learning and teaching mediums at KS3 and 4. Consider 70% as the minimum contact time with Welsh as a medium for A and B cohorts pupils.”

(b) therefore, request an early and open discussion on recommendation 9.1

(c) that early action must be taken to address challenges in the field and, therefore, request that the Education Service act soon on all recommendations of the Welsh-Medium Scrutiny Investigation and report back on progress to the Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 1.50pm.

CHAIR.