



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Council Offices
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, TUESDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 2017

Location

Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

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(DISTRIBUTED 17/01/17)

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Edgar Wyn Owen
Annwen Hughes
W. Tudor Owen

Craig ab Iago
Dilwyn Morgan
E. Caerwyn Roberts
vacant seat

Annwen Daniels
Linda Morgan
Gruffydd Williams

Independent (5)

Councillors

Eric M. Jones
Angela Russell
Louise Hughes

Nigel Pickavance
Mike Stevens

Llais Gwynedd (1)

Councillor Endaf Cooke

Labour (1)

Councillor
Glyn Thomas

Liberal Democrats (1)

Councillor
Stephen W. Churchman

Aelodau Ex-officio / Ex-officio Members

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declaration of personal interest

3. **URGENT ITEMS**

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

4. **MINUTES**

4 - 8

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meeting of this Committee, held on 24.11.16 be signed as a true record.

5. **BEACH MANAGEMENT CUTS**

9 - 12

To consider the report of the Senior Manager - Economy and Community

6. **UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SERVICE IN MEETING EFFICIENCY SAVINGS TARGETS AND THE RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES**

13 - 25

To consider the report of the Byw'n Iach Senior Manager

7. **POST 16 TRANSPORT**

26 - 28

To receive a report from the Cabinet Member on the implementation of the Scrutiny Investigation's recommendations.

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2016

PRESENT:

COUNCILLORS: Annwen Daniels, Eric M. Jones, Dilwyn Morgan, Edgar Wyn Owen, Tudor Owen, E. Caerwyn Roberts, Angela Russell, Glyn Thomas and Gruffydd Williams.

OFFICERS: Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer), Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager - Corporate Commissioning Service), Translators, Rhun ap Gareth (Senior Solicitor), Gareth Jones (Senior Planning and Environmental Service Manager), Cara Owen (Development Control Manager).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- a) In relation to item 5 on the agenda - Councillor Ioan Thomas (Cabinet Member), Arwel Wyn Owen (Senior Housing Manager), Eiliw Llŷr (Housing Strategic Manager), Ffrancon Williams (Chief Executive - Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd) and Enid Roberts (Assistant Director of Customers and Communities - Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Craig ab Iago, Stephen Churchman, Annwen Hughes, Linda Morgan, Nigel Pickavance and Mike Stevens

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following member declared a personal interest for the reasons noted:

- Councillor Angela Russell, in item 7 on the agenda, due to her daughter being a tenant and a former chair of the Board of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd.

The Member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and she withdrew from the Chamber during the discussion on the application noted.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting of this committee, held on 22 September 2016, were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

5. HOUSING STRATEGY DIRECTIVE AND THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATIONS

A report was submitted to encourage a discussion on the priorities of the Gwynedd Housing Partnership Strategy 2013-2017. The role of the housing associations to achieve these priorities, along with the way these matters would be met, was noted by reviewing the Strategy for the 2017 - 2021 period.

The Housing Strategic Manager highlighted that Housing Associations provide more than housing and that the report referred to what had been completed, as well as the main achievements over the strategy's period. Additional benefits were apparent, such as work opportunities and opportunities for people to move forward in the housing market. Nevertheless, their main emphasis was to build new developments that would be funded by grants from the Welsh Government. It was highlighted that Welsh Government had set a supply target of 20,000 units by the end of the next Government, which placed emphasis and urgency on Councils and Housing Associations to respond. It was the Council that decided on the strategic priorities of these development by collaborating with, and directing, the Housing Associations to locations where other areas were targeted that had been divided as required. The process would identify prospective tenants through the Allocations Policy and the Housing Options Team. Reference was made to the role of the Energy Wardens that were crucial in terms of introducing and promoting schemes. It was noted that several Partners of the Partnership contributed toward this role - an example of energy schemes were 'Nyth' and 'Cartrefi Clyd'.

Along with new developments, it was explained that the Partnership focused on homelessness matters and the Housing Act by collaborating with Housing Associations and Supporting People Team to provide services to the most vulnerable people of our society. By reviewing the strategy, it was noted that, as suppliers and promoters, the partners would have to be central to ensure that the relationship continued.

During the ensuing discussion the following observations were highlighted:

- Some areas continued to see need
- What was the vision of the Housing Associations?
- More must be done to keep people local - need confidence in the allocations procedure
- Why build new? Needed to look at the housing for sale and empty housing situation
- Empty bedroom tax being an additional cost to the tenant.
- Building from new could create a ghetto outside of communities where people were seen moving from village centres to live on the outskirts.
- A need for schemes that would include more bungalows
- It was necessary to look long term and in detail in terms of housing suitability - a long term vision was necessary

It was recognised that the situation was challenging with substantial difficulties and problems to do what was possible with the available resources. It was highlighted that the Strategy was robust - the challenge was the capacity to implement and fund the schemes.

In response to the concern in regards to the allocations system, it was acknowledged that the emphasis in the past had been on allocations within a tight timetable, but by now that there was recognition to look at attaining the correct tenant for the correct location. The suggestion was accepted to contact the Local Member in areas with weak lists or situations where, possibly, a warning would be received beforehand about an empty house. It was noted that a review into the Housing Options Team (that was established in 2012) was being completed.

Cartrefi Clyd - in response to an observation, it was highlighted that the requirements of the scheme limited the number of housing. It was reported that every scheme was different with different criteria and a tight schedule to submit an application. Concern was expressed about lack of resources within the unit and that the collaboration and support of the Housing Associations had been advantageous to seek information. It was reiterated

that the national guidelines were an obstacle and it was suggested to contact the Assembly to report that the system did not lead to effective planning.

In response to an observation, and a desire to build more bungalows for older people, it was highlighted that the Older People Accommodation Strategy looked at the situation that was common across the County. It was noted that the constructing industry and developers appeared stubborn due to bungalows not being cost effective. It was noted that four areas had been identified within the Older People Accommodation Strategy and work was needed to seek solutions and hold discussions about the aspirations of families.

It was reported that Extra Care Housing had released 16 units for families in Bangor following work to facilitate and help individuals to move. Following the completion of Hafod y Gest in Porthmadog, the next options would need to be looked at, considering different models for smaller communities that offered the same opportunities for older people.

RESOLVED to accept the report and welcome the opportunity to hold an initial discussion about the direction of the Strategy and offer the observations below:

- **Affordability - emphasise that a response is needed to the housing affordability crisis - for the Partnership to look at different methods and ways of making a difference and respond to the challenge by ensuring affordable housing for local people**
- **Seek housing stock suitable to ensure balance in terms of the provision**
- **Identify opportunities, at least in areas where there are weak lists, to contact the Local Member to discuss the situation along with tailoring marketing methods**
- **Consider the possibilities to buy houses for sale or empty houses as well as new-builds in order to avoid the possibility of creating unviable communities. A suggestion to discuss the change in emphasis and adapt the subsidy arrangement in the long term with Welsh Government.**
- **As the Full Council will consider implementing Second House / Empty House Premium, it is possible to attract income to be earmarked for social, affordable housing - the Partnership would need to hold a discussion for the Council's decision on how to implement this.**

6. THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON HOUSING

Two documents were submitted to the Members - one sharing the brief of the recent workshop arranged by Housing Associations and Gwynedd Council to discuss the obligations of the Local Housing Allowance as well as an initial draft of an action plan.

The Strategic Manager highlighted that the work programme was a live document mainly because the further changes in the benefits arrangements were on the horizon. It was emphasised that there was a need to be aware of these changes and the county's residents.

During the ensuing discussion the following observations were highlighted:

- Low cap in Gwynedd and therefore, attention needed to be brought to this nationally. Awareness needed to be raised on the difficulty of seeking properties to rent
- The situation was disheartening, difficult and tiresome for vulnerable families
- Suggestion to contact the Members of Parliament and the Assembly Member
- Methodology needed to be considered - needed to review Gwynedd's cap
- The scheme needed to be tied in with the other Strategies of the County e.g. the economy - there was a need to attempt to assist to get more people into work - tie in with senior strategies to seek a solution

In response to a question regarding work being done to identify families that would feel the effect of changes in benefits (Housing Benefits and Work Benefits - amendments

7.11.16), it was noted that 53 families had been identified by Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (CCG) that were in a vulnerable situation. It was noted that CCG had collaborated with the Rent Team and were preparing beforehand to seek a solution. In the context of Universal Credit, it was highlighted that 60 individuals had been identified and that CCG had been working closely with Cynefin to seek a solution. It was highlighted that there was a need for the work of identifying vulnerable tenants to continue.

Resolved

- **Welcome the submission of the action plan.**
- **To draw attention nationally to the cap being so low in Gwynedd - need to canvas to adapt the methodology and press on changing it. It was suggested to invite the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children to discuss the situation in Gwynedd**
- **That there is a need to continue to collaborate with tenants and to warn them about the effect of the changes**

7. ANNUAL REPORT OF CARTREFI CYMUNEDOL GWYNEDD (2015-2016)

The Annual Report of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (CCG) for 2015-2016 was submitted. Reference was made to the Transfer Agreement, and it was noted that it was required for them to note how they had realised the promises made to tenants in the Offer Document and implemented the obligations under the Transfer Agreement. It was highlighted that the results of the report were encouraging and had a valuable effect on the economy.

During the discussion the following observations were noted:

- CCG were congratulated on receiving a Wales National Procurement award and on their positive social benefit report.
- New developments were approved, but it was necessary to secure more units for older people as well as one-bedroom units.
- Need to solve the land Maintenance responsibilities of locations in multiple ownership, giving consideration to the lack of flexibility in paying arrangements
- The decline in the standards of kitchens, for example, was likely to come together and therefore it was foreseen that a further investment would be needed.
- A request to strengthen the local members' links - a valuable resource to bridge links

In response to a question regarding an external company forming the report, it was noted that the tender process had been followed that was open to everyone and that it was a company from Belfast that had succeeded. It was highlighted that Menter Môn and a company from Colwyn Bay had contributed local input to the reports.

In response to a question regarding customer care, it was noted that the customer care statistics were lower than expected and that the repair service was part of this. As a result, it was noted that the situation was being reviewed and that work was being done to transform in order to improve customer care efficiency. It was reported that a pilot had been undertaken and that things appeared to be improved.

In response to a question regarding receiving the report, the Housing Strategic Manager reported that meetings were being held every six months with CCG to review the values and the promises. It was received that a number of promises had been given, but by now it was felt that CCG had achieved those promises and therefore accepted that these had been completed. This was confirmed by the Cabinet Member.

The Chief Executive of CCG highlighted that the company was, by now, moving to a period of development and wanted to achieve more within communities. A request was made for them to be treated as an equal partner - like the other housing services.

Everyone was thanked for their contribution and representatives of Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd were thanked for attending the meeting.

Resolved

- **To accept the professional advice that CCG has fulfilled the promises in the Offer Document subject to the points below:**
- **To welcome the fact that a close relationship should be kept with CCG even after completing the promises of the Agreement**
- **To congratulate the success of the procurement process with the investment received locally**
- **That there was a need to solve land maintenance responsibilities in multiple ownership Housing Estates**
- **That customer satisfaction needs to be examined following a lower performance than expected with a suggestion to extend the pilot scheme if it proves successful**
- **That there is a need to ensure that the work programme includes an investment to ensure that the standard of the stock is consistent across the County**

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	24 January 2017
TITLE	Beach Management Cuts
AUTHOR	Llŷr Jones, Senior Manager - Economy and Community
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr Mandy Williams-Davies
PURPOSE	To report of the implementation of financial cuts in the beach management budgets

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It was resolved at the Scrutiny Committee's preparatory meeting to ask for a report on the impact of the cuts undertaken by the Council to the beach management budgets. The purpose of this report is to submit information about these cuts and to consider whether or not there were any unforeseen outcomes to the cuts.

2. BUGETARY CUTS WHICH HAVE BEEN APPROVED

- 2.1 Historically, the Economy and Community Department, via the Maritime and Country Parks Service, has responsibility for managing as much as 301km of the coastline in terms of health and safety, maintenance, cleanliness, managing power boats and jet-skis and coastal leisure activities. The responsibilities also include parking and access management for vehicle, powerboats and pleasure boats for launching purposes, managing and enforcing dog control orders, supervising beach safety and providing information to members of the public.
- 2.2 When considering different cuts, different options were incorporated as potential cuts and reference was made to the features related to beach awards namely
- i. Delete the entire beach management service (saving of £81,900)
 - ii. Management of Blue Flag beaches only (saving of £55,700)
 - iii. Manage Blue Flag and Green Flag beaches only (saving of £24,200)
- 2.3 At a meeting on 3 March 2016, the full Council resolved to implement a programme of cuts in order to meet its financial shortfall. One of the cuts approved within that programme was the option that the Council would 'Manage Blue flag and Green flag beaches only'.

- 2.4 The approved cut involves limiting the beach management activities to beaches that have won Blue Flag or Green Flag awards such as Barmouth, Dinas Dinlle, Aberdaron, Abersoch, Pwllheli, Morfa Bychan, Tywyn, Cricieth, Aberdyfi, Harlech, Llandanwg, Fairbourne and Porth Neigwl.
- 2.5 When considering the effects of 'managing Blue Flag and Green Flag beaches only' it was anticipated that there would be implications such as:
- No management arrangements for other beaches in the county
 - An increase in safety risks
 - Undermining the location's reputation for coastal activities
 - Negative impact on the tourism sector in these communities.
- 2.6 The beach management function is not statutory, and it was considered that risk assessments would be prepared for every beach in order to consider additional signage and / or alternative management measures as an option.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CUTS

- 3.1 Following the Full Council's decision on 3 March 2016, the programme of cuts became operational, and the budgets for the 2016/17 financial year were reduced to reflect this.
- 3.2 Nevertheless, in forming arrangements for implementing the cuts with immediate effect, a number of issues came to light, including
- The implementation period between the decision and the start of the tourist season was limited
 - The service was very eager to endeavour to mitigate the anticipated effects
 - The need to ensure that alternative safety measures were in place
 - Possible opportunities to work with local establishments for alternative management arrangements
- 3.3 Consequently, the 2016 season was considered a transitional period, and although budgets had been reduced, interim arrangements were implemented at some beaches. The following is a summary of the arrangements set for 2016:

a) Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn beaches

Interim arrangements were put in place based on a previous arrangement of collaboration between Nefyn Town Council and the National Trust to provide beach wardens for the 2016 season. The Service has confirmed that this arrangement will not continue into the 2017 season. Gwynedd Council does not have responsibility as

the owner of the beach or the foreshore, and it was considered that assisting with interim arrangements during 2016 would offer an opportunity for relevant organisations to prepare and put in place appropriate arrangements.

b) Machroes beach, near Abersoch

The beach at Machroes adjoins the Abersoch Blue Flag beach, and contributes to the functions of the main beach. It is considered that there is an opportunity to work with local establishments and the business sector to develop alternative arrangements. During 2016, the arrangements for parking fees were reviewed and this brought in additional income to meet the financial deficit. It is anticipated that more time will be needed to develop the model and confirm the permanent arrangements.

c) Trefor beach

New arrangements were implemented at Trefor beach as no beach wardens were appointed during 2016 and the vehicle access to the beach was restricted. It is considered that there are further opportunities to work with a local society in order to build upon last year's arrangements and formalise arrangements and suitable access for annual mooring holders and annual launching permits in the area. It is envisaged that the proposed arrangements would offer suitable measures to mitigate risks associated with safety and possible conflict on the beach.

d) Abererch beach (Glandon)

No significant changes are proposed as part of the cuts (no beach wardens are employed).

e) Llanbedrog beach

Measures to manage vehicle access to the beach have been in place for a number of years, and the Service no longer employs beach warden. No significant changes are proposed as part of the cuts.

3.4 Of course, the work of changing beach management arrangements in the above location was in addition to the efforts to provide facilities and services at the Blue Flag and Green Flag beaches.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The lengths of Gwynedd's coast is greater than any other county's coastline in Wales. The coastline's resources offer a number of functions and are important assets to the area, its residents and visitors.
- 4.2 In identifying and considering different options that could contribute to the cuts agenda the impact of such cuts were considered. As outlined above, the work of implementing the cuts is already underway, however further work is needed to implement them in full. As a result, it is likely that it will be too early to try to evidence the impact of the cuts until they have been fully implemented.
- 4.3 Having said this, when considering the effect of the cut to 'managing Blue Flag and Green Flag beaches only', it was anticipated there would be implications (as noted in section 2.5 of the report). In making arrangements for implementing the cuts, every effort has been made by the Service to seek to reduce and / or mitigate such effects.
- 4.4 To date, the impacts of these cuts are consistent with what was anticipated. It is true to say that the beach management function is also dependent upon and influenced by factors that are beyond our control. However, it is not considered that there have been any outcomes which are very different to what was anticipated.
- 4.5 The Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the contents of the report.

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	24 January 2017
TITLE	Update on the progress of the Healthy Communities Service in meeting efficiency savings targets and the response to the report of the Auditor General for Wales
AUTHOR	Ian Jones, Senior Economy and Community Manager
MEMBER	Councillor Mair Rowlands
PURPOSE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scrutinise progress to date in realising efficiency savings as part of the Council's Financial Strategy 2015 - 2018 2. Scrutinise the Service's response to the Report of the Auditor General for Wales on leisure services.

1. Background

1.1. Members of the Communities Scrutiny Committee have noted their wish to scrutinise the Service's response to the report of the Auditor General for Wales: *Delivering with less - Leisure Services*. As part of this, it was considered that it would also be beneficial for Members to scrutinise the progress of the Service in achieving the efficiency savings target as set out by the Council's Financial Strategy 2015-2018.

2. Efficiency Savings Programme 2015-2018

2.1. As part of the Council's Financial Strategy up to the end of the 2017/2018 financial year, an efficiency savings target of £1,053m was set for the Healthy Communities Service. This was equivalent to 56% of the controlled budget or 26% of the full budget for the 2015/2016 financial year.

2.2. In response to that target, the Service developed seven proposals which, together, addressed the target by the end of the period of the Financial Strategy in question.

2.3. The Cabinet's approval was given at its meeting on 16 December 2014 to implement the proposals, which took effect from April 2015 onwards. Details of the proposals, together with a brief summary of the progress to date, can be seen in **Appendix 1**.

2.4. To date, the Service has delivered £660,894 of the target with a further £135,758k to be delivered in 2017/2018. This is £256,500 short of the target and, therefore, the Cabinet was asked to approve the re-profiling of that amount to be delivered in 2018/2019.

2.5. The Service will prepare schemes in order to meet the deficiency early in the 2017/2018 financial year in order to ensure that it will be possible to implement them in 2018/2019.

3. Response to the Report of the Auditor General for Wales: 'Delivering with Less - Leisure Services'

3.1. In December 2015, the Auditor published a report which noted the following as his main recommendation:

'When delivering leisure services, councils focus on dealing with short-term financial challenges rather than considering how to provide services in the future in a strategic way'.

3.2. Four further general recommendations were also noted that were relevant to leisure services throughout Wales, namely:

3.2.1. *Improving strategic planning work in the leisure services.*

3.2.2. *Undertake an evaluation of options in order to discover the most appropriate delivery model based on the Council's agreed vision and its priorities for leisure services.*

3.2.3. *Ensuring effective management of the performance of leisure services by establishing a series of measures in order to allow officers, members and citizens to judge regarding input, output and effect.*

3.2.4. *Improving governance, accountability and corporate leadership arrangements in the leisure services.*

3.3. Progress towards implementing a number of aspects of the recommendations has been made and details can be provided if required.

3.4. However, in terms of the recommendation noted under 3.2.2 above, the Cabinet at its meeting on 3 November 2016, approved the undertaking of an evaluation of the most appropriate delivery model. It is expected that the Scrutiny Committee will receive a report in September 2017 on the appropriate model for Gwynedd in order realise the following objectives:

- The same service or better for a lower cost;
- Better access to alternative funding;
- Ability to promote and safeguard the Welsh language within leisure and sport in Gwynedd;
- Better effective use of the Council's subsidy;
- Flexibility to change and meet new challenges;
- Maximise the contribution of the provision to meet the Council's strategic objectives

4. Therefore, in relation to both matters in question, namely i) the Service's progress in delivering efficiency savings and ii) the Service's progress in responding to the Report of the Auditor General for Wales on leisure services, the Service received details which aspects the Members were eager to scrutinise in detail and a full response to those questions can be seen in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1 - The Savings Programme for the Healthy Communities Service

Scheme	Title	Description	Amount	Progress to date
HAM1	Review and rationalise new management structures of Leisure Centres	Review the current situation of having a Leisure Centre Manager at every site, and create Area Manager posts, with responsibility for several Leisure facilities within a definitive area.	£135,897	Delivered during 2015/2016
HAM2	Increase levels of fees	Increase general leisure fees level 2% above level of inflation for the next three years.	£147,000	Delivered during 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. It will also be included in the fees and charges schedule for 2017/2018.
HAM3	Review and rationalise the central structures of the Service	Review the central structures of the Healthy Communities Service, looking to combine duties and responsibilities between managers and staff.	£68,887	Will be delivered in full by the end of 2016/2017.
HAM4	More effective running of leisure facilities	Reduce the Council's current subsidy level for the provision of leisure centres. In order to complete this, a series of transitional projects will be needed across Gwynedd, with a specific focus according to catchment / leisure centre. This means that the current provision could reduce significantly or be provided in a different way. This will be completely dependent on the opportunities available.	£639,758	£383,258 will have been delivered by 2017/2018 and it is intended to re-profile the remaining to be delivered in 2018/2019.
HAM5	Grounds Maintenance	Reduce expenditure on grounds maintenance by amending agreement	£20,000	Delivered during 2016/2017.
HAM6	Arfon Sports Hall, Bangor	Bring a current contract for the use of the centre to an end and transfer the facility in full to Coleg Menai or in part to the University.	£25,730	Delivered during 2015/2016 but as a result, the facility was closed to the public (decision of Coleg Menai who own the building)
HAM7	Treborrh Track	End a current contract for the use of the land and transfer the assets to the University. This to include the athletics track and the equipment on site.	£15,880	Delivered during 2016/2017.

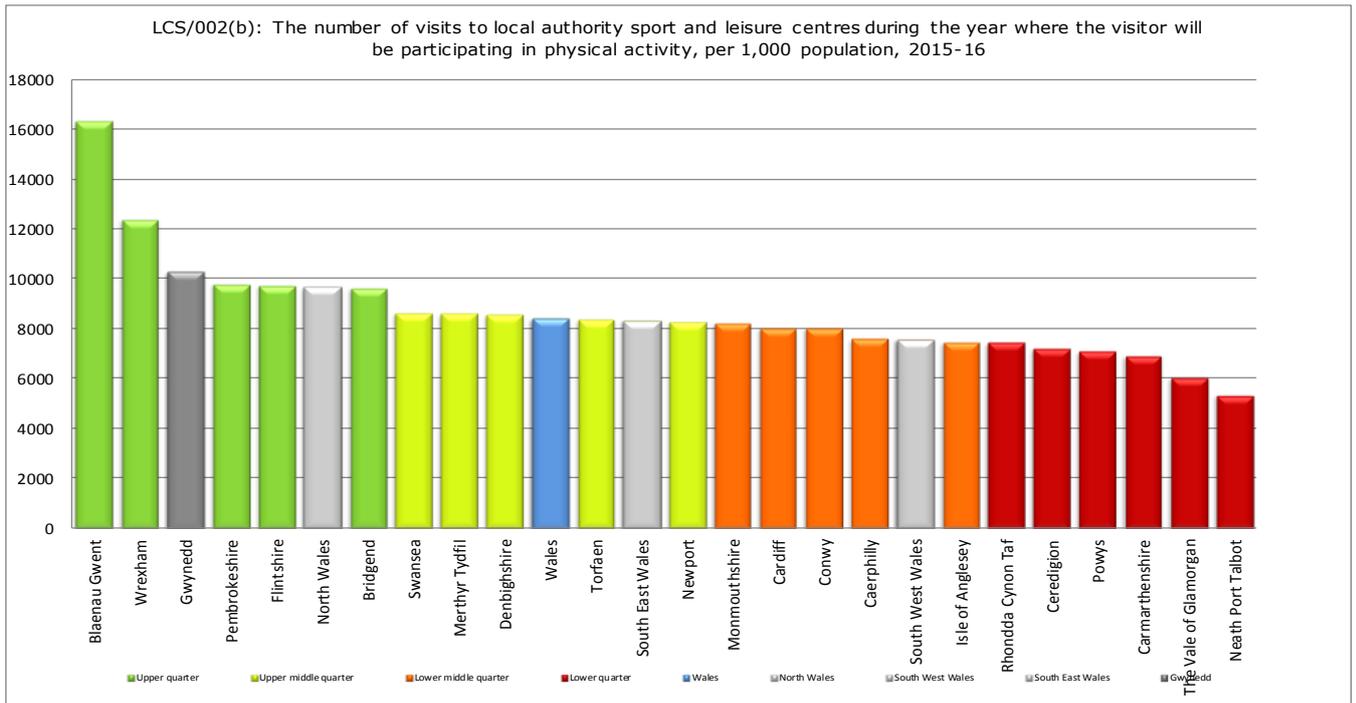
Appendix 2 - Specific questions to be scrutinised

1. The HAM2 Scheme in the appendix of the report showed an increase in income from fees of £147k. What are the projections for further increase in fees beyond 2017/18?

- 1.1. The levels of fees and payments for the use of leisure facilities are determined every year by reviewing fees. For the three years up until the end of 2017/2018, that review has needed to meet not only the increase as a result of the need to achieve efficiency savings, but also to meet the annual increase in the inflation target. For 2017/2018, this has resulted in an increase in general fees of 3.75% that is equivalent to receiving an additional income of £97,430.
- 1.2. The fee levels for using Gwynedd Council facilities are lower than what is seen in the County's private sector but is comparative with nearby counties. We compare them regularly to ensure that the people of Gwynedd are offered a value for money service.
- 1.3. Bearing this in mind, care will need to be taken in considering whether there is an opportunity to increase fees higher than the inflation target from 2018/2019 onwards. This is because it would be possible for the Service to increase fees to the point where Gwynedd residents would consider the price to be too high. This would lead to a decrease in use and would therefore create a risk of significantly reducing income.
- 1.4. As a result, the projections that fees will need to be increased higher than the inflation target will be considered and it will only be possible to confirm whether there will be an opportunity to introduce further increase from 2018/2019 onwards by seeing the effect of the increase for 2017/2018.

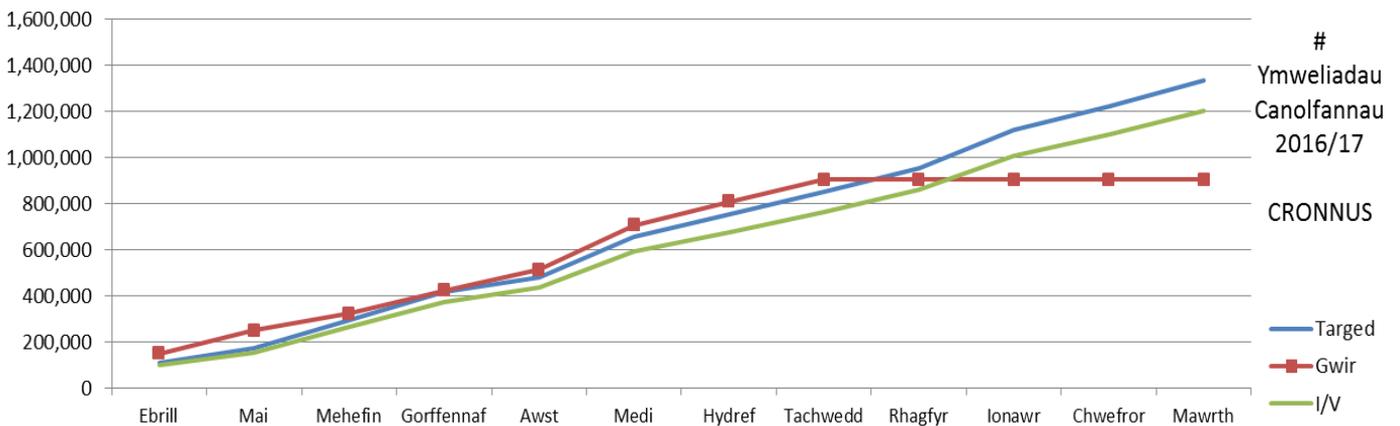
2. What steps have been taken to increase levels of use to date as another way of increasing income?

- 2.1. The current level of use of leisure centres in Gwynedd is comparatively high in comparison to other Authorities in Wales. Based on 2015/2016 information, it can be seen that Gwynedd is the third highest in Wales in terms of Number of Visits per 1,000 of the population.



2.2. The performance has continued to increase since then and the latest data shows a continued positive trend.

Number of visits to Leisure Centres – 2016/2017 (accumulative) – red line denotes actual, blue line denotes target.



* Please note - the above figures do not include the figures for December 2016 - March 2017

2.3. The steps that have been taken to increase use since 2013/2014 are as follows:

- **Renew Fitness Equipment** - the service has renewed fitness equipment in a number of centres during 2016 and this has increased the membership for those centres by 13.34% on average. On the basis of that increase, a business case was developed in

order to ensure that the remainder of the centres receive new fitness equipment in February 2017.

- **Upgrading Facilities** - the Service has upgraded a number of centres by using a combination of internal budget and external grants. We will continue to do that based on developing business cases per individual centre.
- **Fitness Classes** - the Service has transformed its fitness classes offer since 2014. By now, 200 fitness classes are provided every week which is an increase of 60% over the period. The range of classes provided are now one of the best in Wales and far ahead from what is offered by others within the sector in Gwynedd.
- **Cycling** - The Service has taken advantage of the local demand for cycling classes specifically, and a range of the latest bicycles were provided in order to support the demand. That includes three centres that are now offering 'Spivi' and 'Wattbikes' classes that use innovative software from America in order to track and show the users' performance on a large screen.
- **Swimming Classes** - The number of children attending swimming lessons in the County has increased from 2,714 per week in 2014 to 2,846 per week in November 2016 and the classes have reached 72% of the available capacity. In addition, the swimming lessons period has increased from 42 weeks per year to 46 weeks per year in a number of centres which has resulted in children learning to swim at an improved rate whilst moving through different classes in a timely manner. This change has also reduced waiting lists for places in centres such as Arfon Leisure Centre and Bangor Aquatics and Healthy Lifestyle Centre.
- **Marketing Strategy** - we use the latest techniques when marketing the offer to the local residents of Gwynedd. The existing strategy includes making the most of social media and the internet in order to advertise the offer. In addition, images and posters within the centres have been transformed with professional imagery now being displayed. We will be building on this in Quarter 4, 2016/17 by installing new 'Brief Your Market' software in order to be able to reach current, previous and potential customers through new communication methods.

3. What type of effect has the Monthly Payment Plan had on the income profile of the Service? To what extent has the discount offer to public sector staff been successful?

3.1. The Service offers a wide range of different monthly packages which allows users to pay beforehand to gain access to centres in order to undertake activities. It is possible to purchase packages for a month only or for a longer period by paying

through direct debit. The aim is to offer flexibility for users to decide which package is most suitable for them as individuals, depending on their circumstances and requirements.

- 3.2. There is an increased demand for this type of provision by our users because it facilitates arrangements and reduces contact time with the centre's reception areas. One specific example of this is with the swimming lessons where, to date in 2016/2017, 1,196 parents pay for swimming lessons through a swimming direct debit package. This is equivalent to 40% of the total of children who attend the swimming lessons scheme and some centres have much higher percentages e.g. over 80% in Bro Ffestiniog Swimming Pool.
- 3.3. By now, the monthly packages are seen as the main source of income for the Service and nearly £1m of the annual income is accumulated through the packages. This is an increase of 54% between April 2014 and December 2016.
- 3.4. In respect of the Corporate Discount Scheme, this package was introduced as part of a wider package of benefits to the Council's staff. By now, the scheme has been extended to other public bodies (e.g. Snowdonia National Park, Fire and Ambulance Services, the Police) and there are plans to expand it further.
- 3.5. The Corporate Discount Scheme offers a discount of 20% compared to a full direct debit package (£24 a month compared to £29.50) and allows use of all resources and most activities within the centre for 12 months.
- 3.6. Currently (based on the information of November 2016) it can be seen that 410 individuals take advantage of the scheme that attracts an annual income of £98,400 (excluding VAT) to the Service. On average, users who take advantage of the full package of £29.50 do so for eight months of the year only. The Corporate Discount Scheme requires a 12 month full payment contract, so the Service benefits from £17,767 per year by offering the package.
- 3.7. Unfortunately, it is not possible to calculate the number of users who would not have signed up unless the Corporate Discount Scheme was in place.

4. HAM 4 in the appendix discusses reducing the subsidy level and running centres more effectively, and the figure of over £600k for that is very substantial. What type of plans have been achieved to realise this?

- 4.1. In order to achieve the figure of £640k in efficiency savings, the Service has had to look at a number of different aspects in detail. As the Members are aware, a feasibility review was completed by the 'Just Solutions' company in October 2013 on the Leisure provision in Gwynedd. That review noted a series of recommendations

for achieving efficiency savings and a number of the proposals were based on realising the targets on those recommendations. The list below notes all of the plans within HAM 4, noting the plan's effect on the budget in terms of increasing income or reducing expenditure.

Scheme	Progress up to the end of December 2016	The effect on the Budget i.e. Increase Income / Reduce Expenditure
Renew Fitness Equipment (see 2.3 above)	Has been achieved with another scheme under way by February 2017.	Increase Income
Increase the number of fitness classes (see 2.3 above)	Has been achieved	Increase Income
Cycling (see 2.3 above)	Has been achieved	Increase Income
Swimming Lessons (see 2.3 above)	Underway	Increase Income
Marketing Strategy (see 2.3 above)	Underway	Increase Income
Review health and safety procedures	A successful review of the service's procedures was completed in order to see a reduction in expenditure on the basis of a risk assessment. That work has led to reducing staff presence within swimming pools and also dry centres during quiet periods.	Reduce Expenditure
A review of Staffing Structures	Every centre has completed a staffing review by abolishing empty posts and restructuring where there was an opportunity to do so. There was a need to make one compulsory redundancy as a result of this exercise.	Reduce Expenditure
Co-location of Services	In order to make the best use of the centres, a number of schemes have been realised.	Increase Income

	The Library is now located in Glaslyn Leisure Centre and the 'Flying Start' provision is located in Plas Ffrancon Leisure Centre. Further projects of this nature are planned in the future.	
The Development of Centres (see 2.3 above)	This has been completed. Further plans under consideration for Bro Dysynni, Tywyn and Arfon Leisure Centre.	Increase Income

4.2. These schemes have had a positive effect on the budgetary situation of most of the leisure centres. The table below notes the difference between the 2013/2014 and the 2016/2017 budget per individual centre.

Canolfan / Centre	Cyllideb Rheoledig / Controlled Budget						Gwahaniaeth yn y Gyllideb / Change to Budget				
	2013/14			2016/17			Gwariant / Expenditure		Incwm / Income		% Newid / Change
	Gwariant / Expenditure	Incwm / Income	Graddfa Adennill / Operational Recovery	Gwariant / Expenditure	Incwm / Income	Graddfa Adennill / Operational Recovery	Gwir / Actual	%	Gwir / Actual	%	
Arfon, Caernarfon	£566,860	-£414,970	73%	£556,060	-£430,540	77%	-£10,800	-1.91%	£15,570	3.8%	4%
Tenis, Caernarfon	£283,740	-£215,170	76%	£250,900	-£261,550	104%	-£32,840	-11.57%	£46,380	21.6%	28%
Bangor	£585,600	-£407,180	70%	£523,050	-£406,610	78%	-£62,550	-10.68%	-£ 570	-0.1%	8%
Plas Ffrancon, Bethesda	£218,390	-£132,140	61%	£195,170	-£147,100	75%	-£23,220	-10.63%	£14,960	11.3%	15%
Glaslyn, Porthmadog	£518,450	-£356,410	69%	£473,710	-£383,980	81%	-£44,740	-8.63%	£27,570	7.7%	12%
Dwyfor, Pwllheli	£526,260	-£445,450	85%	£523,320	-£456,240	87%	-£2,940	-0.56%	£10,790	2.4%	3%
Plas Silyn, Penygroes	£228,510	-£145,440	64%	£183,520	-£146,270	80%	-£44,990	-19.69%	£ 830	0.6%	16%
Penllyn, Y Bala	£297,800	-£141,140	47%	£252,180	-£142,410	56%	-£45,620	-15.32%	£ 1,270	0.9%	9%
Pafiliwn, Y Bermo	£168,980	-£105,340	62%	£110,390	-£113,550	103%	-£58,590	-34.67%	£ 8,210	7.8%	41%
Glan Wnion, Dolgellau	£166,810	-£105,530	63%	£138,200	-£114,180	83%	-£28,610	-17.15%	£ 8,650	8.2%	19%
Bro Dysynni, Tywyn	£379,900	-£252,720	67%	£330,920	-£204,690	62%	-£48,980	-12.89%	-£48,030	-19.0%	-5%
Bro Ffestiniog	£128,690	-£55,900	43%	£132,180	-£52,920	40%	£3,490	2.71%	-£ 2,980	-5.3%	-3%
Cyfanswm / Total	£4,069,990	-£2,777,390	68%	£3,669,600	-£2,860,040	78%	-£400,390	-10%	£82,650	3%	10%

4.3. The performance of every centre has improved in terms of reducing expenditure and it can be seen that the expenditure total has reduced by 9.84%.

4.4. In terms of income, it can be seen that the income situation of most centres has improved but a decline was seen in Bro Dysynni Leisure Centre, Tywyn. This is mostly due to the decrease in the number of children that attend swimming lessons regularly in the area and also the reduction in target income compared to 2013/2014.

4.5. It should also be noted that two centres, namely Arfon Tennis Centre, Caernarfon and Pavilion Leisure Centre, Barmouth now attract an income above the

expenditure level under the management of the Council. This is unprecedented performance, and is an exception to most of the centres in Wales.

4.6. In terms of the number of visits to the centres, a significant increase was not seen in the use. However, as was already noted in 2.1 above, the use is relatively high anyway. It should also be taken into consideration that the Service re-installed an information technology system during the period between 2014 and 2016 which resulted in cleaner data by removing duplicate members and usage. Furthermore, Bangor Aquatics and Healthy Lifestyle Centre was closed for six months during 2015/2016 in order to complete remedial and upgrading works.

4.7. However, the main factor for the change is the reduction in the free swimming grant that is received from Sports Wales. Losing a £49k grant at the beginning of 2015/2016 involved a significant reduction in the free swimming sessions provided in Gwynedd, and that partly explained why an increase was seen in other counties such as Blaenau Gwent that received an increase in the grant.

4.8. These factors have had an impact on the performance, but the performance continues to be high compared to other Authorities within Wales. See below a table that notes the number of visits per individual centre.

Canolfan / Centre	Defnydd / Visits		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Arfon, Caernarfon	277,484	249,948	392,822
Tenis, Caernarfon	73,563	92,429	126,790
Bangor	218,134	218,134	196,239
Plas Ffrancon, Bethesda	71,068	77,127	47,955
Glaslyn, Porthmadog	166,459	160,981	139,923
Dwyfor, Pwllheli	308,032	270,167	214,556
Plas Silyn, Penygroes	86,941	82,268	84,444
Penllyn, Y Bala	174,803	115,194	80,072
Pafiliwn, Y Bermo	24,819	24,819	28,461
Glan Wnion, Dolgellau	53,125	53,125	61,868
Bro Dysynni, Tywyn	93,961	91,199	88,892
Bro Ffestiniog	30,061	36,061	26,731
Cyfanswm / Total	1,578,450	1,471,452	1,488,753

5. In November 2016, the Cabinet released resources in order to develop possible business models for the future. What type of options has the Services been considering for the future and what are the advantages and the disadvantages of the options that are being considered in terms of finance and service level?

5.1. The service is considering three possible directions, namely; i) continue to provide the service through the current model, ii) establish a new social enterprise and iii) transfer to a social enterprise that has already been established. There is a range of options within these directions, and the aim between now and March 2017 is to look closer and in detail at the implications associated and risks associated with the different models.

5.2. In relation to the financial advantages and disadvantages, some models are eligible for a non-domestic tax and VAT relief that will, in turn, create significant savings for the Council. The implications of this, however, is the need for that body to be independent to the Council and the Council would then manage the body by agreement or contract. Over the coming months, we will investigate those implications so that the Council is fully aware of any possible disadvantages.

5.3. In terms of the service level, the aim will be to offer the same level of service or better and by evaluating the options, we will study both the opportunities and associated threats. For example, one advantage would be that some of the models could attract investment from new funding sources that are not available to the Council in order to improve the service offer. Furthermore, one of the main qualities of the models being considered is that any financial savings or additional income would be re-invested in local public services.

6. Other councils have been looking at transferring leisure centre management, some of them to trusts that could heavily depend on volunteers. What is the viewpoint of the Service on that?

6.1. Gwynedd Council has experience of transferring the management of leisure centres to volunteers with Harlech Swimming Pool. Whilst this example has its strengths and weaknesses, it is clear that the pressure placed on volunteers can be burdensome and challenging to those individuals associated with that centre.

6.2. The Service is eager to keep opportunities open to volunteers to come forward with a business case to manage any centre in Gwynedd. Welsh Government has developed a Framework in order to facilitate any transfer based on what has happened at Harlech and at other locations in Wales and, by now, it is foreseen that the process would be less cumbersome for future projects.

6.3. However, the Service has concerns about the sustainability of any such enterprise, and the associated risk of losing consistency across the County. The Service has business and quality assurance procedures for the county, including staff training schemes and those aspects could be a challenge for volunteers to develop them on their own.

7. If internal discussions are taking place on different options for the future, how much discussion has been held with the staff of those centres regarding the issue and what was the outcome of those discussions?

7.1. The Project Board has a comprehensive communication and engagement plan that includes staff in the centres as well as other main stakeholders. As part of this plan, the Senior Manager met with every member of staff between November and the end of December 2016 in order to explain the context of the work and to outline the implementation timetable.

7.2. In addition, based on those discussions, a question and answer leaflet was provided and this will be circulated at the end of January 2017.

7.3. Engagement with the remainder of the stakeholders will begin very shortly and any feedback will be submitted back to the Project Board regularly.

7.4. In terms of the feedback from staff so far, the response has been very positive as they acknowledge the need to consider other ways of providing a service in order to ensure a sustainable and successful future.

8. Paragraph 3.4 noted a series of objectives for the development of the service for the future. Will this be the criteria for assessing the business model for the future? Is there a way of meeting all of these objectives or is there tension between some of them that the Council will need to address?

8.1. The possible models will be evaluated against the objectives that are listed in paragraph 3.4 (pre-report). Naturally, the aim will be to address all of these objectives but it is possible that some models will be better than others in relation to some objectives, that is, one model will not offer the best solution in relation to every objective. By evaluating options, we will highlight whether there is any tension between some of the objectives so that it will be a consideration when making a decision on the way forward.

9. Has the Service considered the models for the future in light of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and is there an intention of undertaking a Health Impact Assessment on these proposals as part of the considerations?

9.1. The Well-being of Future Generations Act is one of the drivers for looking at the way we provide the leisure service for the future. The purpose of this project is to identify and implement the most suitable provision model to achieve the aim of ensuring a modern, fit for purpose, inclusive and sustainable infrastructure that will motivate and support the people of Gwynedd to live healthy lives that robustly aligns with the Act. In the short term, it is not foreseen that the possible changes will have a striking impact on the service proposal nor on the health of local residents, but undertaking a health impact assessment would provide a baseline for measuring success in the future.

10. The report from the previous consultants (Just Solutions) that looked at the field recommended to possibly not look for only one model for the county but to develop a different model for different areas. Is the Service still considering that or is it considering establishing a model for the whole county?

- 10.1. Since the Consultants, Just Solutions Ltd, reported in October 2013, the Service has looked into the possibility of transferring some facilities dependant on the opportunities that existed in every area.
- 10.2. As part of the Saving Scheme, Treborth Athletics Track was transferred to Bangor University, Arfon Sports Hall to Llandrillo / Menai Group and Harlech Sports Hall to Ysgol Arduwy on a permanent basis. Rhyd Ddu Outdoor Centre was also transferred to Antur Nantlle on a 25 year lease. In other areas, we have introduced different models, favouring co-locating services where appropriate.
- 10.3. In the Porthmadog area, the Library was relocated to the leisure centre and in Bethesda, the 'Flying Start' nursery was relocated to the leisure centre.
- 10.4. However, attempting to do that on a county scale takes time and resources away from providing day to day services. Therefore, it was decided to work jointly with other services within the Economy and Community Department, focusing on one area at a time. Currently, the focus is on the Barmouth area where the Department is assessing the practicality of co-locating Youth and Library services within the leisure centre.
- 10.5. As a result and currently, the Service is looking at developing an alternative provision model for the whole County by ensuring flexibility in order to respond to any opportunity likely to come up during the coming years.

Implementing Recommendations of Post-16 Further Education Transport Scrutiny Investigation Report

Cabinet Member’s Update (January 2017)

Here is an update on progress in implementing the recommendations that were not fully implemented at the time of the last update report (September 2016)
 (In referring to specific recommendations, the numbering used is that of the ‘Summary of the recommendations’ found on pages 7 and 8 of the original report.)

Note:

Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai have stated that they are not now in a position to consider acting as an agent with regard to selling and distributing the 16+ Travel Ticket. This directly affects recommendations 1 and 12b.

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Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
1 In order to improve the benefits for learners/students and their families, reduce the processes and in the spirit of the Gwynedd Way, there should be closer collaboration and negotiation with the Llandrillo Menai Colleges Group to be an agent for Gwynedd Council	The College has stated that they are not now in a position to consider acting as an agent.	Tickets will continue to be sold through Galw Gwynedd.
12b Based on the evidence found during the scrutiny investigation, it is recommended that a combination of options should be considered. Options 3, 6 and 7 – changing to a ticketed system, <i>transferring the service and the administration of college transport tickets to Llandrillo Menai Colleges Group.</i>	The College has stated that they are not now in a position to consider acting as an agent.	Tickets will continue to be sold through Galw Gwynedd.

Although progress has been made, work continues with regard to recommendations 2 and 5 below, and discussions are continuing with Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai and the Gwynedd and Anglesey Post 16 Education Consortium with regard to recommendation 7

2	The Post-16 Transport Policy should be reviewed to secure a suitable and purposeful policy to address the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and the Learner Travel – Statutory Provision and Operation Guidance, June 2014	<p>Meetings have been held with individual transport providers to try and come to an agreement regarding flexibility in travelling times.</p> <p>We await confirmation regarding flexibility in travelling times on 2 routes.</p>	<p>Agreement has been reached on flexibility in travelling times for the majority of routes (all except 2).</p> <p>By January 2017 we are awaiting confirmation regarding 2 routes.</p> <p>After receiving final confirmation from the providers, the information regarding the routes and times will be updated on the website, and a publicity campaign will be organised to bring attention to the new flexibility in travelling times.</p>
5	Consistency is needed in the provision and the arrangements across Gwynedd, in order to give everyone an equal and fair opportunity	<p>Meetings have been held with individual transport providers to try and come to an agreement regarding flexibility in travelling times.</p> <p>We await confirmation regarding flexibility in travelling times on 2 routes.</p>	<p>Agreement has been reached on flexibility in travelling times for the majority of routes (all except 2).</p> <p>By January 2017 we are awaiting confirmation regarding 2 routes.</p> <p>After receiving final confirmation from the providers, the information regarding the routes and times will be updated on the website, and a publicity campaign will be organised to bring attention to the new flexibility in travelling times.</p>
7	Post-16 education providers need to collaborate to put systems in place to collect data to find out whether travelling costs lead to students dropping out of further education	<p>During Easter 2016, a specific question regarding <i>partnership courses transport</i> was included in the general (paper-based) Post-16 Learner Voice questionnaire.</p> <p>There was no specific question regarding transport in general.</p> <p>This was a general questionnaire for current students, not students who had dropped out of further education.</p>	<p>Analysis of the general comments made in answer to this questionnaire shows that there were very few comments about transport, with 5 out of 404 expressing general dissatisfaction with transport and the associated cost. None noted that they were considering dropping out of Post-16 Education.</p>

	<p>For the 2015-16 academic year a specific (paper-based) questionnaire was used for students dropping out of 14-19 partnership courses. There was no specific question regarding transport.</p> <p>For 2016-17 a specific question regarding transport has been included in the questionnaire for students dropping out of partnership courses early.</p> <p>Also for the 2016-17 academic year an on-line questionnaire will be available to all students who leave any course early. There will be a specific question regarding transport in this questionnaire.</p>	<p>There are no references to problems regarding transport in the questionnaires received for 2015-16.</p> <p>An analysis of the responses to the questionnaire will be available at the beginning of the summer term.</p>
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Work has been completed with regard to recommendation 12dd.

Recommendation	What has happened and when	Effect of action
12dd We should continue with the good practice of the provision of peripatetic teachers/lecturers and build on the foundation of working in partnership, and review regularly.	The matter has been transferred to the College.	Implementation of this recommendation is a matter for the College.