

THE CABINET TUESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

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**Present-**

Councillors: Dyfrig L. Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Peredur Jenkins, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas and Ioan Thomas

**Also present:**

**1. APOLOGIES**

Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.  
An apology was received from Cllr W. Gareth Roberts

**2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest.

**3. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

**4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

**5. ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT 2017-18**

The report was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys.

**RESOLVED**

To accept and note the Annual Equality Report

**DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted, noting that it was a statutory duty on the Council, according to the Equality Act 2010, to abolish discrimination, harassment and persecution and to promote equal opportunities and nurture a good relationship between those who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not share these characteristics. It was expressed that it was a duty on the Council to create a Strategic Equality Plan every four years and to report on the matter annually.

It was explained that the Council had created a Strategic Equality Plan in 2016 and that four of the Council's objectives were noted in the Plan. It was emphasised that although a Plan was needed, that it was also important to ensure that a culture of equality was deeply embedded in the Council's services. It was added that equality was at the centre of all Council decisions and it was reiterated that an e-module had been created to raise

staff awareness.

A summary was received, noting some of the year's highlights and emphasising that a fifth objective had been added to the Equality Plan, namely to "Improve our information provision for people who do not use Welsh and English as a first language or who need information in different formats". It was expressed that some work had been done but that more information was required on the matter. It was expressed that there was an intention to contact relevant organisations to ascertain the demand and to be aware of any obstructions.

Observations arising from the discussion

It was expressed that the report noted that just over a third of the Council's staff was over fifty years of age, and it was asked whether this was a reflection of the society or did it mean that there were fewer opportunities for young people? It was expressed that Workforce Planning was one of the elements that the Learning and Development Team was focusing on. It was noted that substantial work was being done, in particular with Apprenticeship Schemes, Trainees and Specialists for the future, to offer opportunities for young people.

## **6. WELSH LANGUAGE PROMOTION PLAN**

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

### **RESOLVED**

Approve the Welsh Language Promotion Plan and the initial Work Programme to implement the priorities.

### **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted and attention was drawn to the plan's format, noting that the new format was clear in terms of its order, it was concise and it was easy to understand. It was added that there was a Statutory requirement on the Council under Standard 145 of the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No. 1) 2015, to produce a five year strategy relating to Welsh language promotion. It was noted that Gwynedd Council had a long history of Welsh language promotion, noting that the 2011 census revealed that 65% of Gwynedd's population were able to speak Welsh. It was reiterated that an increase in Welsh speakers could be seen in some areas of Gwynedd and attention was drawn to the fact that the increase was above the 70% threshold in the Clynnog ward.

Despite the increase, it was noted that there had been a general reduction in the number of wards where over 70% of the population could speak Welsh, with 39 from 71 wards according to the Census. The challenges of Welsh language promotion were emphasised, emphasising the challenges posed by the influence of technology. Emphasis was placed on the long-term hopes of the Council, along with what the department wished to see during the lifespan of the Strategy, noting that the Action Plan was in line with the plans.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that a drop had been seen in the number of Welsh speakers aged over 65 years, but that the greatest increase was to be seen amongst the youngest residents, in the 3-4 years and 5-15 years age groups. It was added that the good work needed to continue and to work closely with Universities and other Bodies.
- It was noted that the Language Charter had been central to the promotion of the language in schools. It was noted that the Primary Language Charter could now

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be seen across Wales and that work continued on the Secondary Language Charter. The importance of not only teaching the language to children, but rather to encourage them to use the language socially, was emphasised.

- It was asked how the work of promoting the Welsh language could be measured and monitored; it was noted that the Officer would report back through the performance challenging system. It was added that it would be difficult to measure but that the first step would be to get all main partners around the table to share information and resources.

### **7. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT**

The item was submitted by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

#### **RESOLVED**

To accept and note the information in the report.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted, and as a new Cabinet Member for the department, she noted that she had spent the summer visiting the teams and meeting staff. The staff were thanked for their warm welcome. Attention was drawn to some of the Council Plan's projects. It was noted that the work of using the Welsh language within the Council's services continued but it was noted that weaknesses had been highlighted in the recruitment process. It was noted that the language requirements of jobs were not always clear and steps were now in place to help with the situation. It was added that support was available to staff who wished to improve or refresh their language skills.

It was explained that managers and some officers had now received training to equip them to put Ffordd Gwynedd into action. The need for follow-up was emphasised and members were encouraged to challenge their departments to enable the Council to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of what it does.

The department's performance was discussed and it was noted that the Communication and Engagement Service continued to receive very positive observations. It was added that the service also felt that they did not measure the efficiency of the Council's communication and the service, consequently, would be looking at ways of measuring the impact of the Council's public statements. It was expressed that the Council's Research and Analytics Service was developing this further and had recently been awarded a GwE tender contract.

The Council's latest development was explained, following an increase in the number who use the on-line service, namely "ap Gwynedd". It was added that the app was now live and that individuals had started to download the app.

Observations arising from the discussion

- A discussion was held on the success of Ffordd Gwynedd. It was explained that this was a difficult question as Ffordd Gwynedd changed cultures, and that this would be difficult to measure. It was added that managers needed to understand that the Ffordd Gwynedd culture needed to be embedded in their teams, emphasising that accountability lay with the managers. It was expressed that the Ffordd Gwynedd journey could be seen in teams across the Council but that the teams were on different steps of the journey. It was explained that the actual measure of Ffordd Gwynedd would be all units

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measuring the correct things for the Residents of Gwynedd and the percentages being as high as they could be.

- The Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families noted that the measure "Number of defects discovered in programmed inspections" in terms of Health, Safety and Well-being, suggested that there were large gaps in the department and he asked whether the department was aware of this. It was noted that this had been raised within departments and that this would need to be discussed in the departmental Forums to discuss Health, Safety and Well-being.

### **8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

The item was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

#### **RESOLVED**

To accept and note the information in the report.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The report was submitted noting that the figures available in the report were some for the first quarter of the year. It was noted that the Council Plan's Projects had now commenced. Concerns were raised about the number of high value jobs that had now moved from Parc Menai in Bangor to Anglesey. It was expressed that the work of developing the Llanbedr site continued but that the owner was still awaiting confirmation of funding by Welsh Government.

Concern was added about the Arloesi Gwynedd Wledig project on how the project would move forward. It was noted that the free WiFi project in Aberdaron had been a success and that other areas were eager to trial the project.

Disappointment was expressed that Festival No.6 was taking a break next year but it was hoped that another festival would be held during the same period. It was added that the Red Bull Hard Line event had been successful and it was reiterated that there had been commitment and close collaboration between the Major Events Unit and Red Bull.

It was explained that the Economy and Community Department would hold a workshop with the tourism sector in September to ascertain their views on improving and maintaining Gwynedd destinations and raising the standards of the tourism sector. It was added that a discussion was being held regarding Pwllheli Harbour and Hafan regarding its future, along with Glynllifon Country Park.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The concern of losing Festival No.6 was reiterated, but it was explained that the organisers needed to reconsider the arrangements. The organisers' commitment to Portmeirion was expressed and the Council would be collaborating with the organisers on every option.
- A discussion was held on the fact that the trend of job creation by supported ventures was reducing. It was noted that the reason for this was a reduction in the resources and buildings that the Council had to offer to businesses that wished to expand. It was expressed that this was a consistent message seen across north Wales, namely that no bespoke locations and buildings were available for private businesses. It was noted that the North Wales Growth Plan was looking at this and that discussions were being held regarding a joint-venture with the Government to improve the supply of land or

bespoke buildings.

## 9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

The item was submitted by Cllr Peredur Jenkins

### RESOLVED

To accept and note the information in the report.

### DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that the Cabinet member was happy with the department's performance and that appropriate steps had been taken to improve performance. It was explained that the period of the current Information Technology Strategy was coming to an end and that discussions were being held to plan a new strategy. In addition, it was noted that the department was collaborating with Education Department officers to develop a new strategy that would focus on providing the best Information Technology support service for Gwynedd schools.

It was noted that the department's performance was generally good, but attention was drawn to some problems that had arisen. It was noted that some of the schools' auxiliary staff had received the wrong salary in April. It was added that the problem had been identified immediately and that the Service had responded appropriately to it. It was explained that steps were now in place to ensure that the same problem would not happen again.

It was expressed that three occasions had arisen during the year where a significant disruption was caused to the ability of Council staff to act due to the loss of access to the Information Technology service. It was reiterated that this had led to the department commissioning an independent assessment to consider the architecture of the IT network and they would report back on the findings in due course.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the graph shown for the Payroll Unit showed the Ffordd Gwynedd Culture within the Department in the fact that they were open about their performance and that they learnt from the problems arising. It was added that clear explanations could be seen and that steps had been taken to ensure that the same problems would not arise again.
- The Cabinet Member for Education noted that a delay had occurred over the years before schools would pay invoices, as a result of school holidays, but now the Education Department had changed their systems and consequently the figures were much improved.
- It was noted that there were no figures for Investment and Treasury Management for the quarter, as they were unavailable for the performance challenging meeting. It was noted that much better returns than expected were seen on the investments of the Pension Fund and it was hoped that a reduction in the pension contributions of some employers could be offered by 2020.
- A discussion was held on the uncertainty of Brexit and its impact on the Pension Fund. It was noted that the majority of the Fund's assets had been invested overseas, and that the slump of the pound against the US dollar following the vote to leave the European Union had meant that the value of overseas assets had increased as the pound weakened. The Head of Finance Department had asked for an analysis from the Fund's actuary of how much of an increase had been seen in the value of the Pension Fund due to an actual increase in asset value between 2015 and 2018, and how much was due to the change in exchange rates, and he would report on this to the Pension

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Fund's Annual General Meeting on 10 October. It was reiterated that the Pension Fund was now fully funded. A discussion was held on the Wales Pension Partnership and it was noted that a joint-investment partnership had been formed, and not a single Fund for Wales.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.15 pm

**CHAIRMAN**