



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 2018

Location

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

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home

Contact Point

Eirian Roberts

01286 679018

eirianroberts3@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

(DISTRIBUTED 14/11/18)

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (10)

Councillors

Steve Collings
E. Selwyn Griffiths
Huw Gruffydd Wyn Jones
Mair Rowlands
Cemlyn Rees Williams

Aled Ll. Evans
Judith Mary Humphreys
Olaf Cai Larsen
Paul John Rowlinson
[vacant seat]

Independent (5)

Councillors

Freya Hannah Bentham
Keith Jones
Elfed Powell Roberts

Elwyn Jones
Beth Lawton

Llais Gwynedd (2)

Councillors

Alwyn Gruffydd

Gareth Williams

Gwynedd United Independents (1)

Councillor
Dewi Owen

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

With a vote on education matters only

Anest Gray Frazer

Church in Wales

[vacant seat]

The Catholic Church

Dylan Davies

Meirionnydd Parent/Governors'
Representative

Karen Vaughan Jones

Dwyfor Parent/Governors'
Representative

[vacant seat]

Arfon Parent/Governors' Representative

Without a vote

Dilwyn Elis Hughes

UCAC

David Healey

ATL

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

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

4. MINUTES

6 - 10

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meetings of this committee held on the following dates be signed as true records:-

- (a) 20th September, 2018 (attached)
- (b) 15th October, 2018 – Extraordinary Meeting (attached).

5. REVIEW OF HAFAN PWLLHELI AND HARBOUR

11 - 17

Cabinet Member – Councillor Ioan Thomas

To receive a presentation and to consider a report on the above (attached).

*10.30am – 11.15am

6. SUPPORTING GWYNEDD BUSINESSES (IN RELATION TO BREXIT)

18 - 21

Cabinet Member – Councillor Ioan Thomas

To consider a report on the above (attached).

*11.15am – 12.00pm

7. ROLE OF THE AREA REGENERATION OFFICERS IN FUTURE

22 - 26

Cabinet Member – Councillor Craig ag Iago

To consider a report on the above (attached).

*12.00pm – 12.45pm

*LUNCH BREAK – 12.45pm – 1.30pm

8. SCHOOL MEAL DEBTS

27 - 32

Cabinet Member – Councillor Gareth Thomas

To consider a report on the above (attached).

*1.30pm – 2.00pm

*estimated times

A Workshop on Cuts to the Education Improvement Grant will be held at 2.00pm, followed by an informal session for members at the close of the workshop.

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 20/09/18

Present: Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair).
Councillor Paul Rowlinson (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Freya Bentham, Steve Collings, Alwyn Gruffydd, Elwyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Dewi Owen, Elfed Roberts and Gareth Williams.

Co-opted Members: Dylan Davies (Meirionnydd Parent / Governors Representative) and Dilwyn Elis Hughes (UCAC).

Officers present: Vera Jones (Members' Manager – Democratic Services) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support Officer).

Present for item 5 below:

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Council Leader)
Councillor Ioan Thomas (Cabinet Member for Economic Development)
Sioned Williams (Head of Economy and Community Department)
Dylan Griffiths (Economic Development Programmes Manager)

Present for item 6 below:

Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member for Education)
Garem Jackson (Head of Education)
Debbie A.W.Jones (Education Corporate Services Officer)
Paul Matthews-Jones (Core Leader – Secondary - GwE)
Geraint Evans (Core Leader – Primary – GwE)

Present for item 7 below:

Sion Owen (Council Business Support Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Menna Baines, Aled Evans, Judith Humphreys, Huw Wyn Jones, Mair Rowlands and Cemlyn Williams; Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales) and Rita Price (Catholic Church).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 21 June 2018, as a true record.

5. GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S ACTIVITY IN RELATION TO BREXIT

Submitted – a report by the Leader (in his capacity as Lead Member for Brexit) and the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, outlining the Council's activities in response to the UK's decision to leave the European Union (Brexit).

The Leader, Head of Department and Manager expanded on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from members.

The Chair summarised the main conclusions of the discussion as follows:-

- The observations reflected the fact that it was a confusing and uncertain period, and that the situation was extremely difficult, mainly due to a lack of information.
- Concern had been expressed that the timetable was tight, but that it was not possible to prepare due to the lack of information.
- Committee members were grateful for confirmation regarding the situation of the current European funding projects.
- There was a need to ensure that Gwynedd continued to participate in the regional discussions in order to be prepared for any funding that might be received, through whatever sources.
- Another report should be submitted to committee when further information became available, especially in relation to funding for small businesses, and how the Council could assist those businesses to access the funding.
- The Welsh Local Government Association should be invited to give a presentation to the committee, or to all members of the Council, on the nature of its input to the discussions.

6. REPORT ON THE SUMMER 2018 RESULTS

Submitted – the report of the Cabinet Member for Education on the draft summer 2018 results.

The Cabinet Member, Head of Department and GwE representatives expanded on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from members.

The Chair summarised the main conclusions of the discussion as follows:-

- The main emphasis of the discussions had been on the significant fall in the results of Key Stage 4 English (GCSE); the committee understood that the Head of Education had already contacted Qualifications Wales expressing dissatisfaction about the significant and unexpected increase in the threshold level between grades 'B' and 'C'. Subject to the response, the Cabinet Member proposed to further raise the matter on a political level.
- There was agreement that the Cabinet Member should update the Chair and Vice-chair when a response was received from Qualifications Wales, as many of the committee's observations were dependent upon that response.
- Concern had also been expressed about the possibility of a significant change, without notification, to the grade thresholds of other subjects in future and, subject to a response to this from Qualifications Wales, the Cabinet Member should update the Chair and Vice-chair so that the committee knew what was happening.
- The Committee had noted a specific concern due to the impact of the unexpected and significant change in the English grade thresholds on individual pupils, and

on their career prospects in due course, and especially for the 7%-8% that did not succeed in reaching their expected target of a 'B' or 'C' grade as a result of the change in the threshold.

- Concern had also been expressed about the possible negative impact on teachers, the improvement journey within schools and the tracking work etc. that had been developed over recent years.
- There was some nervousness among members about the changes to the arrangements for reporting on performance measures, with less emphasis on comparative data and greater emphasis on self-evaluation, etc. There was scope for members to keep an eye on this through the work of the committee, their work as school governors, and the rolling data from year to year.
- It was agreed that a further report should be submitted to the committee in January 2019 on the Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 final data, which would also include information about examinations through the medium of Welsh / English.

7. SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF NEW BUILDING DEVELOPMENTS FOR SCHOOLS ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Submitted – the report of the Chair, inviting the committee to adopt the brief and confirm the membership of the scrutiny investigation.

It was noted that the list in paragraph 5 of the prospective schools to be studied should be amended to include Ysgol Penybryn, Tywyn.

RESOLVED

- (a) To adopt the brief (included as an appendix to the report).**
- (b) To confirm that the members of the investigation would be the Chair, Councillor Beth Lawton, and Councillors Steve Collings, Cai Larsen and Paul Rowlinson.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.45pm

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING - 15/10/18

Present: Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair).
Councillor Paul Rowlinson (Vice-chairman)

Councillors: Menna Baines, Steve Collings, Aled Evans, E Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Elwyn Jones, Huw G Wyn Jones, Cai Larsen, Dewi Owen, Edgar W Owen, Elfed P Roberts, Cemlyn Williams

Co-opted Members: Dylan Davies (Meirionnydd Parent / Governors Representative)

Officers present: Vera Jones (Members' Manager - Democratic Services) and Eimir Davies (Member Support Officer).

Present for item 4 below:
Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn (Council Leader)
Iwan T Jones (Corporate Director)

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Freya H Bentham, Judith Humphreys, Keith Jones, Mair Rowlands and Gareth Williams. Anest Gray Frazer (Church in Wales). Dilwyn Ellis Hughes (UCAC)

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

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

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. GROWTH DEAL FOR THE ECONOMY OF NORTH WALES: THE PROPOSITION DOCUMENT

The Leader and the Corporate Director presented the Proposition Document: Growth Deal for the Economy of North Wales, prior to consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on 16 October 2018 and then at the extraordinary meeting of the Full Council on 25 October 2018.

The Leader and the Corporate Director expanded on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from the members.

The main conclusions of the discussion, including additional observations and risks identified were noted as follows:

Financial Risks

- It was crucial to continue to hold discussions with the UK Government and Welsh Government in order to reduce the financial risks - particularly the risks in relation to the cash-flow and the risk of losing grants if firm financial controls were not in place
- It was recommended that discussions should continue with Welsh Government to seek to retain the non-domestic taxes (or at least an element of which) as a means of reducing the costs to local authorities
- However, there was a need to be awake to the fact that financial risks could fall on Local Authorities and prepare for this by considering the projects and expenditure profile

Governance Risks

- The risk should one of the Deal Partners withdraw was noted, but it was confirmed that this would be managed by the Partnership Agreement which was currently being developed
- It was noted that clarity was needed regarding the future Governance Framework, with the Governance Framework ensuring Leaders' clear accountability procedure to the individual Councils

Political Risks

- The risk to the Welsh National entity from the development of the Deal was noted

Project Risks

- There will be a need to seek to ensure that small businesses and farming benefit from the Deal as well as the large companies

RESOLVED

- (a) To send confirmation to the Cabinet that the Scrutiny Committee is supportive of the strategic direction and shows its support to proceeding with the Proposition Document.**

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 11.30am



Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee:

Date of meeting :	22 November 2018
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Ioan Thomas
Contact Officer :	Llyr Jones, Senior Economy and Community Manager
Contact E-mail and Tel:	llyrbjones@gwynedd.llyw.cymru ext. 32219
Department / Service:	Economy and Community

Title of Item: Review of Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour

Why does it need to be scrutinised? One of the Economy and Community Department's priorities within the Council's Plan for the period 2018 - 2023 is to develop management options for Hafan Pwllheli and Harbour. This is based on a downward trend in the income generated at the Hafan since 2008/09. The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the work carried out to date, including the following aspects:

- 1) Does it agree with the core aims proposed for evaluating the current situation and alternative options for the future (see part 19).
- 2) Does it agree that there was a case for change
- 3) Does it agree with the recommendations to further develop 4 options

What are the background and relevant considerations?

Background

1. Dwyfor District Council developed Hafan Pwllheli in the early 1990s with European funding, before it was transferred to Gwynedd Council following local government reorganisation in 1996. It offers over 400 pontoon moorings, offices, changing rooms, showers, toilets, safe boat storage area, a 50 tonne crane, boat transport and parking provision.
2. More recently, the Plas Heli development has added to the wide range of sailing facilities in Pwllheli Harbour.
3. The most recent economic study dates back to 2002 and, at the time, it was suggested that the Hafan led to a £20m annual expenditure within the local economy and was responsible for approximately 200 local jobs.

Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.gov.uk



4. It has also contributed significantly to the Council's Financial Strategy over the years with a net income (i.e. profit) of £800k per annum at its peak. Recently, however, there has been a downward trend and it was now anticipated that this year the net income return would be £400k.
5. Over the same period, the number of moorings fell, and the rate of occupation currently stood at 70%.
6. Several theories have been proposed to try to explain this decline, with some contradictory theories coming from different sources. The following challenges have been noted as being possible contributors to this reduced income:
 - The economic recession had had an impact on the maritime sector (and the demand for moorings)
 - Concerns that silting levels in the channel are affecting access to the harbour
 - Lack of capacity in suitable locations for disposing of sediments from the harbour (which restricts dredging options)
 - Recent increase in costs such as VAT and fuel has affected the maritime sector
 - The fragile condition of the maritime sector has led to increasing competition amongst marinas for customers
 - Customers having higher expectations
7. In engaging with stake-holders earlier this year, several operational matters (such as lack of marketing, customer care aspects) and a lack of financial investment on site (including facilities on land and dredging requirements) have been highlighted.
8. Another common finding was that other marinas have adapted to these challenges and have, consequently, filled their moorings. There is a perception that Hafan does not make the most of its assets and lags behind other marinas.
9. Consideration should, however, be given to the context within which Hafan operated. This included factors such as:
 - i) The Council has had to deliver substantial savings on its budget in recent years and the financial contribution from Hafan has reduced the effect of those savings on the residents of Gwynedd. Consideration will have, doubtlessly, been given to investment in Hafan against financial pressures on other public services.
 - ii) The dredging requirements at Pwllheli are great and likely to be more costly compared with other marinas in the United Kingdom. The financial and legal/regulatory complexities of removing the deposits is a stumbling block to carrying out work.

- iii) Managing Hafan is a commercial enterprise but, as previously mentioned, it contributes to a greater benefit within the local economy. Hafan is required to strike a balance between operating commercially and supporting the local economy. For example, some decisions that make commercial sense could impact other local business. Consequently, the service is cautious not to compete excessively with local businesses.
- iv) A softer aspect of the picture is the culture. A general perception of the public sector is that it does not create the circumstances and systems for effective trading. Although private providers with an eye on profit-making would not necessarily be guaranteed financial success, their purpose is usually far more straightforward with activities being built around that purpose. Hafan is subject to the Council's management and governance arrangements; it is possible that this presents barriers to maximising profit.

Steps of the Proposed Review

10. There are three main stages to the proposed review:

- Stage 1: Establishing whether there is a case for change
- Stage 2: Develop the Outline Business Case
- Stage 3: Implementation

11. The current work involves Stage 1, and addresses two fundamental questions:

- i) Is there a case for changing the current management model for Hafan ourselves?
- ii) If there is a case, which management model or models should we develop further?

12. The work in Stage 1 represents the first step in the process of developing a business case and, therefore, presents high level information and considerations with which to set the direction. Looking at every option in detail would be an expensive and useless exercise if it failed to meet our core aims.

13. If there is a desire to carry out further work, this would allow us to focus resources on the option or options most likely to help us achieve our aims as a Council. As part of this, expert legal opinion would have to be sought to verify the feasibility and implications of some options.

The case for change

14. The case for change is based on the following:

- a) Indications that suggest that the current net income of approximately £400k is unsustainable over the coming years. The Pwllheli Harbour Berth Holders

Association predicts that as many as 50 (12% of all berths) could terminate their contracts during the coming financial year, with reference to access difficulties as the main reason (i.e. dredging matters). If efforts to prevent or to recover this loss are unsuccessful, this could affect the net income by £175k. Furthermore, attracting fewer customers could potentially have a wider impact on the local economy.

- b) The current customer profile at Hafan is a risk in relation to contract retention. Attracting new customers is vital but there is no clear marketing strategy.
- c) Several stake-holders have expressed concern and views about the current provision. Concerns mainly relate to:
- The lack of action on the dredging requirements
 - Lack of investment on the site which has led to a deterioration in its image
 - Lack of facilities such as eateries and shopping
 - Lack of commercial thinking and lack of focus on customer care
 - Negative publicity about the service, facilities and channel into the harbour
- d) The occupation rate at other marinas is higher, which suggests a potential market in which to compete and attract customers.
- e) The current financial model is inadequate to address the necessary dredging requirements.
- f) Most facilities, including moorings, are over 20 years old and despite currently being in working order, they will reach the end of their life in the next few years. The funds that have been earmarked will not be sufficient to address the work that needs to be done in the medium and long term.
- g) If we fail to address this field, we will most likely fail to achieve Hafan's core aims of:
- being an economic catalyst that creates and supports local jobs
 - Provides a financial income that contributes to public services in the County.
15. It is recommended there is a case for change but that does not necessarily mean that new providers are needed to manage the Hafan. The alternative model could, as a minimum, mean introducing improvements and/or an investment to the service and, at the other end of the scale, could mean selling the site to an independent provider.

Scope of the work

16. It is recommended that the scope for any alternative model should include the responsibilities of managing the harbour and all dredging responsibilities at the site, together with the Hafan itself, of course. This could somewhat restrict the models and possible providers; nevertheless, it is worthwhile including all responsibilities in order to generate the most comprehensive picture of the true benefit and implications of any alternative model.

Criteria for evaluating the options

17. The following stake-holders were consulted to develop the criteria for evaluating the model:
- Pwllheli Harbour Consultative Committee
 - Pwllheli Marina Berth Holders Association
 - Plas Heli
 - Pwllheli Town Council
 - Pwllheli maritime businesses focus groups
 - Dwyfor Area Committee
18. Draft criteria were prepared as a starting point and it was agreed that they reflected the core objectives for the Hafan / harbour. Discussions generally revolved around obstacles or matters that impeded the current model's delivery of those core aims. This then informed the case for change.
19. The following aims were proposed as a basis for evaluating the possible models (in no particular order):
1. To strengthen the economy by being commercially viable and therefore support marine businesses and local employment
 2. To be an economic catalyst by attracting and maximising the use of the harbour by all
 3. The ability to promote the Welsh language
 4. To provide a financial benefit to the Council
 5. To be able to attract investment to improve facilities and implement the agreed Dredging Strategy
 6. A viable and sustainable business model
 7. A model that can be feasibly implemented
20. It is considered that the above are sufficient for the purposes of setting the direction. However, if further work is to be carried out on detailed options, these objectives may need to be more specific and prioritised.

The Possible Direction

21. The table in Appendix 1 summarises the possible options in terms of overall direction, which variances within each direction. It is again emphasised that this is a high level assessment in order to set the direction and focus for any further work; considering each option in detail would be an expensive exercise.

22. The assessment is based on the likelihood of the option addressing or aligning with the individual aims.

Stage 1 Conclusions and Recommendations

23. There is evidence pertaining to the need to take steps to prevent further decline in the income and use of Pwllheli Hafan and the harbour.

24. Necessary investment in Hafan means that the financial gains to the Council are likely to fall over the coming years in all scenarios. Any further work would consider those requirements in more detail and would assess a shortlist of options as grounds for the Council's decision.

25. Based on an initial assessment against the proposed aims, it is recommended that the following options be considered for more detailed development, and the justification for taking action, or not, weighed up on the basis of a business case.

26. It is recommended that Stage 2 of the Review focus on the options below:

Option 1 (Baseline): Introduce improvements to current arrangements

Option 2: Management to stay within the Council with an investment programme

Option 3: Establish an arm's length company

Option 4: Joint venture with a private provider

Option 5: Lease the site

27. The feasibility of options 4 and 5 would have to be proved before any detailed work could continue on them. It is recommended that opportunities to incorporate Plas Heli be considered as part of the work to further develop the above options.

28. In order to continue with Stage 2, it is anticipated that a multi-disciplinary project team would have to be established and external experts appointed to deliver the next phase of the business case.

Relevant timetable

29. It is intended to move forward to develop further details on the options above immediately, and complete Step 2 by spring 2019.

Green = Likely	Yellow = More Likely	?	Orange = Less Likely	Red = Unlikely
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Options	Objective A: Support maritime companies and local jobs	Objective B: Economic trigger	Objective C: Promoting the Welsh Language	Objective Ch: Financial benefit to the Council	Objective D: The ability to attract investment	Objective Dd: A viable and sustainable business model	Objective E: Feasible	Further Consideration?
1. Do nothing	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✘
2. The Council to retain its management, with improvements being financed from within the current budget	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	✓ (
3. The Council to retain its management, with improvements and investment from the Council	●	●	●	?	?	?	?	✓
4. Transfer to a Council owned Company	●	●	●	?	?	?	?	✓
5. Create a brand new Trust	●	●	●	●	●	?	?	✓
6. Transfer to a community company	●	●	?	●	●	●	?	✘
7. Joint enterprise with a private provider	●	●	●	●	●	●	?	✓
8. Contract with a private provider as agent	●	●	●	●	●	●	?	✘
9. Lease	●	●	●	?	●	●	?	✓
10. Sell	●	●	●	●	?	?	?	✘

Agenda Item 6

Meeting:	Education & Economy Scrutiny Committee
Date:	22 November 2018
Title:	Supporting Gwynedd Businesses (in relation to Brexit)
Author:	Colin Morris Business Support Services Manager Economy & Community Department
Member:	Councillor Ioan Thomas Cabinet Member for Economic Development

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report is presented at the request of the Scrutiny Committee to outline how the Council and other organisations are supporting local businesses in general and in response to the UK's decision to leave the European Union (Brexit).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Business Support Team is a small team and is part of the Economy and Community Service which includes a number of teams that focus on creating jobs and strengthening the local economy base.
- 2.2 The Team has attained vast experience over the past 22 years in relation to managing, implementing and monitoring various financial assistance schemes for businesses.
- 2.3 Over the past couple of years, the Team has continued to develop a work programme that responds to the needs of local businesses. It should be noted however, that as European funding opportunities for business grants have ended, and as less public money will be available in the future, there will now be more emphasis on offering loans that would promote a culture change from being dependent on public money.

3. Gwynedd Council support for Businesses

- 3.1 Gwynedd Council's Business Support Team is responsible for providing support, advice and information to local businesses so that they develop and become more competitive in order that existing jobs are safeguarded and new jobs are created in the local economy. The Team will also facilitate advice and support of a more specialised nature from other business support organisations if this is required from a local business.

- 3.2 An important role that the Business Support Team undertakes is raising awareness of relevant business news and business related events, e.g. tender opportunities for local businesses, specific Superfast Business Wales events and other relevant business workshop events. This is done through our social media accounts and our various business networks and contacts. This is certainly a matter that has been undertaken recently with respect to raising awareness of the new Business Wales Brexit Portal as well as specific Brexit workshops that have been held for the benefit of local businesses.
- 3.3 The Business Support Team are responsible for the administration and implementation of a number of business loan schemes which will continue to be available to Gwynedd businesses following any Brexit agreement, namely:
- Business Loan Fund – a fund of £3m to support small and medium sized businesses located in Gwynedd struggling to secure funding from the banks. Small loans of between £25k and £100k are available to create or develop a business with the opportunity to borrow larger amounts provided that the loan is supported by a guarantee based on a good value asset. Repayment of existing debts or loans is not eligible but loans can be used towards capital expenditure or the financing of working capital.
 - Town Centre Loans Fund – currently this loan fund is available in Caernarfon, Bangor, Bethesda and Penygroes areas. This interest free loan is available for owners of properties that are in need of refurbishment or improvement. The purpose of the loan is to improve the property for continued ownership, to sell, to rent or unlock a vacant or stalled site. Improvements can include making a residential property safe, warm and/or secure. The loan cannot be used to repay existing borrowings.
- 3.4 The Team also administer a grant scheme with respect to assisting local businesses to achieve ISO certification, e.g. ISO9001 (Quality Management System) and ISO14001 (Environmental Management System). The objective is to make businesses more efficient and effective in supplying quality goods and services leading to increased competitiveness and placing businesses in a better position to respond to tendering opportunities with Gwynedd Council, other local authorities, government organisations and the private sector, as well as to any Brexit implications.
- 3.5 As it continues to be uncertain what specific implications Brexit will have on Gwynedd businesses, it will be vitally important that the Team continues to provide the necessary support and advice to the local business community.

4. Welsh Government activity in relation to Brexit

- 4.1 The recently launched new Business Wales Brexit Portal has been designed to provide companies in Wales with up-to-date information and advice on a range of crucial issues including international trading and workforce planning – (<https://businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/>)
- 4.2 It also includes a diagnostic tool that helps businesses to identify how prepared they are for Brexit, recommends actions they should take to increase their resilience and signposts them to additional sources of support. The six key business areas are: Business Strategy and Operations; Innovation; Sales and Marketing; Export; People Management, and Finance.
- 4.3 The new Brexit portal builds on the advice and guidance that has been provided to Welsh companies by both the Welsh Government and Business Wales since the referendum.
- 4.4 It has been designed to make it as easy as possible for business to access the most up to date information and support that they need.
- 4.5 In addition to the support available through the Brexit Portal, the Welsh Government has an existing comprehensive range of support mechanisms to help businesses on their export journey. These include specific export support programmes, namely:
 - Overseas Events Programme
 - International Trade Development Programme
 - Overseas Business Development Visit Support
 - Export Seminars and Workshops
 - International Trade Opportunities Programme
- 4.6 Further details with respect to the above support can be found on the Business Wales website:
<https://businesswales.gov.wales/zones/export/how-we-can-help/support-export-guide>
- 4.7 The Welsh Government has recently announced an additional £7.5 million to help Welsh businesses build resilience in order to cope with the challenges of Brexit.
- 4.8 The £7.5 million, which is part of the Welsh Government's £50 million EU Transition Fund, will be used over the next 3 years to help companies develop the new expertise and processes they will need in order to thrive, post Brexit.

- 4.9 Part of the funding will be directed into a Brexit Resilience Grant which businesses from across Wales will be able to bid for a share of. This will complement the support available through the Business Wales service to help businesses invest in overcoming immediate challenges related to Brexit, such as additional administrative burdens and complexities.
- 4.10 The £7.5 million will also be used to help businesses explore and engage in new collaborations and innovations so they can develop capacity and retain competitiveness, post-Brexit, in order to keep jobs here in Wales.
- 4.11 At the time of completing this report no further details of this fund were available from the Welsh Government.
- 4.12 Recently, the Business Wales Service has also arranged interactive workshops throughout Wales with respect to the implications of Brexit on running a business. These workshops are designed to give business owners the most up to date position on Brexit and to present practical information and advice on the potential impact for companies involved in international trade.

5. Other Business Support Organisations

- 5.1 A number of other business support organisations offer advice and information to businesses in relation to preparing for the impact of Brexit. One example of these organisations is the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) who have prepared an information pack on their website in relation to Brexit (<https://www.fsb.org.uk/standing-up-for-you/brexit/introduction>) which is updated as required, as well as looking at other ways of supporting their members in addressing the consequences of whatever the Brexit outcome will be.
- 5.2 Locally, members of the Gwynedd Business Network are regularly updated with respect to the support available and informing them of any relevant workshop sessions which provide advice and information in relation to Brexit.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 Gwynedd Council will be collaborating with the private sector during the coming months in order to better understand what implications Brexit will have on our local business community. There is an assumption that the situation will be clearer by the end of the year and this hopefully will enable local businesses to plan for the future.
- 6.2 As noted in the previous report submitted to this Committee, Gwynedd Council will continue to collaborate with other local authorities through the WLGA as well as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to undertake this work with the aim of identifying the main risks to the economy of Gwynedd.

Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting :	22 November 2018
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Craig ap Iago
Contact Officer :	Sioned Williams
Contact E-mail and Tel: :	sionedewilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru est. 32547
Department / Service:	Economy and Community
Title of Item: Role of the Area Regeneration Officers in future	
Why does it need to be scrutinised? The Department was asked to consider incorporating the role of collaborating with Community Councils and the Third Sector into the future work programme of the Community Regeneration Service. This was in response to the funding of a temporary resource in the Corporate Support Department coming to an end. The Department had identified the need to review the role of the Area Regeneration Officers within the Community Regeneration Service in 2018 as a result of change in the demands for support by communities, and the funding opportunities available. Different options have been considered to make the best use of the skills and resources, and the input of the Scrutiny Committee on the favoured option is welcomed.	
What are the background and relevant considerations?	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The regeneration officer network was set up in Gwynedd in 1997 to help communities come up with ideas for enterprises, and support the establishment of new enterprises in order to safeguard and create jobs locally. The LEADER fund was initially targeted, which was European funding to trial new ideas. In 2000, however, the Cwllwm Gwledig Fund was established with the assistance of the Assembly's Rural Regeneration Programme. This secured £2.5m worth of resources for communities to target with help from the Area Regeneration Officers. Emphasis was on using the fund as match funding with other funds.2. By 2001, several funds had been established to support communities and the third sector with the help of Objective 1 European Funding, Welsh Government, and Lottery funding. Together with the Gwynedd Third Sector Group it was agreed that the gaps in Gwynedd lay in skills to:	

- support communities to prioritise interventions that would make the biggest difference;
- provide guidance on preparing business cases;
- help with submitting applications to target funding programmes.

The role of the Community Regeneration Officers during that time was revised so that they collaborated with communities in eight catchment areas across Gwynedd. They generated community regeneration plans and supported partners to deliver the priority projects.

3. Through the work of the area plans, it emerged that greater priority needed to be given to targeting communities in need and the team was developed alongside the Communities First Programme in Gwynedd. Between 2001 and 2018, the Communities First Programme provided intensive support to communities in the most deprived wards. Meanwhile, the Community Regeneration Officers targeted those communities with the highest levels of deprivation that did not meet the national threshold that made them eligible for help from the Communities First Programme (Community Regeneration Structure in Appendix 1).
4. As part of the Council's 2012 savings programme, the decision was made to reduce the network of Community Regeneration Officers from eight to five. This meant that the resources were no longer available to sustain the relationship at the same level. The total budget for the Community Regeneration service in 2018 is £212,800. Over the same period, there was a fall in the level of aid available for community organisations on a national and local level with fewer grant funds available to target.
5. Over the past three years, officers' roles have become more responsive to the demands of communities; there has been less emphasis on community regeneration aspects and greater emphasis on supporting communities to respond to change. A copy of the team's Work programme will be available to the Committee 22 November and you will note from this that the nature of the demand for support varies greatly. More emphasis is now placed on helping communities plan in response to changes to public service bodies' provision arrangements, with fewer projects planned as part of a targeted community regeneration programme.
6. It is clear from the work programme that the officers work closely with Community Councils and the third sector and already operate in several communities as a main point of contact for the Council. The team of regeneration officers has been working closely with the Community Council Coordinator and Community Groups (within the Corporate Support Department) over recent years and has supported the communities to engage and respond.

7. Over the same period, the Welsh Government regeneration policy has moved away from working with communities to target regional strategic plans in the centres that have the most profound levels of deprivation. The skills of the Economic Development Programmes team have been more relevant to these regeneration programmes and this is the service that now manages and develops the regeneration projects.
8. The Communities First programme ended in 2018 and was superseded by the Communities for Work programme. This programme's emphasis is on supporting individuals into work; its outcomes are more economic and is less involved with empowering communities. The role of the Community Regeneration Officers' team has, thus, naturally become distanced from the regeneration agenda, yet it continues to play a key role in supporting communities.
9. The background clearly shows that the role of the Community Regeneration Officers has evolved consistently over the past 20 years. But, its purpose has remained constant over the period, which is to support communities. Incorporating the role of third sector and community council liaison would be a natural step toward making the most of resources.
10. The Department has considered several opportunities to make the best use of these resources, but there are two specific options on which the Scrutiny Committee's input would be welcomed:
 - Option 1 - merge the role of the community regeneration team with other teams within the Economic Development Programmes Service (Appendix 3). There would be advantages here to strengthening resources to target more communities. However, it is considered that the two services no longer have the same purpose and that the skills needed for delivery also differ. Consequently, there would be nothing to gain from merging the service units.
 - Option 2 - retain a small team to keep the emphasis on supporting communities to achieve (Appendix 2). The advantage here would lie in creating a resource that would enable Gwynedd Council to maintain a relationship with the communities across a wider range of programmes; they would not be restricted to programmes that only contribute to regeneration and economic development.
11. Of course, it is impossible to predict at this point the Council's decisions on savings within the budget, but on the grounds that the budget is safeguarded, it is recommended:
 - that the role of the Community Regeneration Officers be re-defined as Community Support Officers that would incorporate the role of Community Council and Third Sector liaison.

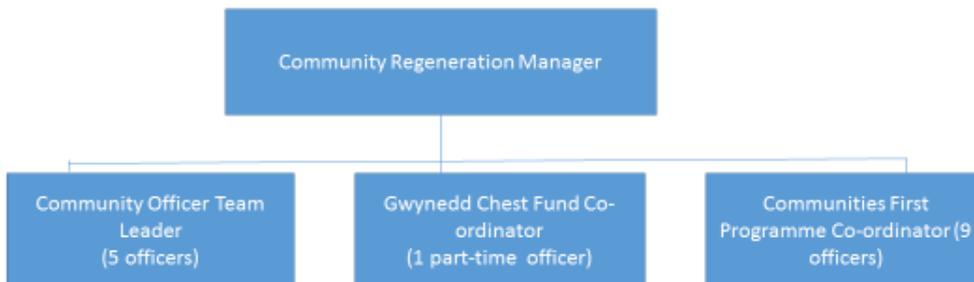
- that a liaison officer be identified for individual communities, but that officers operate more as a county team in order to benefit from the specific strengths and skills of different team members.
- that the team strengthen the link with libraries in order to promote community access to sources of information and assistance in future

12. The Scrutiny Committee’s views on these recommendations would be welcomed.

Relevant timetable: Action 1 April 2019

APPENDIX 1

Community Regeneration Structure 1/4/17



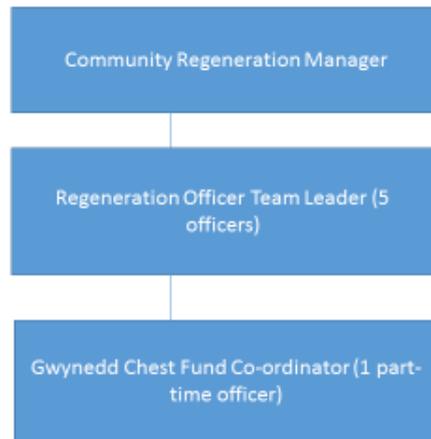
Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490
cabinet@gwynedd.gov.uk





APPENDIX 1

Community Regenerations Structure (Temporary) 1/4/18



APPENDIX 2

Option 1: Merge with the Economic Development Programmes Team





APPENDIX 2

Option 2: Establish an Economic Communities Support Team



Committee	Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report	School Meal Debts
Date of Meeting	22 November 2018
Author	Owen Owens, Senior Manager Education Resources Service
Relevant Officer	Garem Jackson, Head of Education
Cabinet Member	Councillor Gareth Thomas

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A request was received from the Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee for school meal debts to be an item for the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, following a report in the media that the total debts for school meals in Gwynedd was £85,589.47.
- 1.2 In this report, an attempt to address the Chair's request is made, allowing the Committee members to scrutinise the situation regarding school meal debts, the processes that have been used to respond to a situation where there are debts, as well as further steps the Department intend to take in order to respond appropriately to the situation, and reduce school meal debts over time.
- 1.3 It is fair to note that the situation regarding school meal debts is only relevant to primary schools. A different methodology is implemented in secondary schools. Secondary schools operate on a cafeteria system where pupils pay at the till for the food they have chosen.
- 1.4 Some secondary schools are moving to an on-line payment system where parents will be able to pay into a pupil's school meals account beforehand, and the pupil will be able to choose food up to the value of the money that has been paid into his/her account beforehand.
- 1.5 The remainder of this report, therefore, concentrates only on the School meal debts in Gwynedd primary schools.

2. PRIMARY SCHOOL MEAL DEBT PROCEDURE

- 2.1 Historically, a procedure involving the use of paper-based 'School Books' was used by individual primary schools. The 'School Books' kept a record of the school meals taken by pupils and the cash or cheques received to pay for those meals. The School Meals Clerk would reconcile all pupils' accounts weekly. At the end of the month a paper form would be sent to the Authority noting the situation regarding school meals. The monthly forms noted the total debts owed to the school.

- 2.2 Currently, the responsibility for identifying a debt on an individual pupil account rests with the school. The school is expected to send a letter to parents who have not paid for school meals for a fortnight (see **Appendix 1**).
- 2.3 If neither a valid reason nor payment has been received within a fortnight of the first letter, a second letter is to be sent which tells parents that they need to make alternative arrangements for their child's meals until a payment is received (see **Appendix 2**). Although the second letter says that no further school meals will be provided for the pupil, in the majority of cases, schools do not operate a policy of refusing to serve a meal to a child.
- 2.4 If the debt has not been paid after these two letters, the school is expected to transfer the debt to the Authority. When a debt is transferred to the Authority, an invoice is raised against the parent which is payable within 28 days, and the debt on the school books is cleared.
- 2.5 The Education Department receives money from the Council centrally for the value of the invoice raised and the Council will take steps to recover the debt from the parents. Recovering the debt from parents can take a long time. In a few cases, the debt is 'written off' by the Council. In these instances, the Education Department will not receive the money owing.
- 2.6 Some pupils are entitled to Free School Meals (FSM). If the entitlement to FSM has not been timely recognised and a pupil is accruing a debt, but it is found later that the pupil should have been receiving free school meals, the accrued debt on the school books is deleted.

3. SITUATION REGARDING DEBTS ON SCHOOL BOOKS

- 3.1 The figure reported in the media recently (£85,589.47 seen at the middle of the bottom of Table A represents the debts on the School Books at the end of March 2018.

Table A – School Meal Books

Year	School Meal Books		
	Income	Total of debts carried forward month 12	Largest debt by an individual school
2013/2014	£2,904,884.34	£36,356.78	£2,490.50
2014/2015	£2,927,648.25	£32,173.01	£3,112.79
2015/2016	£3,157,313.56	£36,269.73	£7,015.27
2016/2017	£3,236,111.24	£69,289.33	£14,037.92
2017/2018	£3,123,362.23	£85,589.47	£17,990.09

- 3.2 As a matter of interest, the situation at the end of October 2018 was total debts of £73,763.59, with debts in 81 (of the 87) primary schools. The debts in individual schools ranged from £2.50 to £6,987.02, with 23 schools having debts of over £1,000.
- 3.3 It can be seen from the table that the debts on school books increased significantly in 2016-17 and 2017-18. This corresponds to the years in which there were significant increases in the price of school meals (firstly to £2.30 in September 2017 and then to £2.50 in September

2017). However, we have no firm evidence to prove that this is the basis of the school dinner debts.

- 3.4 For 2017-18 specifically, it is noted that the debt in one school was almost £18k (which was more than 1/5 of all the debt in schools). Intensive work has been undertaken with this school recently.
- 3.5 The debts on school books affect the figure noted as 'lack of income' which is reported by the Catering Service in financial reports considered by the Cabinet.

4. SITUATION REGARDING DEBTS OF INVOICES STILL OWING

- 4.1 The figures in the table above and that reported in the media recently represents the debts on the School Books only. This figure did not include the value of the invoices which were still outstanding on 31 March 2018.

Table B – Debts transferred to the Authority - Invoices

Debts transferred to the Authority				
Year	Number of invoices raised in the year	Value of invoices raised in the year £	Value of invoices still owing at 31 March 2018 £	% of value of invoices still owing at 31 March 2018 %
2013/2014	352	£4,797.45	£4,797.45	21.87%
2014/2015	369	£6,387.27	£6,387.27	24.01%
2015/2016	392	£9,823.22	£9,823.22	33.58%
2016/2017	459	£13,333.17	£13,333.17	36.40%
2017/2018	469	£16,890.63	£16,890.63	42.68 %
Total value of invoices still owing at 31 March 2018			£51,231.74	33.27%

- 4.2 On taking the situation over the last 5 years in their entirety, **£136,821.21** (£85,589.47+ £51,231.74) was owed to the Council at the end of March 2018.

5. WHAT COULD HAVE LED TO THE CURRENT SITUATION?

- 5.1 Perhaps not every school has followed the procedure noted in 2 above as expected – either by not sending letters to parents or by not transferring debts to the Authority. This has led to debts accruing on the school books.

- 5.2 Historically, the monthly dinner forms (which noted debts) were passed on to the Income Department who checked the income only. There was no specific/formal procedure for monitoring the level of debt in individual schools, although they were recorded.

6. STEPS ALREADY TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT

- 6.1 Tighten up on schools' implementation of expected procedures.
- 6.2 During the 2017-18 academic year, two new systems were introduced to primary schools in order to (eventually) reduce the administrative work required by the School Meal Clerks. Each school received an on-line payment system enabling parents to make electronic payments directly into their children's meal account.
- 6.3 Every primary school also received the SIMS Dinner Money system to replace the paper-based 'School Books'. SIMS Dinner Money automatically reconciles the account for each pupil by receiving information regarding on-line payments (this is done automatically from the on-line payments system) and information about cash or cheque payments (which have to be recorded by the School Meals Clerk). The system produces electronic reports to replace the paper forms used under the old procedure, and it is possible for the Authority to identify debts on individual pupil accounts rather than just the total debts owed to a school.
- 6.4 The 'school books' have been replaced by SIMS Dinner Money, which allows us to receive regular, more specific reports, on the debts in individual schools. This will help in following up on those schools who appear to be allowing debts to accrue rather than transferring them to the Authority. A specific/formal procedure should be established to monitor the debts in individual schools.
- 6.5 As was done with the school that had debts in the region of £18,000, intensive work should be undertaken with individual schools that appear not to be transferring debts to the Authority. This includes:
- Ensuring that the Headteacher and School Meals Clerk understand the procedure for collecting debts and discuss the next steps to be taken by them:
 - Contact parents to inform them that they are required to settle their debts by a certain date
 - After this date, the School should forward a PY20 spreadsheet to the Authority in order to arrange raising invoices for the debts of the parents.
- 6.6 The on-line payment system also makes it easier for families to pay for school meals at a time which is convenient for them, since the system is available 24/7. This should lead to fewer debts.

7. FURTHER STEPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED

- 7.1 Ensure that every school is aware of the procedure to be followed when school meal debts arise, as well as understanding the benefits to the school in transferring the debt to the

Authority. Similarly, develop a procedure that monitors that debts are transferred to the Authority in a timely fashion.

- 7.2 Establish a central system of chasing up on debts on the basis of the electronic reports, rather than expecting schools to send the warning letters out.
- 7.3 Establish a system to identify families that go into debt often or repeatedly, and refer them to services/agencies that can offer support to them regarding financial matters.

Gwasanaeth Adnoddau/ Resources Service

Uwch Swyddog Gwasanaethau Ategol/
Senior Ancillary Services Manager- Bethan Griffith

PY18

ARIAN CINIO YSGOL YN DDYLEDUS / SCHOOL DINNER MONEY OWING

Ysgol/School: Dyddiad/Date: -

Annwyl Riant neu Warcheidwad / Dear Parent or Guardian of,
.....

Hyd yma ni dderbyniwyd arian cinio Ysgol eich mab / merch a enwir uchod. Rwyf yn anfon y lythyr yma rhag ofn eich bod wedi anghofio talu. Mae'r swm sydd yn ddyledus hyd yn hyn, gan gynnwys heddiw, yna dylid danfon y swm yma at y Pennaeth neu talu ar-lein erbyn bore Dydd Llun. **Os oes gennych ymholiad am y swm sy'n ddyledus yna cysylltwch yn uniongyrchol gyda'ch Ysgol.**

Mae teuluoedd sydd yn derbyn Cymorthdal Incwm, Lwfans Cymorth a Chyflogaeth (sail incwm), Lwfans Ceisio Gwaith (ar sail incwm), Credyd Pensiwn (Gwarant), Cymorth o dan Ddeddf Lloches a Mewnfudo 1999, Credyd Treth Plentyn (gyda incwm trethadwy blynyddol ddim mwy na £16,190) yn gymwys i dderbyn cinio Ysgol am ddim. Os ydych yn derbyn un o'r budd-daliadau uchod ac ddim yn derbyn cinio am ddim ar hyn o bryd rydych angen **cysylltu â'r swyddfa Budd-daliadau.**

Ffôn :- 01286 682689 neu e-bost:- budd-daliadau@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

.....
School dinner money in respect of your son / daughter named above has not to date been received. I am sending you this letter to remind you that money is owed as you may have forgotten. The amount owing up to and including today isand this sum should be sent to the Head teacher or paid on-line by Monday morning at the latest. **If you have a query regarding the sum owed then please contact the school directly.**

Families in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (income based), Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (income based), Child Tax Credit (with annual taxable income not exceeding £16,190) Pension Credit (Guarantee) and Help under Immigration and Asylum Seekers Act 1999 are eligible to receive free school meals. If you are receiving one of the benefits above and your children are not presently receiving free school meals **you need to contact the Benefits Office.**

Telephone: - 01286 682689 or e-mail:- benefit@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Yn gywir/Yours Sincerley,

Bethan Griffith

Uwch Swyddog Gwasanethau Ategol/Senior Ancillary Services Officer

Gwasanaeth Adnoddau/ Resources Service

Uwch Swyddog Gwasanaethau Ategol/
Senior Ancillary Services Manager – Bethan Griffith

PY19

ARIAN CINIO YSGOL YN DDYLEDUS / SCHOOL DINNER MONEY OWING

Ysgol/School: - Dyddiad/Date: -

Annwyl Riant neu Warcheidwad / Dear Parent or Guardian of,

.....

Cawsoch lythyr ar i'ch hysbysu fod swm o yn ddyledus am brydau Ysgol a roddwyd i'r disgybl uchod.

Y swm dyledus hyd yma, gan gynnwys heddiw yw ac mae'n rhaid i mi bwysu arnoch i anfon yr arian yma i'r Pennaeth neu talu ar-lein ar unwaith. Ni roddir prydau pellach i'r disgybl uchod o ddydd Llun nesaf ymlaen hyd oni thelir y swm dyledus. **Os oes gennych ymholiad am y swm sy'n ddyledus yna cysylltwch yn uniongyrchol a'ch ysgol.**

Dylech wneud trefniadau eraill ar gyfer cinio canol-dydd y disgybl yma un ai paratoi pecyn bwyd neu drefnu i'r disgybl ddod adref i ginio.

I advised you by letter on the that the sum of was owing in respect of school dinners provided to the above named pupil/s.

The amount due up to and including today is and I must ask you to send this amount to the Head teacher or pay on-line immediately. **If you have a query regarding the sum owed then please contact your school directly.**

Until payment is made, no further meals will be provided to the pupil(s) named and, as from next Monday you should make alternative arrangements for his/her mid-day meal either provide a packed lunch or arrange for the pupil to return home for lunch.

Yn gywir/Yours sincerley,

Bethan Griffith

Uwch Swyddog Gwasanaethau Ategol/Senior Ancillary Services Officer