

Complete Agenda

CABINET

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

DATE	Tuesday, 30th November, 2021
TIME	1.00 pm
LOCATION	Virtual Meeting – This Meeting will be webcast https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core/portal/home
CONTACT POINT	Annes Siôn 01286 679490 cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET MEMBERS

Members	
Dyfrig L. Siencyn	Leader
Dafydd Meurig	Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Craig ab Iago	Cabinet Member for Housing
Gareth Wyn Griffith	Cabinet Member for Environment
Nia Wyn Jeffreys	Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Dilwyn Morgan	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Gareth Thomas	Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community
Ioan Thomas	Cabinet Member for Finance
Catrin Elen Wager	Cabinet Member for Highways and Municipal
Cemlyn Rees Williams	Cabinet Member for Education

AGENDA

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THE CABINET TUESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2021

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Griffith, Nia Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Ioan Thomas, Gareth Thomas, Catrin Wager, Cemlyn Williams, Bethan Lawton (Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee) and Dewi Roberts (Local Member for Abersoch).

Also present-

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Siôn (Democracy Team Leader).

Item 4: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Dwyfor/Meirion Area Education Officer) and Carys Fon Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department).

Item 6: Gareth Jones (Assistant Head of Environment Department) and Alun Fon Williams (Senior Tourism Development Officer)

Item 7: Geraint Owen (Head of Corporate Support Department)

Item 8: Carys Fon Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department)

Item 9 - 11: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Dwyfor/Meirion Area Education Officer) and Huw Ynyr (Assistant Head, Information Technology).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

A declaration of personal interest was received from Cllr Dewi Roberts for item 4 as he was a member of the Governing Board of Ysgol Abersoch, however it was not a prejudicial interest.

A declaration of personal interest was received from Cllr Cemlyn Williams and Garem Jackson for item 11 as they were Directors of Cwmni Cynnal. It was a prejudicial interest and they left the meeting for the item.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

YSGOL ABERSOCH

The item was presented by Cllr. Bethan Lawton - Chair of the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee.

DECISION

Resolved not to amend the decision made on 28 September 2021 and to finally confirm the proposal issued through statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021, and to provide a place for the pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach from 1 January 2022 in accordance with Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the requirements of the School Organisation Code 011/2018.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the matter had been called in to the Scrutiny Committee as they did not feel that the Cabinet had given adequate attention to five specific aspects when considering the matter formally after the statutory objection period.

It was explained that the Scrutiny Committee had discussed the item at its meeting on 21 October, where a discussion was held and an opportunity to scrutinise further. It was noted that many of those aspects had been answered during the meeting and the Committee resolved to refer the matter back to the Cabinet for reconsideration on the grounds that a sufficient response had not been received to the second reason for calling in, namely that the report did not take into account future Housing and Employment which will come into the village. It was stressed that the Scrutiny members were concerned that full consideration had not been given to the possible effect of the proposed developments on the projection figures for Ysgol Abersoch before any decision is made. The Cabinet was asked to reconsider its decision as a result of their concerns.

The Local Member added that the discussion in relation to Ysgol Abersoch had been a very lengthy process and that the Cabinet members needed to give specific attention to the Housing matters underway in the village. It was explained that there was mention of housing developments in the ward and beyond and, consequently, education provision will be needed for children and families moving into the area. Attention was also drawn to the fact that Ysgol Llanbedrog was over-subscribed. It was expressed that these developments and the new Hotel were good news for the area but it was stressed that there was no mention of these developments in the reports and it was also noted that there was a feeling locally that the reports were misleading and did not comply with the Well-being Act.

Members were urged not to close the School for the reasons noted today and in the past and not to close the school mid-way through the school term, and to prioritise the education of children in the area.

The Cabinet Member responded to the report, giving the background of the item. He explained that, in June, the Council had issued the statutory notice to close Ysgol Abersoch on 31 December 2021 and offer a place to pupils at Ysgol Sarn Bach. It was noted that the Cabinet, following consideration of the objections, had confirmed the decision to close the School. It was stressed that the report submitted had dealt with observations about the possible likely effect on the area and that the Cabinet had considered them prior to reaching its decision.

He noted that the proposal to the Cabinet was not to amend the decision as closing the school responded to the challenges facing the school and would lead to more consistent opportunities for the children in the catchment area, offering a good quality education, experiences, skills and confidence to be successful bilingual citizens.

The Monitoring Officer noted the constitutional procedure in accordance with the calling-in procedure and noted that the decision made today would be final and that it would not be possible to call this decision in to scrutiny.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the possibilities of opening a hotel need not be discussed as the company, hopefully, would appoint local individuals and therefore people would not need to move into the area. It was asked if the housing developments are realised, whether Ysgol Sarn Bach would have the capacity to take more children. It was explained that there would be capacity in the school.
- It was noted that initial discussions had been held to discuss and respond to the need for housing in the area but that no decision had been confirmed and, consequently there was a desire not to raise expectations in the area.
- It was stressed that much of the analysis had already been done, and it was noted that if houses would be built, they would be houses for local people in the area and not for people outside the area, and therefore would not increase the number of children. It was noted in terms of the Penrhos site that the priority would be for care provision, with a small number available for families. It was noted that these would not lead to much change in the school's projections.
- It was explained that, even if there is development, there would be capacity at Ysgol Sarn Bach for the number of pupils.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER AND 12 OCTOBER 2021

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meetings held on 28 September and 12 October 2021 as an accurate record.

6. RESEARCH TO THE MOTOR HOMES SITUATION IN GWYNEDD

The item was presented by Cllr. Gareth Griffith.

RESOLVED

The report was accepted and the following was approved:

- I. To authorise the Head of Environment Department, in consultation with the Head of Education and Community to hold a pilot project to use up to six of the Council's parking sites (or part of the sites) within the Gwynedd Planning Authority Area, to provide facilities for motor homes to stay overnight, including the designation of the locations, but subject to securing capital funding and necessary permissions.
- II. That a further report on the outcomes of the pilot are submitted to the Cabinet within three years.
- III. Give consideration to and take enforcement measures to accompany the above.
- IV. Present the research to the Welsh Government and ask them to review the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it was research into motor homes in Gwynedd. The decision was read.

The Assistant Head - Environment Department explained that this research had been produced jointly between the Environment Department and the Economy and Community Department. It was noted that the purpose of the report was to explain what the motor homes situation was in Gwynedd and whether there was a need for better control of them and any lessons to be learned from other locations in Britain and Europe. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Planning and Licensing legislation dated back to the 1960s and it was asked if it was fit for purpose by now.

It was noted that three questionnaires had been used - one for owners of Caravan and Camping sites in Gwynedd, one for owners of motor homes and one for the residents of Gwynedd. It was highlighted that an overview of the findings was provided noting that the sector is one that is developing significantly and that the needs of motor home users were different to those of traditional caravan and camping users. It was noted that users favoured locations within a walking distance of places of interest and town centres and tended to travel throughout the year.

It was noted that there were examples in Scotland and England where councils had trialled car parks as places to stay overnight with the necessary facilities and it was explained that this trend is also seen in Europe. It was noted that owners had noted in the questionnaire that they would use them and the public had also expressed support for the piloting.

It was noted that the report highlighted the need for better control of the sector but that support was needed to trial the overnight facilities but that they needed to be accompanied with more enforcement. It was explained that the report requested permission to pilot such facilities in up to 6 locations within the Gwynedd Planning Authority. It was noted that investment would be needed to create the purpose-built facilities.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that motor homes had become a major problem across the county and thanks were given for the significant work that had gone into creating this report. Support was expressed for the scheme, and it was noted that there was a need to move swiftly.
- It was noted that the report highlighted excellent collaboration between the two departments, and it was added that there was a need to be central to lead growth in the economy in order sustain jobs.
- The report was welcomed specifically in terms of control and reference was made to specific locations to try to deal with the situation. A question was asked as to if it would be possible to push the programme forward and possibly have the sites earlier rather than later.
- The report was supported and it was highlighted that the needs of the group were different to those of the users of traditional camping sites, and that they supported local businesses. Concern was highlighted about the six locations only as they could cause a rush in the six locations and in doing so not reflect what the scheme could do more widely. It was explained that these locations were owned by the local communities in other countries and that there may be a need for a discussion with the whole community so that a proportion of the funding would benefit these communities.
- It was noted that, in an ideal world, there would be a network of locations across the county but that six was a practical number to pilot and on Council-controlled land. It was expressed that the report was a basis for evidence which would, possibly, give an opportunity for other sectors to open this type of location.
- It was stressed that this report noted that the Council was eager to control this situation and not develop it further. The need for open dialogue with the Park was noted, in order to ensure that they also control and not develop the sector. It was noted that it had not been possible to include the National Park as part of the pilot because of its specific planning rules.
- It was noted that the department would examine ways of pushing the plan forward.

7. COMMITTEE FRAMEWORK

The item was presented by Cllr. Nia Jeffreys

RESOLVED

Resolved to adopt the arrangements for Cabinet meetings in the future with the start date to be determined by the Leader in consultation with the Head of Democracy Services and Monitoring Officer, and after the current restrictions are lifted.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and it was noted that the framework set guidance on the way forward for future meetings. It was noted that remote attendance of

meetings offered many advantages such as diversity in democracy, travel costs and time for Councillors and Officers. It was stressed that the pandemic had highlighted that remote attendance had worked well. It was noted that the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 noted the need to formally announce the arrangement for future Committees.

It was explained that the Cabinet had the right to adopt its own arrangements and that the Full Council decided on the arrangements for other committees across the Council. It was noted that the framework had been created based on public interest in the items that were seen in various committees and that holding the Cabinet in a hybrid manner was consistent with this procedure.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PROPERTY

The report was submitted by Cllr. Craig ab Iago.

RESOLVED

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that there was a good and bad news. It was noted that three specific schemes outlined the positive work that the department did. It was explained that the Housing Action Plan was now operational and worked to ensure housing for local people in their communities. It was noted that there were innovative schemes across the county and that several grants had been received to respond to plans such as homelessness.

It was noted that schemes were underway to build housing within the county and that discussions were being held with bodies across Gwynedd to build housing on Council land. Attention was drawn to the One-Stop-Shop scheme which would be available to assist individuals to ensure that they received the support and were aware of any available opportunities. It was noted that the social housing letting scheme for local people which had been started a year ago was taking large strides forward and were continuing to develop although many problems had arisen along the way. Nevertheless, it was emphasised that the department had succeeded to house a high number of people in their communities.

It was explained that, although the schemes were ambitious, the pandemic had slowed many schemes down with the Housing Action Plan. It was stressed that steps were in place to tackle homelessness which had been a crisis prior to the pandemic but that the situation had worsened over the past eighteen months. It was noted that the pandemic had had an impact on the resources that were available together with the capacity to respond. However, with the new performance challenging regime, it was possible to respond quickly to the challenges and tackle problems immediately.

On the whole, it was noted that the department was succeeding and that receiving four National Awards was testament to this success. It was explained that the Cabinet Member would visit every regeneration area over the coming months to explain to Councillors what the Department hoped to do in every area.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Attention was drawn to hidden homelessness which seemed to be on the increase across the county. The schemes within the Housing Action Plan were welcomed, and it was highlighted that it had been operational for a mere seven months. It was asked if it would be possible to have information for every ward. It was noted that a discussion regarding hidden homelessness was extremely important as the success of the scheme to get individuals off the street had reduced the housing available to tackle the increase in hidden homelessness.
- It was explained that homelessness was at its highest level ever and this was the case across Wales. It was explained that the Council was looking at buying six sites and was continuing to seek to buy houses in order to offer lettings for individuals locally.
- It was explained that the money for homelessness would come from the Council's Hardship Fund but it was noted that the Minister had emphasised that the money would not be available in the next financial year. It was explained that if it continued, money would be needed to fund it and assurance would be needed that the money was in the settlement received from the Government.
- It was noted that the report was clear, concise and to the point and was very positive. It was noted that homelessness figures were astoundingly high although there was no shortage of housing, but that a high number of houses were used seasonally at present. The Government was asked that if they were withdrawing the funds, support would be needed with second homes.

9. EDUCATION DIGITAL STRATEGY

The report was submitted by Cllr Cemlyn Williams.

DECISION

- I. The Education Digital Strategy was approved in its entirety.
- II. It was agreed to joint-fund up to half the cost of renewing the devices by committing £2 million from Council balances, with an expectation for schools to pay the other half.
- III. It was agreed that Gwynedd schools will receive technical support from the Authority's Information Technology service from April 2022 onwards.
- IV. It was agreed to fund £145,000 in order to offer technical support up to April 2022, in order to speed-up the timetable of delivering the devices to schools.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted and the pleasure of being able to submit this innovative strategy was noted. It was stressed that this had been a cross-departmental scheme between the Education Department and Information Technology and appreciation of the close collaboration that had occurred to create the Strategy was noted. It was noted that the purpose of the Strategy was to use the best digital provision to support pupils and school staff to ensure consistent opportunities across the county. It was explained that this proposal highlighted the ambition that existed to use information technology to improve education and escalate the use to all parts of the curriculum.

The Head of Education Department added that the pandemic had highlighted the need to ensure that pupils could use technology confidently. It was stressed that the work on the strategy had started prior to the lockdown but that the pandemic had pushed the scheme forward.

The Dwyfor / Meirion Area Education Officer guided the members through the report and noted that digital skills were now at the same level as literacy and numeracy and therefore there was a need to ensure that pupils had the required digital skills. It was explained that Welsh Government had provided funds to improve the provision and had placed the responsibility on the local authorities to lead and the work of ensuring collaboration between the schools.

It was explained that, currently, many devices were dated and schools were using a variety of different systems. It was noted that the strategy would ensure consistency across schools. It was emphasised that lockdown had highlighted the lack of suitable devices and that it was striking how many households that did not have suitable devices. It was noted that almost 2000 devices had been shared during lockdown but that there had been a need to share more because many families were sharing devices rather than having one for each pupil. It was noted that the strategy ensured that every pupil and teacher had a device, and that they would be chosen in accordance with the age of the pupils and would be set to Welsh across the county.

Attention was drawn to the costs and renewing these as several thousand devices were on the way to the pupils with a lifespan of approximately five years. It was explained that £3.9million would be needed to renew them. It was stressed that the devices would need to be maintained effectively in order to ensure that not one pupil would miss education. The current procedure to support pupils was highlighted and it was noted that, in the short-term, the support would be drawn in to the Council's information technology service while the department ensures the long-term support system.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was noted that the scheme was an ambitious one and gave opportunities and the best and most consistent experiences across the county. It was noted that they would work extremely well in the schools but it was asked what support would be available for individuals without internet connection. It was explained that the pandemic had highlighted problems but that schools had assisted by providing internet boxes from the schools but some continued to have problems because some houses did not have a phone signal. In order to respond to this, the department would look at every possible option and schools would be available to apply for grants.

- After the five-year period, the devices would be upgraded and therefore it was asked how the devices would be recycled or could they be reused. In terms of the devices, specifically at the end of secondary school, an offer would be made for the pupils to keep their devices at the end of the five-year period, but it was explained that other devices would be recycled in Britain.
- In terms of equality, it was noted that consideration would need to be given to the pupils that were placed out of county. Discussions were held to ensure that these children, together with children with profound disabilities, would be a part of the scheme.
- Attention was also drawn to pupils that are home-educated as there was an increase in these numbers as a result of the pandemic. It was explained that support was available for those families through the welfare team.
- The financial context was provided and it was stressed that the Council had received grant funding but that renewal costs would have to be funded. It was noted that, subject to schools funding half the costs, £2million would need to be committed from the Council's balances to renew the devices in five years' time.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item due to the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - information about the financial or business transactions of any specific person (including the authority that retains that information) and Paragraph 16, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

There is an acknowledged public interest in openness in relation to the use of public resources and related financial issues. It is also acknowledged that there are occasions, in order to protect the financial and commercial interests that matters related to such information need to be discussed without being publicised. The report deals specifically with financial and business matter and related discussions. Publishing commercially sensitive information of this type could be detrimental to the interests of the bodies and the Council. It also includes legal advice received in relation to determining the way forward. The ability to receive and discuss such information is protected by legal privilege. Publishing this information would be contrary to the wider public interest of securing the best overall outcome.

11. SCHOOLS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY AND CWMNI CYNNAL

The report was submitted by Cllr Ioan Thomas

DECISION

- I. The proposed way forward in relation to the future of Cwmni Cynnal was approved.
- II. Delegated powers were granted to the Head of Finance Department in consultation with the Head of Legal Service to negotiate such contracts that are reasonably required to facilitate the procedure.

- III. A request was made for a follow-up report to the Cabinet to approve the distribution and transfer matters agreed upon.

DISCUSSION

The report was discussed.

The meeting commenced at 1pm and concluded at 3:40pm

CHAIR

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 30 November 2021
Cabinet Member: Councillor Catrin Wager
Contact Officer: Steffan Jones, Head of Highways and Municipal
Contact Telephone Number: 32402
Title of Item: Clean and Tidy Communities Teams

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet is requested to approve the proposal to establish teams to undertake minor maintenance work and to complement the regular maintenance activities. The intention is to respond to concerns on a community level and make a visible difference to the area's image. This will make a significant contribution to the cleanliness, neatness and security of the local built environment.
- 1.2 The Cabinet is asked to approve an allocation of £1,523,730 from the Transformation Fund to provide the necessary budget and its associated costs on a one-off basis for a period of three years to commence as soon as possible.

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1 'Clean and Tidy Communities' was adopted as an improvement priority within the 2021/22 Council Plan. When engaging with residents as part of the 'Our Area Engagement Programme', concerns about untidiness and lack of investment in beautifying our communities were highlighted as themes of importance to our residents. Comments were gathered on what is important to the residents of each regeneration area during September/October 2021. It can be seen in Appendix 1 that a significant percentage of the comments relate to lack of investment to ensure clean and tidy communities.
- 2.2 Due to pressure on the resources we have for routine maintenance, minor issues affecting the appearance of the County tend to be missed, as any interventions to deal with minor works can affect the performance of the maintenance programme.
- 2.3 If these minor issues affecting the appearance of the County are to be properly addressed in order to achieve clean and tidy communities, new provision is needed.

- 2.4 It is recommended that Clean and Tidy Community Teams are established across the County as an innovative way of adding value and responding to the specific concerns by Gwynedd residents and their communities during the first phase of 'Our Area' engagement work.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The Council introduced 'Community Gangs' during 2007 to respond to complaints and minor problems. This initiative was successful, with a reduction in complaints and positive feedback from residents and community councils. Unfortunately, this service had to be discontinued in order to achieve financial savings and it is clear that the impact was greater than anticipated at the time.
- 3.2 We also succeeded to implement the 'Tidy Towns' initiative in Gwynedd between 2008 and 2018. This initiative aimed to empower people to take more responsibility for the quality of their local environment and there were various positive developments and successes. Some of the developments during the first three years included grants for 50 projects to provide equipment and logistical support to voluntary groups as they undertook litter clearance projects and provide community improvement grant aids. As part of this initiative the Community Gangs were undertaking 'Blitz' program of work (tidying up) throughout the County. Tidy Towns also facilitated and funded a primary school environmental show to raise awareness of recycling, litter and dog fouling among a young audience.
- 3.3 This approach is not entirely new, many other Councils have developed 'Environmental Hit Squads' within community boundaries. During 2019 Wigan Council introduces 'Sparkle Gangs'. As part of this initiative towns received four days of deep cleaning each quarter. This included undertaking activities such as sweeping roads and tracks, washing signs, clearing shrubs and spraying weeds. Similar examples can be found from Cardiff, Oxfordshire, Corby, Enfield and Salisbury.
- 3.4 These successes, along with the initial engagement work, underpin the need for reinstating this work that will contribute towards the area's image and beauty. We believe that this is a crucial opportunity to deliver pride in our areas of Gwynedd. By adopting these working methods, we can target the high risk areas, thereby making a significant and visible difference in a comparatively short space of time.
- 3.5 Evidently the success of the above method of working depends on forging partnerships and close collaboration with community councils and other local stakeholders. As part of the Clean and Tidy Communities scheme we will hold a further consultation to nurture relationships and find out exactly what needs to be targeted within the various communities.

4. THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 4.1 A significant contribution to the department's improvement priorities, namely Clean and Tidy Communities and Strengthening Communication and Engagement.
- 4.2 To deliver the vision within the Council's Plan 2018-23, 'for every community in Gwynedd to prosper' for the people to 'enjoy happy, healthy and safe lives' by 'taking advantage of the beauty of the County's natural environment'.
- 4.3 To facilitate physical improvements to the built environment within and in the vicinity of Gwynedd's towns and villages, by focusing on public open spaces, e.g. roads, streets, parks, promenades, etc.
- 4.4 Promote local ownership and foster pride in the area by working at a community level to foster relationships with local groups/organisations, volunteers and the third sector.
- 4.5 An opportunity to integrate the work of the Highways and Municipal department by establishing the teams within the Street Services Team. Although the teams will sit within the Street Services Team, we will consider the teams as an integral part of each service within the department.
- 4.6 Enable the main workforce to focus on the rolling work and programmed work.
- 4.7 Inclusive teams within community boundaries would reduce the need to use various means of transport, which is more sustainable.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

Organisation of the Teams and Management/Supervision Arrangements

- 5.1 Simply, the teams include two individuals in a small lorry. It is intended to provide each team with a set of appropriate equipment and materials to undertake a variety of minor works. To ensure that the team vehicles can be recognised in the communities, it is intended to use a different colour and logo to the normal maintenance vehicles, e.g. Clean and Tidy Communities, telephone number, etc.
- 5.2 Based on previous experience, we suggest establishing two teams within Meirionnydd and Arfon, and one team in Dwyfor. As part of arranging the programme of work, a Team Leader will be appointed. This work will be based on the requests made by local members, community councils and any other partners that express an interest during the consultation period.
- 5.3 It is intended to hold consultation sessions within the department in order to ensure that managers and the workforce have an opportunity to express their views on the type of work that needs to be targeted, and the best way of delivering it.
- 5.4 We will also take advantage of new/mobile technology to respond to minor problems swiftly and effectively. We will provide each team with a tablet/mobile phone to program their work. This will enable the teams to update requests/queried from the public and establish strong communication and engagement streams.

5.5 Remit of Community Teams

Here is an initial draft list:

- Emphasis on urban and busy rural locations
- Cut and move urban weeds and specific overgrowth
- Cleaning and minor maintenance of street signs and street names
- Cleaning and painting of benches, bollards and other street furniture
- Wash, repairing and installing street bins and dog fouling bins
- Needle collection, in addition to, not to replace, the Street Cleaning work
- Remove graffiti, stickers and posters from Council property
- Other minor repairs and painting jobs
- Respond to relevant deficiencies, damage and vandalism on Council property
- Deep Cleaning - cleaning streets and removing gum
- Clearing specific cases of illegal tipping or dumping (responsive and in addition to, but not to replace, the Street Cleaning work).
- Emergency role - work in conjunction with other gangs as an emergency response, e.g. flooding, snow.
- Winter maintenance - the team will be available to support this work
- Minor drainage works - cleaning and trimming overgrowth from roadside drains and channels
- Siding - where relevant (e.g. urban)
- Tidying road verges
- Emptying bins when overcrowded at busy times.

5.6 Measuring Performance

- In introducing any new initiative, it is essential that we establish measures in order to regularly challenge our performance.
- We believe that the best way to assess the value of this service is to listen to the views of residents of our communities. Therefore, we plan on establishing a monthly customer satisfaction measure so that we can track our performance and respond quickly where necessary.
- Other measures are also to be piloted to find the most suitable and reliable measures.

5.7 Financial implications

- An initial bid for funding of the teams was submitted for an initial 3 year period - £1,523,730
- It is important to note that we are hoping to fund this scheme soon, as it is a very high priority.
- As a result, we cannot wait for the 2022/23 budget and therefore the Cabinet will need to pre-judge the bidding process (i.e. approve this plan without weighing against other bids).

Workers-

Project Officer /
Team Lead Contact
Team Leader
5x Community Team
Overtime (10%)
Training

£397,830

Transport-

5 3.5T vehicles
1 van
(we aim for these
vehicles to be
completely green)

£85,080

**Supplies and
Services-**

Minor Equipment
and tools
Sacks
Safety clothing and
footwear
Mobile Phones
Disposal etc.

£25,000

Sub Total			£507,910
Total			£1,523,730

5.8 Management and Timetable

A single point of contact will manage the project on a day-to-day basis and communicate with Members and Community Town Councils to ensure a work program for implementation. This role is essential and will work closely with the Communications Team.

Timetable - If Cabinet approves the establishment of the Clean and Tidy Communities team, we intend to see it operational early in the new year.

5.9 Well Being of Future Generations

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Preparation of the proposal has taken place addressing the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the requirement it places on public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and to prevent ongoing problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

6.1 'Our Area 2032' consultation (see the details in point 2.1).

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Our Area (Clean and Tidy Communities comments).

7. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance:

I note that the financial requirement is clear in the second phase of the decision sought, which is a request for Cabinet to approve the allocation of £1,523,730 from the Transformation Fund now, in order to fund the team and their associated costs on a one-off basis for a period of three years.

It is a matter for the Cabinet to prioritize the use of the Transformation Fund. While the fund is well resourced, other applications will follow. Therefore, should this substantial application be granted, Cabinet should be convinced that this need is a high priority.

Area	Clean and Tidy Communities
What's not so good about the area?	
Llŷn Peninsula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough litter picking on the seaside, maybe this would be one thing that the Friends of the AONB could do as practical work? • Occasionally the recycling service leaves a mess.
Ardudwy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadsides look messy - not enough grass maintenance etc on roadsides in the area. • Insufficient infrastructure spend to upgrade / tidy up.
Bro Lleu / Nantlle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog fouling is a problem and a risk to our children's health.
Ogwen Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's messy in places.
Llanberis area (Bro Peris)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourists use the 'Lagoons' area as a free camper cam for 'Campervans' and leave litter and dirt behind. • Dog fouling is a problem and people need to be educated. • Litter left by tourists, much more litter in the summer season than winter. • Not enough litter bins / dog bins. • Dog fouling and litter problem especially over summer when there is more tourism around. • Litter and dog fouling everywhere.
Bangor area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter bins everywhere and making pavements difficult to walk on. Shame on Gwynedd Council for this.
Caernarfon area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pool Street, behind the post looking messy. • Don't like the parking building near the bus stop - it's a real eye sore when coming into town. • Need to cut down and trim the trees above the railway site so that cars or walkers from Tesco can see the castle and quay on entering the Town. • Dog fouling is a big problem. • Looks dirty in parts e.g. outside the Anglesey wall. • Terrible rubbish over the Estuary - often from McDonalds / Costa Coffee - need to find a way to look at things like this. • Lack of recycling bins. • No street art to see anywhere - feel strongly about this - can look a bit silly in Winter. • Not enough flowers and trees. • Litter. • Litter problem on the streets. • Areas of town looking untidy eg Lake Street.
Pwllheli area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untidiness - not litter, but lack of maintenance. • Empty houses around 10 in total, which look untidy and affect the appearance of the village; owners refuse to improve them which is waste because they could be used as homes. • Not enough dog fouling bins, as a result of Covid many more people have dogs.
What changes would you like to see happen in your area?	
Bala Penllyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green spaces / parks / trails maintained to a good standard

<p>Bro Dysynni</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling center in Tywyn. Dolgellau and Bala have recycling centers; Tywyn is a larger town, but without a recycling center. It is very far for Tywyn residents to go to a recycling center. There are also 6 villages that rely on Tywyn as a focal point - Aberdyfi, Brynchrug, Abergynolwyn, Llanegryn, Rhoslefain and Llwyngwril. I have met with Steffan Jones, and have identified an ideal site owned by Gwynedd Council, which is not currently in use. • Litter. The councilor goes out to collect litter herself in her community. Would like to see a 'Best kept village' competition come back to Gwynedd. It would give a sense of pride in villages / communities. • State of the art recycling center
<p>Llanberis Area (Bro Peris)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That villages look more welcoming, more effort is made to keep our villages neat and clean with flowers, trees etc. being grown • Create tree corridors by planting and linking existing woodlands in the villages. • Increased tree planting, on vacant green land and encouraging private landowners to plant trees too. • Work to tidy up and improve the standard, paths, woods, hedges, walls. • Control dog fouling in areas • Provide more litter bins in all areas / housing estates / main foot traffic areas • More projects to enhance the community and bring the community together • Work on appearance as you come in and in Deiniolen - eg flowers / hanging baskets more children's drawing etc.
<p>Caernarfon area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More trees and flowers and better links to over the Estuary / Snowdonia park • Art and color everywhere • No litter • Town council hired person to go around housing estates to collect weed work rubbish etc, it would be nice to have the same sort of thing in the town center • More green space in the town center

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Date of meeting: 30 November 2021

Cabinet Member: Councillor Nia Jeffreys

Contact Officer: Geraint Owen, Head of Corporate Support Department

Contact Number: 32335

Subject: Hunaniaith Business Case

A Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To continue as a unit within the Council for the time being, and invest £203,880 in a chief officer for a four- year period to focus on attracting new grants and raising income, improve community contact, attract more community members to the Strategic Group and work towards being an independent entity.

REASONS FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Response to the Cabinet's request on 24/11/2020 for further work on the possible options and establish a task force of officers to create a business case for the options.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hunaniaith was established as an operational unit within the Welsh Language Promotion Unit, Gwynedd Council, in 2009. Prior to that, the Gwynedd Language Initiative was implemented as a project managed by the CYMAD company from 2006.
- 1.2 Currently, Hunaniaith is operating under the banner of the Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023 (Theme 4: The Language of the Community). The Promotion Plan sits within the policy framework proposed by the 2018 Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan - a statutory plan promoted by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board. This Plan notes the protection and promotion of the Welsh language as one of Gwynedd's main well-being priorities.

- 1.3 As a result of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011, Welsh Language Standards (2015), the duty to ensure a prosperous future for the Welsh language was adopted by Public Services Boards across Wales, and the requirement on local authorities to implement Welsh Language Promotion Plans has also led to an increase in the responsibility of unitary councils in that context.
- 1.4 To that end, during the past years, despite the recognition given to the special linguistic situation of Gwynedd and the background of establishing Hunaniaith as a strategic unit within Gwynedd Council, the main income source - Grant Scheme to Promote and Facilitate the Use of Welsh 2019-21, Welsh Government - has mainly focused on funding activity that promotes and supports social use of Welsh in accordance with Theme 2 of the national language strategy, Cymraeg 2050, 'Increasing the Use of Welsh'. The emphasis of that grant scheme is on operating at grass roots level to promote and facilitate an increase in the social use made of the Welsh language.
- 1.5 This community focus is reinforced by Hunaniaith's current work programme and the operational priorities noted under the current grant conditions, namely:
- influence the language of the family,
 - strengthen the link between the school and the community,
 - offer activities to a wide range of residents, including the 18-24 age group, and
 - develop an understanding of the linguistic practices of the residents of Gwynedd.
- 1.6 Under the guidance of the Welsh Government and the conditions of the grant scheme, Hunaniaith, in recent years, has also been collaborating closely with the Bangor Language Initiative. The Bangor Language Initiative was established in 2013 as a voluntary group that wished to condense and intensify the efforts to maintain and promote the use of Welsh in the city.
- 1.7 In 2016, a grant of £300,000 was received from the Welsh Government, under the Bwrw 'Mlaen scheme, to establish Popdy as a centre for Welsh language activities and organisations in Bangor. 30% of Hunaniaith's grant (£50,000) has been referred since then to maintain development officer(s) who work specifically in collaboration with Bangor Language Initiative. Currently, one full-time development officer and one part-time development assistant are employed specifically to work with the Bangor Language Initiative.
- 1.8 Hunaniaith's core function is noted as follows:
- motivational and empowering role jointly with local communities and networks,
 - operational role to motivate and implement direct and sustainable projects at grass roots level.
- 1.9 Iaith Cyf was appointed in 2020 to undertake the work of considering the possible options for the Language Initiative Structure in Gwynedd in the future, addressing the current structure, an arms-length company, a charity, a not-for-profit company, grant allocation for communities or any other possible option.

1.10 This work was reported back to the Cabinet on 24/11/2020 where a request was made for further work on the possible options and establishing a task force of officers to create a business case for the options. The outcome of this work is submitted to you today.

2. Possible options

2.1 The main considerations of each option are outlined in turn below, with further details available in Appendix 1.

Option 1 - *To continue as a specific service unit within the Council*

- The governance model would remain unchanged from its current form
- Reliant on the Government's grant to sustain the current posts
- There would be a need to ensure how to generate the greatest benefit and impact in the community, attracting new community members to the Hunaniaith Strategic Group.
- Need to consider how Hunaniaith would attract additional funding from other sources.

Option 2 - *A company under the Council's control*

- There would be a need to establish a company that could be based on shares or to operate on a not-for-profit basis, a company by guarantee. Hunaniaith's existing staff would transfer to the new company, via TUPE.
- A chief officer would need to be appointed for the company, along with company maintenance costs. There would be a need to fund the additional costs by attracting new grants and taking 10% of a contribution from all grants as a contribution towards the company's running costs.
- A board of directors would need to be appointed from amongst the members and/or officers of the Council.
- The new company would be reliant on attracting a Government grant to fund the current posts, therefore there would be a need to ensure that match funding is available in order to attract the grant.
- The company would be open to apply for project funding from various sources, respond to commissions and operate commercially.

Option 3 - *Establish an independent entity/entities to Gwynedd Council.*

- There would be a need to establish a non-Council-owned company or in a minority role in legal terms, e.g. a company limited by guarantee (that could also apply for charitable status) or a charitable corporate organisation
- Hunaniaith's existing staff would transfer to the new company, via TUPE arrangements and so higher pension contributions would have to be funded.
- A chief officer would need to be appointed for the company, along with company maintenance costs. There would be a need to fund the additional costs by attracting new grants and taking 10% of a contribution from all grants as a contribution towards the company's running costs.
- A Board of Directors would need to be appointed
- The new company would be reliant on attracting a Government grant to fund the current posts, therefore there would be a need to ensure that match funding is available in order to attract the grant.
- The company would be open to apply for project funding from various sources, respond to commissions and operate commercially.

Outcomes

Each of the above options would achieve the following outcomes at a different scale.

- The ability to expand the scope and nature of Hunaniaith's work
- The ability to attract income from other sources
- The ability to secure the voice of the community in Hunaniaith's priority arrangements.
- More fairness in terms of sharing the grant across the county.

Please see the matrix in Appendix 2, which outlines how each option meets the above outcomes.

3. Financial analysis

3.1 Finance work has been carried out to estimate the proposed costs of each option, as seen in the following table.

	Proposed costs of Option 1: £	Proposed costs of Option 2 £	Proposed costs of Option 3 £
Staff	143,100	195,740	225,970
Property	0	7,500	7,500
Services and Supplies	23,790	35,650	28,990
Sub-total	166,890	238,890	262,460
Government Grant	(166,890)	(166,890)	(166,890)
<i>New grants</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>(72,000) *</i>	<i>(95,570) *</i>
Net Total	0	0	0

** Grant equivalent to £720,000 or £955,700 would need to be attracted to obtain a 10% contribution from them towards managing the initiative*

- 3.2 In terms of the costs of option 1, it must be borne in mind that match funding in terms of office space and the time of the Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor are also contributions towards attracting the grant. In terms of the costs of option 2, staffing costs include the salary of the chief officer to lead the initiative. In terms of the costs of option 3, costs include the salary of the chief officer, the salary of the part-time support officer as well as higher pension costs.
- 3.3 As a result of further work on the income levels of other language initiatives across Wales, it became apparent that other initiatives do not attract grants at these levels, but rather attract income through commercial elements, that would not be suitable for Gwynedd, e.g. creating and maintaining childminding clubs and charging a fee on attendees.
- 3.4 It must be noted that there is a considerable amount of competition for those grants and it is therefore difficult to provide assurances regarding the success in attracting any additional grants in the future.
- 3.5 Uncertainty continues in relation to the implications of Brexit on any European grants in the future.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 4.1. If the plan is approved, the intention is for it to be adopted immediately.
- 4.2. As a result of the information in terms of the size of the new grants that would need to be attracted and the increase in costs for options 2 and 3, the Cabinet is asked to approve that the unit should continue within the Council for the time being, and invest £203,880 in a chief officer for a period of four years. The chief officer will focus on attracting new grants and generating an income, improving community contact, attracting more community members to the Strategic Group, and working towards being an independent entity.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 5.1. We have engaged with the Hunaniaith Strategic Group.

5.2. Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. The Monitoring Officer:

I've had input into this project and I am content with the propriety of the recommendation.

ii. Head of Finance:

Having worked with Finance Department officials with the author of the report, I confirm that the figures contained in part 3 of the report are accurate, or fair estimates where appropriate. In the current climate, given the uncertainty of the core grant position, and the lack of other grants generally, I agree that it would be prudent to continue to provide this service in-house at this time.

The Cabinet can approve a relevant commitment from the Transformation Fund for an additional post, over a 4-year period at a cost of £203,880 to manage the service and improve the situation. That is, a one-off bid could be biased, before prioritising the other one-off bids to be approved from the Transformation Fund to support the principles of the Council Plan.

APPENDIX 1

	Option 1 - do nothing	Option 2 - Local Government Company	Option 3 - establish an independent entity
<i>Description</i>	<i>It would continue as a specific service unit within the structure of Gwynedd Council</i>	<i>A Council-owned company</i>	<i>It would establish an independent entity/entities to Gwynedd Council</i>
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would facilitate collaboration opportunities with other Council departments. • The ability to attract and manage volunteers to assist with the initiative's work. • Democratic accountability already in place via the Council's structures (e.g. Hunaniaith Strategic Group). • It would ensure a relationship with other accountability structures in relation to the Welsh language within the Council (e.g. Language Committee). • Networks already established, e.g. Community Support Teams, expertise in attracting grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope and nature of the activities could be expanded as a result of attracting some additional income sources. • Attracting and managing volunteers to assist with the initiative's work. • Opportunity to establish a lead system that is more responsive to the needs of the work. • Possible to ensure representation within the relevant networks within the Council. • Possible to establish voluntary consultative forums as required. • Networks already established, e.g. Community Support Teams, expertise in attracting grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be possible to extend the scope and nature of the activities as a result of attracting additional income sources. • Attracting and managing volunteers to assist with the initiative's work. • The Board of Directors open to attract members in accordance with the need for a range of specific skills and expertise. • Independence from the Council and is therefore more likely to attract broader community ownership. • Able to present an independent specialist voice within the Council's partnership networks and in other forums. • Able to act as an equal partner as other language initiatives within Mentrau Iaith Cymru.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to apply for additional external grants, e.g. Community Lottery Fund. • A perception of Hunaniaith as a Council agent being able to produce unreal expectations and restrict the ability to be effectively involved with communities. • Decisions associated with the Council's bureaucracy processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct ownership by bodies or individuals outside the Council. • A perception of Hunaniaith as a Council agent continuing as a potential obstruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of having no support structures in place. • Uncertainty regarding the annual grant, thus impacting the viability of the initiative. • Need to test the market in terms of the level of interest in the community.
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the current situation that is restricted to the Government Grant - a risk that it will reduce. • The small resource will not be able to provide support across the county and meet the broad and varied needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to attract members to serve on the Initiative's Board. • Unable to attract grants. • Unable to appoint a suitable Chief Officer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to attract members to serve on the Initiative's Board. • Unable to attract grants. • Unable to appoint a suitable Chief Officer.

	Option 1 - do nothing	Option 2 - Local Government Company	Option 3 - establish an independent entity
<i>Description</i>	<i>It would continue as a specific service unit within the structure of Gwynedd Council</i>	<i>A Council-owned company</i>	<i>It would establish an independent entity/entities to Gwynedd Council</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to ensure the commitment of members to serve on the Strategic Group. Ensure community ownership of the work programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for clarity regarding who else is doing similar work in Gwynedd to assess the real potential to attract new grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for clarity regarding who else is doing similar work in Gwynedd to assess the real potential to attract new grants. Is there interest out in the community to manage the initiative?
Legal Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exact implications to be confirmed when the model is clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community movement to take control of the initiative - whether a new or existing movement. An independent entity and therefore no role for the Council in terms of input or management.
Financial Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An opportunity to review opportunities to attract funding from other sources (internal and external). Unable to apply for some external grants, e.g. Community Lottery Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to the pension contribution. The new staffing structure could be funded by taking an element of each grant application made, e.g. 10% of each application going towards staffing costs. Clarity is needed on what would happen to the match funding of 30% that the Council is currently funding - will this continue as support for the initiative or will it be up to the initiative to secure match funding for the grant? Hunaniaith staff are implementing elements of the Council's Promotion Plan; this element will need to be funded if a new provision model is in place (as well as procuring the work). Possible to submit applications for project or capital funding from various sources, bid for commission work and operate commercially, e.g. a community translation company. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher pension contribution and there will be a need to ensure that a bond is in place. The new staffing structure could be funded by taking an element of each grant application made, e.g. 10% of each application going towards staffing costs. Clarity is needed on what would happen to the match funding of 30% that the Council is currently funding - will this continue as support for the initiative or will it be up to the initiative to secure match funding for the grant? Hunaniaith staff are implementing elements of the Council's Promotion Plan; this element will need to be funded if a new provision model is in place (as well as procuring the work). Ability to attract additional grants. Possible to submit applications for project or capital funding from various sources, bid for commission work and operate

	Option 1 - do nothing	Option 2 - Local Government Company	Option 3 - establish an independent entity
<i>Description</i>	<i>It would continue as a specific service unit within the structure of Gwynedd Council</i>	<i>A Council-owned company</i>	<i>It would establish an independent entity/entities to Gwynedd Council</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There would be a need to establish or commission a support service from the Council or another company. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> commercially, e.g. a community translation company. There would be a need to establish or commission a support service from another company.
Staff implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to review the current staffing structure to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose, e.g. full-time chief officer to lead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TUPE implications and therefore a sufficient period of time will be required to consult with staff. Possible changes in staff terms of employment in the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TUPE implications and therefore a sufficient period of time will be required to consult with staff. Possible changes in staff terms of employment in the future.
Governance Arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in legal terms, but there would be a need to consider where best to position the Initiative within the Council's structure in terms of community work and contact, e.g. Economy and Community Department. There would be a need to review the current governance arrangements to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose, e.g. Strategic Groups and Sub-groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An arms-length entity. No way of establishing charitable status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An independent entity by establishing a Company Limited by Guarantee or a Charity.

APPENDIX 2

Hunaniaith options assessment matrix

Outcomes	Option 1 - to continue as a service unit within the Council	Option 2 - establish an arms-length company in the ownership of the Council	Option 3 - establish an independent entity
Sustainable organisation for the future	Maintaining the status quo	The Council able to underwrite pension costs Uncertainty about the level of potential new grants in the future	Higher pension costs could possibly be unsustainable. Uncertainty about the level of potential new grants in the future
The ability to extend the scope and nature of the work	Less scope to do this as a part of the Council	More scope to do this by attracting new grants	Full scope to be able to do this as a community initiative
The ability to secure the voice of the priority arrangements	Less interest in the community as it is associated with the Council	Easier to attract the community's interest in an arms-length initiative	Easier to attract the company's interest in a community initiative
The ability to attract income from other sources	Less scope to do this as a part of the Council	More scope to attract additional grants than from within the Council but not all grants available to an arms-length organisation either	Scope to attract additional grants opened in full

Note the risk to the Council with Option 2 and 3 if they do not succeed, i.e. risk to the Council's reputation having transferred to an unsustainable initiative and a risk for the Council to have to take the initiative back.

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



A Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of meeting: 30 November 2021
Cabinet Member: Councillor Dilwyn Morgan
Councillor Dafydd Meurig
Contact Officer: Aled Gibbard, Senior Manager
Contact E-mail: aledwyngibbard@gwynedd.llyw.cymru
Title of Item: Autism Plan 2021-23

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 The Cabinet is asked to approve the Autism Plan 2021-23, included in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Also, as this is a matter of the highest priority, the Cabinet is requested to prejudge the annual bids process and approve a bid for £48,000 from the permanent revenue budget now, in order to fund the post of Autism Co-ordinator and two Social Work posts at an annual cost of £144k, with the Council contributing a third of the cost.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will already be aware that autism is a priority for us as a Council, therefore, it is my pleasure to present this Plan to the Cabinet today.
- 2.2 Members will recall, from previous presentations, that we intend to make improvements within the field, jointly with our key partners, namely the Health Board and also Anglesey Council.
- 2.3 The work is partly influenced by the work which has been carried out as a result of a complaint made to the Council in relation to the service provided. The complaint was referred to the Public Services Ombudsman, and the Ombudsman provided recommendations to us as a Council. Therefore, this Plan seeks to respond to the lessons from that complaint, together with the Ombudsman's recommendation, and it is important to note our continued commitment to try to improve our service in response to the opinion of our users.

- 2.4 Another key part which has been carried out in order to ensure that we are able to create an Autism Plan with the right foundation, was commissioning an external Consultant (namely Hugh Morgan, a very prominent expert in the field of learning disabilities and autism here in Wales), to undertake a comprehensive multi-agency review of the field, giving us his opinion on what needed to change and develop.
- 2.5 He was asked to focus specifically on the criteria for receiving a service; the assessment process; access to children and young people with high-functioning autism; autism and no learning disability, and the handover period to services such as Adults. The intention was to create a plan which would ensure that these children and young people gain access to support tailored to their individual needs.
- 2.6 The consultant's review was, therefore, crucial for us in order to develop the Autism Plan which is presented to you today.
- 2.7 It is also important to draw members' attention to the fact that the Welsh Government has published a consultative Code of Practice of the Delivery of Autism Services. This Code of Practice came into force on 1 September this year. The Code requires a Local Autism Plan as well as the need to review it annually, therefore, as a Council and sub-region, we will be well-positioned in terms of the Code of Practice in having this Plan adopted and implemented. The document is a Statutory Code of Practice which sets a legal presumption that the Council will act in accordance with the requirements. Unavoidably, the consultant's work has considered the new Code of Practice when completing the review, and the Plan addresses it.
- 2.8 Though the initial work started from the Derwen Service direction (namely the Anglesey and Gwynedd integrated service for disabled children and children who are ill), this service is only one part of the bigger picture. It cannot be considered as a separate entity to all public services involving the autism field of work. The Consultant's review confirms that the Derwen Service (Social Services, Nurses and Psychologists) has expertise and a good understanding of children and young people with autism. However, it must be noted that autism is not necessarily an obvious and visible disability and it is unavoidable, therefore, that children on the spectrum come into contact with children services at a more general level. Consequently, the Derwen Service also acts as a resource which provides advice and guidance to children services at a more general level.
- 2.9 It is important to give you as members the context in terms of the significant increase we have seen in the number of children receiving a diagnosis of autism in the County. We anticipate that there will be a significant increase in the demand for children services as well as adults services over the coming years. It has become apparent that there is a gap in services for those children with autism, but no learning disability, particularly for young people aged 14-17. Working alongside the Education Department will, therefore, be crucial as we move forward.

3 THE PLAN

- 3.1 As noted above, it is essential with this field that key partners work together if we are to see a sustainable and effective change in the future. Having received the external Consultant, we as a Council asked Anglesey Council and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board for their agreement to establish a sub-regional Autism Project Board, in order to create the Autism Plan 2021-23 for the local area. We are very grateful to our partners for agreeing to this proposal.
- 3.2 Though members will be entirely aware of the work context in terms of Covid-19, it is important to note that the work which has happened across partners, and also in terms of the work of the external Consultant, happened while also trying to cope with one of the biggest challenges in our history as a Council and the wider public sector. It is, therefore, testament to our commitment to the field, that the work which started before the pandemic began, has continued despite the enormous pressure on managers, officers and staff. I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone for prioritising the work during such a challenging period.
- 3.3 The Project Board was established in 2020, and the Board includes representation from Gwynedd Council, Anglesey Council and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board. Many services are provided jointly, therefore, it was essential for the Plan to be co-developed. As a result of the Consultant's review, there was a golden opportunity for the Council to offer guidance and a clear direction to ensure that the multi-agency plan is developed to improve the experiences of children, young people and their families across the sub-region.
- 3.4 The Council presented the recommendations of the external consultant's Review to the Project Board, and they were accepted in full. The Project Board has been spending the past year addressing those recommendations, in order to develop this Autism Plan, together with developing action points.
- 3.5 The intention is for the multi-agency Autism Project Board to continue to meet to co-ordinate and monitor this Plan as well as an area plan under the Government's Code of Practice. The Board will meet during December 2021 and the intention is to meet up to four times a year. It is intended for every organisation to report on progress against the Plan via their own governance arrangements.
- 3.6 As members will see from the action points, a few actions have already been implemented. A co-ordinator has already been identified and has started in order to implement some elements. Initially, they will assist with elements of developing the training programme and focusing on gathering data and information from relevant agencies regarding children and adults with autism. This will allow the Project Board to have a firm picture when reviewing the Plan and forward-plan once the Plan has been adopted.

- 3.7 For information, there is a National Autism Team (IAS) who have a central role in raising awareness of autism in the community. This work is developed with a specific aim of including autism people in the process of developing and disseminating resources. In addition, post-diagnostic support is provided by neuro-developmental health services and the IAS for adults, parents, children, carers and professionals. By now, a representative from the Children and Adults Department meets regularly with the National Autism Team in order to share information and promote developments in the field.

4 THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 4.1 The autism field is a priority for us as a Council, therefore, adopting the Plan is an important part of ensuring that we action the priority.
- 4.2 We will comply with the new Code of Practice which came into force in September 2021. It is worth noting that the Code of Practice is relevant to every local authority and Health Board in Wales and there are clear advantages of implementing a joint plan with Anglesey Council and the Health Board.
- 4.3 The Ombudsman has given recommendations to the Council following a complaint, and adopting the Plan will ensure that we have implemented these recommendations in full.
- 4.4 The plan as a whole is not cost-neutral, and additional resources are needed for it to be realised. To fund the jobs element, it is estimated that an additional investment of £150,000 will be needed at this point. As it is a joint plan, it is expected that the partners will contribute to the total cost. It is, therefore, anticipated that the Gwynedd Council contribution will be £50,000. In order to proceed without delay, we are eager to have a decision on the bid as part of adopting the Plan. If implementing the Plan will lead to financial implications above what has already been identified, the bids for resources will be submitted to each organisation in accordance with the governance expectations.

5 EQUALITY

- 5.1 The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The work of preparing the plan has taken place while addressing the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the requirement it places on public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent continued problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

6 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

See the action points within the Plan in Appendix 1.

7 VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

The Monitoring Officer:

The report highlights the background to the recommendation to adopt this key plan. It has meant joint work and responding to quite recent changes to the national statutory guidance framework. There is appropriate and relevant reference to the role of the Ombudsman's report in initiating the process. It is expected that this decision will meet his requirements. However, it probably goes further by jointly establishing an up-to-date new autism plan which meets the new Code's requirements.

Statutory Finance Officer:

I note that the financial implications are clear in the decision sought, namely the request for the Cabinet to approve the bid for £48,000 from the permanent revenue budget now.

To preclude the usual annual bids process and allow this bid without weighing it up against the other bids in the 2022/23 budget, it is essential that the Cabinet is convinced that this need is unavoidable and of the highest priority.

APPENDIX 1

Autism Plan 2021-23

1.	The definition of Autism
	<p>“The term autistic spectrum condition (ASC) is used to describe the group of complex neuro developmental symptoms, of variable severity, that are characterised by challenges in social interaction and communication and by restricted or repetitive patterns of behaviour, thought and sensory feelings”.</p> <p><i>(Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services, Welsh Government 2021)</i></p> <p>An autistic spectrum condition (ASC) is a developmental disability that affects how people communicate, behave or interact with others. Some people may have very obvious features, and others may not. The common thread is differences in social, communication and behavioural skills compared with people who are not on the spectrum. In women, the presenting features can be very subtle, which makes it more difficult to identify the signs, as women and girls can be very good at hiding symptoms and hiding the condition from their friends, family and professionals in the health field in particular.</p>
2.	The Purpose of the Plan
2.1	The aim of the plan is to provide the context for developing a strategic direction in order to improve outcomes for people with autism and their carers.
2.2	A review of the current provision, undertaken by an independent consultant and reported to a project board which included Gwynedd Council's Children and Adults Services, Isle of Anglesey Children and Adults Service and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, identified gaps in the provision for people with autism, particularly for those who do not have a learning disability.
2.3	The autism code of practice came into force on 1 September 2021. It provides clarity to local health boards, local authorities and Regional Partnership Boards on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and / or NHS (Wales) Act 2006 and the responsibilities and the services that they are required to provide in order to support autistic people in their daily lives. Therefore, this plan will provide a focus to ensure compliance with the new Code of Practice.
2.4	Considering the financial constraints faced by the Council, some of the recommendations are achieved by re-designing services or re-prioritising budgets. However, the plan asks for greater focus on raising awareness, partnership methods and better coordination of Services - additional funding will be needed for these initiatives. In addition, partnership working provides opportunities to align community resources and attract third sector funding.

3.	Key Issues
3.1	Access to health and social care services - a key feature of people with autism is a difficulty in communicating and expressing themselves and their needs. Assessing an individual with autism who does not have a learning disability is challenging as their needs are often hidden and their impact can depend on the circumstances. The families of people with autism tell us that professionals often miss or are unable to understand the impact of communication difficulties when carrying out assessments. Someone who may appear to have capacity could have difficulties because of their inability to communicate or understand social situations that others take for granted.
3.2	Diagnosis - In line with the national strategy, we need to develop easy access to a diagnosis and post-diagnosis support, which is coordinated to assist people to access services and social care networks. There is a need to develop clearer roles and guidance to provide support to families as they await an assessment and a diagnosis.
3.3	Post-diagnosis Advice and Support - The range of people's needs and the support they will require after their diagnosis will vary greatly. Most people with autism, but who do not have a learning disability, will have low or moderate care needs and their requirements will mainly relate to communication, building a social network, promoting independence, employment, housing and maintaining stability. However, some may have critical or substantial needs and they will require 24 hour support and supervision. Access to post-diagnosis advice and support will vary. There is a need to develop clear guidance regarding the level and type of post-diagnosis intervention, advice, support and review. This would ensure that people know / can contact relevant support services.
3.4	Young People during the transition period - The largest proportion of children with ASD receiving a service from the Derwen Integrated Team are in the 14-17 year old category. Therefore, the transition from children services to adults services is a pinch point for the service. The transition pathway is complex, as the transition age into adults services is not the same in every service. There is a need to focus more on those children with autism who do not have a learning disability and who would therefore not be in receipt of a service from Derwen at present.
3.5	Training - Every member of staff who works directly with children, young people or adults should undertake awareness training. Evidence suggests that raising a basic awareness and providing training on autism can substantially improve people's ability to communicate with people with autism. We are developing focussed training materials on understanding autism, including an information booklet and e-learning module. We have started to map the

	<p>education and training requirements of practitioners. In partnership with Anglesey Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, we will develop tiers of training for general and specialised services. This will be steered by work being done on a national level through the National Autism Service.</p> <p>In addition, statutory bodies will be expected to undertake an analysis of autism training needs for their staff, tailored to their professional needs.</p>	
3.6	<p>National Autism Service - The Service offers a diagnostic assessment for adults, but they do not work directly with children and young people. There is a need to strengthen the link with the service from the direction of Children's Services and Adults Services. Developing a pattern of information sharing and collaboration on developing useful resources in the field is essential in order to influence the improvement of services locally.</p>	
3.7	<p>Third Sector - There is a need to identify partners who can provide low level services for people with ASD. The voluntary sector can play its part in developing skilled, low level and low cost practical support services for young people with autism or who do not have a formal diagnosis of a Learning Disability in Gwynedd that needs to be addressed. Introducing a similar model in Gwynedd would provide an effective service that improves the quality of life of young people with autism; helping prevent emergencies from happening, but it will also reduce the pressure on the statutory services. The need for such services will become increasingly important should the current increase in ASD diagnosis lead to a greater demand on statutory services.</p>	
4.	<p>Actions for 2021-22</p>	<p>Timetable</p>
1	<p>Establishment of a Local Autism Partnership Board - In accordance with the Code of Practice, regional partnership boards, local health boards and local authorities must gather information about the degree in which outcomes are improved and the quality of the services provided to autistic people and their family or carers. Service improvements need to align with Welsh Government's autism strategic action plan. The local plan also needs to be reviewed on an annual basis. Currently, the project board includes key partners from the statutory agencies. Therefore, it is recommended that the current Project Board transforms into a Local Autism Partnership Board, to include representation for autistic people. This will ensure supervision of service development and improvement, gather key strategic data and an annual review of the plan.</p>	<p>Established</p>
2	<p>Appointment of a Coordinator / Project Officer to develop Autism Services - Currently, there is a lack of data in relation to the numbers and profiles of children and</p>	<p>November 2021</p>

	<p>young people who have a diagnosis of ASD. Establishing this role to collate this information across the local authority, the health board and education will assist when planning to improve services. The post would also offer a regular contact with the National Autism Service, avoiding any duplication, identifying gaps and developing a network for professionals involved with the provision of services for autistic people. The post will also assist with the implementation of elements of the action plan.</p>	
3	<p>Establishing the Role of ASD Transition Practitioner (14-25 years) - This post would be co-located across children and adults Learning Disabilities Services and would include access to those children and young people where there is no learning disability diagnosis.</p>	April 2022, subject to financial investment
4	<p>Establishing the Role of ASD Practitioner (Support during the assessment / diagnosis) (14-25 years) - The increase in the demand for an ASD assessment means that there is a waiting list. Providing advice and support at this point would assist to manage the demand for post-diagnosis services and would promote support and early intervention with the aim of reducing the demand for post-diagnosis statutory services.</p>	April 2022, subject to financial investment
5	<p>ASD Training - A multi-tier programme of training, including e-learning, is being developed. This is provided across general services to increase autism awareness as well as more specialised training for practitioners who work directly with autistic people.</p> <p>Undertake an audit of staff training needs, giving consideration to the level of contact of individual roles with autistic people. This will consider direct work with autistic people as well as jobs where it is possible, via face-to-face contact with the public, to come into contact and therefore there is a need for a level of awareness about their needs.</p>	<p>September 2021 - March 2022</p> <p>November 2021 - March 2022</p>
6	<p>Engagement with the National Autism Service - Undertake a mutually-beneficial engagement strategy that will avoid any potential duplication, ensuring clarity of information and advice provided to adults and children and young people and their families. Effective communication and information sharing will assist to develop services and share information in relation to the outcomes for autistic people in Gwynedd.</p>	Already happening

7	<p>Investigate the potential for developing third sector Autism Services - there is a need to further investigate the development of skilled, low level practical support services. There are examples of practical activities being undertaken by third sector organisations that receive Welsh Government and other grant funding. Introducing such a model in Gwynedd provides an effective service to improve the quality of life of people with autism and manage any additional demand on statutory services.</p>	April 2022
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This is a scheme under the supervision of the joint Project Board with Anglesey Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. This will be monitored and reviewed annually.

Welsh Government has declared with a monitoring framework will be developed jointly with the Regional Partnership Boards. Additionally, a review of neurodevelopmental services has commenced since February 2021. This review will be completed by March 2022 and will consequently inform the second clause of the Government's Action Plan for 2022-23. Any outcomes from this work will be reported to the Board and will be included in the plan as appropriate.

Assessing the Impact on Protected Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

For help to complete this form see the *How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment* leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the effect of a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), in its opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From April 1st 2021 the Council has a duty to have due regard to tackling socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1. What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Autism Plan

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism Services sets out the duties related to the social services functions of local authorities about the range and quality of services that should be available in their local areas for autistic children, young people and adults and their families and/or carers.

The Code highlights the duties placed on local authorities, local health boards and NHS Trusts to ensure that autism awareness training is included in general equality and diversity training programmes offered for all staff working in health and social care.

Section 3 of the Code highlights the importance of raising awareness of autism in the community. To create a society inclusive of autistic people, there needs to be an understanding of the autism condition across the community.

The purpose of the plan is to implement the Code of Practice on a local level.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Aled Gibbard

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

November 2021. Version 1.0. This is an assessment of the overall plan. Further assessments will be undertaken when planning to implement different aspects and when revising the plan.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?

The plan has been developed following input and meetings with other professional stakeholders, including the health board and the regional and national autism service.

2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics, regarding the Welsh language or with communities (either of place or of need) that live with socio-economic disadvantage?

As part of the development of the Code of Practice prior to its implementation, consultation was undertaken with groups representing people with protected characteristics on a national level.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The above consultation has highlighted some areas where there is either a lack of current research and information. This has been recognised on a national level.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?

The plan is being implemented on the basis of needing to develop better local information e.g. it is estimated there are 30,000 autistic people in Wales (1 in every 100), however we do not have current data, and how that might inform us in relation to anyone who has protected characteristics.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

There are gaps in the data available locally and one of the aims of the plan is to gain a fuller understanding of the needs of autistic people within the County.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics?

Characteristics	What type of impact? *	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	The Code will provide a positive impact on people from black Asian and minority ethnic communities or who are asylum seekers and refugees as support for autistic people and their parents/ carers in ethnic minority communities has been a key element of the work carried out by the National Autism Team (funded by the Welsh Government). For example: they have been providing specific information and support for Ethnic minority communities on their Covid-19 newpage.
Disability	Positive	The Code of Practice highlights the requirement in the Equality Act 2010, which places a legal duty on service

		providers and those providing goods and facilities to make reasonable adjustments for autistic people so they are not at a disadvantage compared to people without autism. Reasonable adjustments are therefore required to be made for autistic people on a case by case basis.
Sex	Male - none Female - positive	<p><i>Male:</i> Evidence suggests that males can be up to four times more likely to be diagnosed with autism than females. The reasons for this are varied, but may be linked to studies which show that females are more able to mask ASC symptoms through mirroring behaviour etc. The differential impact of autism in girls has been raised as a concern and this is well known amongst clinicians. For this reason, it is not expected that the Code will have a differential impact on males.</p> <p><i>Female:</i> The rate of autism diagnosis in girls and women has historically been much lower than for boys and men. Although the research is limited, evidence and anecdotal clinical evidence suggests that the disparity in diagnostic rates is caused by a number of factors. These include the way girls and women present themselves, they are often more able to mask behaviour through observing and mimicking others around them. It is also suggested that standard diagnostic tools are more tailored towards recognising classic autism more commonly seen in boys and men, whereas girls and women's presentation of autism may be more subtle making it more difficult to diagnose. It is important that professionals understand how autistic girls and women may present differently and that they can have different support needs. For example girls may appear to be more able to sustain social relationships but in reality experience exhaustion when trying to adapt their own behaviour to mirror that of others and what is seen as more acceptable. Additionally, there are significant life milestones where women may require more individual support such as, during puberty and pregnancy. Therefore the Code of Practice is expected to have a positive impact on females.</p>
Age	Positive	The term 'people' within the code refers to children, young people and adults. The Code recognises all individuals, irrespective of age.
Sexual orientation	none	There is increasing literature linking autism with gender identity/dysphoria, with a higher incidence of autistic people reporting a psychological identity with a gender other than the one they were born with. The Welsh Government has recognised the need to improve gender identity services in Wales and have established the All-Wales Gender Identity Partnership Group to provide

		advice. The Welsh Gender Team is based in St David's Hospital in Cardiff. Any information from this service may be used to inform any subsequent iterations of the Code.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	None	There is no evidence to suggest that the Code would have a positive or negative impact on individuals because of their religion or belief or lack of belief.
Gender reassignment	None	There is a lack of evidence to show how the presence of autism can impact on people who are transgender. The Welsh Government have stated that further work is required in this area and that the Code of Practice will be evaluated within 2 years and addressed through the delivery plan for the Code of Practice.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	A National Perinatal working group has been established which will consider the key themes and suggested solutions to address the barriers with regard to autistic women and maternity services.
Marriage and civil partnership	None	No known negative impacts on marriage and Civil Partnership.
The Welsh language	Positive	Some autistic people are unable to speak or have limited speech while other autistic people have very good language skills. Autistic people whose first language is Welsh will be offered a service in the language of their choice.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	None	There are no known negative impacts on protected groups and those living in low income households.

* Delete as appropriate

3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes / No	The plan does not discriminate between different characteristics. The intention of the plan is to raise awareness and provide a better service to autistic people and therefore meet a range of needs, taking into account of other individual characteristics in the process.

Promoting equal opportunities	Yes / No	The plan identifies the need to meet a range of different needs, and to offer support according to these needs. It also includes the duty to assess the care and support needs of vulnerable groups, and meet their needs accordingly. The work done in producing the Code has already identified the need to promote equality for autistic women and to provide for ethnic minority groups (see 3.1)
Encouraging good relationships	Yes / No	Encourage good relationships between autistic people and the wider community by raising awareness and providing training.

* to be deleted as appropriate

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English and that you seize every opportunity to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

65% of Gwynedd's population are Welsh speakers and the Council operates a Language Policy that ensures that " it is possible for all the county's citizens can use the Council's service through the medium of Welsh and English, and that positive steps will be taken to ensure that the language choice of the service user will be noted and respected at all times. To ensure that this policy can be operated across the whole county, and that individuals can receive a Welsh Language service should they wish so (in accordance with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) the Welsh Language has to be a consideration when recruiting and developing services. It should be noted that an Welsh speaker appointed to a post should also be able to provide that service in English also.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy / practice may have on the Welsh language?

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have had due regard to the need to address inequality caused by socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone)?

Autistic people can be disadvantaged in the workforce. The National Autism Team have developed specific information to raise awareness and improve employer skills in order to support autistic staff more efficiently.

3.6 What other measures or changes might you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have had due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

The information referred to in 3.5 above needs to be widely known to local employers.

4) Analysing the Results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

Consistent with the Code of Practice the plan aims to ensure that consideration is given to the needs of autistic people when providing services and that equal opportunity is provided to everyone. On a local level we will consider any other individual characteristics when implementing the plan.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above and what is the reason for this?

The plan should not have a negative effect on any of the protected characteristics.

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	x
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

No further action at this time because it is too soon to decide, or there is insufficient evidence	

4.4 If continuing with the project, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

We do not expect any negative effects and will monitor(see below) and address any negative issues that arise.

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.

Not relevant

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

The plan will be monitored through a local Autism Board, and it is an expectation of the Code of Practice that the plan be reviewed on an annual basis. We intend to undertake further impact assessments when revising the plan in order to better understand the detail of the impact.

Agenda Item 9

REPORT TO THE CABINET

30 NOVEMBER 2021

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member – Finance

Subject: Change approval arrangements of up to £100,000 from Reserves

Contact Officers: Dafydd L Edwards, Head of Finance and
Ffion Madog Evans, Senior Finance Manager

1. Decision sought

In order to facilitate more flexible spending arrangements, the Cabinet is requested to delegate power to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Head of Finance, to commit sums of up to £100,000 from the Transformation Fund and/or the Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements Fund.

The Cabinet's formal approval will still be required for priorities in excess of the £100,000 threshold and the regular routine budget review reports will report on commitments in the period.

2. Introduction

The Transformation Fund is the fund used to fund the Council priorities included in the Council Plan. The latest plan was presented to full Council on 4 March 2021: 'Gwynedd Council Plan 2018–2023 - 2021/22 Review'.

<https://democracy.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/ielistdocuments.aspx?cid=130&mid=4215&ver=4>

The fund supports transformational and one-off work.

The Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements Fund was set up at the end of the 2020/21 financial year, following the receipt of a number of Welsh Government grants late in the year which included funding for the digital transformation field.

3. Background

In 2013, in the face of the challenging financial period and tight local government budgets, a decision was made to change the expenditure approval regime from the Transformation Fund, with all claims from the Transformation Fund receiving Cabinet approval. A Cabinet report was presented on 2 July 2013 entitled 'Using the Transformation Fund and Invest to Save Fund'.

After considering the size of the Transformation Fund, It is suggested that a revised procedure should be established, because of the need to move forward to achieve priorities without delay, whilst addressing immediate spending needs. For one-off resource commitments, It is now appropriate to introduce more flexible arrangements for expenditure up to £100,000, subject to the expenditure conforming with the priorities of the Improvement Plan / Council Plan. This would be consistent with the arrangements that existed before July 2013.

4. Reserves

As funds and reserves form part of the Council's budgets, there is freedom to use them in accordance with the Council's financial regulations, which generally, subject to certain thresholds, allow appropriate officers to use them for the purpose earmarked for them. What is recommended here is consistent with the right that chief officers have to authorise transfers between budget headings of up to £100,000.

Over £4 million was set aside in the Transformation Fund during 2021/22, which means that the fund balance is £12.5 million at 31 March 2021.

The Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements Fund was established when closing the 2020/21 accounts, when £2.5 million was allocated to the fund to assist the Council to recover following the crisis.

5. Use of the Transformation Fund

Constant expenditure has been made annually from the Transformation Fund in line with Council priorities. Between 2016/17 and 2020/21 there was expenditure of over £7 million from the fund, as outlined in table 1 below. A reduction in use of the fund was seen during 2020/21, as a result of numerous grants being received from the Welsh Government.

Table 1: Transformation Fund Expenditure between 2016/17 - 2020/21

Financial Year	£
2020/21	811,015
2019/20	1,593,935
2018/19	1,951,572
2017/18	1,526,115
2016/17	1,302,740

The current commitments against the Transformation Fund are £5.3 million, comprising commitments of over £5 million before the 2021/22 financial year, together with the recent commitments below which have been approved at Cabinet meetings as listed in table 2.

Table 2: Recent commitments from the Transformation Fund

Field	£	Cabinet Meeting
Climate Change Climate Change Project Manager	58,990	26 January 2021
Unit 2a, Eryri Business Park, Penrhyndeudraeth Galw Gwynedd	83,000	27 July 2021
Public Spaces Protection Order Dog Control	98,120	27 July 2021
Total	240,110	

This means that resources of £7.2 million are available for the purpose of the Council's Plan priorities.

6. Use of the Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements Fund

In terms of commitments from the Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements Fund, there are commitments of £430,000 which includes £130,000 for upgrading technology to enable remote attendance at meetings.

7. Suggested Direction

In order to facilitate spending arrangements and given the size of the Transformation Fund, it is suggested that for sums of up to £100,000, that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Head of Finance determine the allocations from the Transformation Fund and from the Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements Fund. Cabinet approval will still be required for priorities in excess of the £100,000 threshold.

Local member's views

Not relevant

Views of the statutory officers**The Monitoring Officer:**

I'm content with the reasoning and propriety of the recommendation.

Head of Finance:

I have collaborated with the Cabinet Member in the preparation of this report and I confirm the content.



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date:	30 November 2021
Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dilwyn Morgan
Contact Officer:	Morwena Edwards, Corporate Director

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on developments in the fields within my remit as Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families. This includes outlining the latest developments to date in 2021-22 against the pledges within the 2018-2023 Gwynedd Council Plan; issues and the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the savings and efficiency schemes.
- 1.2 I wish to remind you that all the matters have already been discussed and scrutinised in Performance Meetings, which also included representatives from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 The priority projects featured in the Council Plan are progressing, and are on track to deliver against our pledges, and their purpose. A few other matters of concern have been brought to our attention through performance challenging, and I outline these below.

2 GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS 2018-2023

2.1 Below, we note the progress that has been made to date against the Department's priority projects. These priorities address the department's main risks. In general, I feel that every project is currently moving in the right direction against the pledges that we have made in the Council Plan.

2.2 Keeping Families Together Strategy

I am pleased to note that the Safeguarding Children Effectively, and the Ffordd Gwynedd joint review between the Children and Education Departments; and the development of the Keeping Families Together Strategy, are all progressing as anticipated. However I draw your attention to the ongoing staffing challenges faced by the Department's services and their potential impact on our ability to realise the vision of this Strategy.

2.3 Securing a local, appropriate specialist provision for children with complex needs

Although the pandemic has delayed this transformation programme, I can note that the Department, jointly with the Health Board and Anglesey Council, has adapted and recommenced the project. The Multi-agency Team is in place since September; and the training programme to upskill the current workforce to support children with complex needs in health, education and social care teams is ongoing.

2.4 Ensure that families and children with autism have access to the support they need to thrive

A project group has been established and it has completed a review of the current experiences of families with autistic children. The Group has created a draft Autism Plan, which shows what we need to do in response to the recommendations in the review. I will present this plan to the Cabinet soon. The Department has secured funding to appoint a Co-ordinator to progress the implementation for the plan, and the recruitment process will start shortly.

2.5 Supporting People's Well-being

The work of supporting the well-being of people over the past months has continued to focus on responding to the challenges and side-effects of the pandemic. We continue to be part of the Covid Support Hubs pilot, and expect an evaluation of the project before the end of the year. Since my previous update we have now established Cross Departmental Task and Finish Groups for the work streams as prioritized by the Cabinet. Some of those work streams are moving forward well such as homelessness prevention, support for unpaid carers, children and young people's wellbeing. The other work streams need to be confirmed further, these are Community Resilience, Council Services' Front Doors and Tackling Poverty. The changes to Universal Credit, rising living costs such as food and fuel, over the last few months are a matter of concern to me and fellow members. We have already started working with our partners to increase our capacity to help residents with financial advice, dealing with debt, and food poverty.

3. PERFORMANCE AND MEASURES

3.1 I wish to draw your attention to the following matters, which are unrelated to the Priority Projects, but that are being addressed by the department because they are affecting the performance of services and/or causing us concern.

- 3.2 Workforce Capacity - Since my previous update, the workforce situation remains a matter of great concern. The Department is implementing temporary arrangements in order to deal with a shortage in the required number of social workers and care support workers, by redeploying employees to the Social Work Teams. The department is also continuing to attempt to recruit social workers. The caseloads of the current workforce are increasing, and a number of those cases are complex and require more time, attention and support. The risk surrounding the capacity of the existing workforce, if we are unable to respond to it, will affect our ability to deliver the priority projects and day-to-day work; as well as being detrimental to the health and well-being of the staff themselves.
- 3.3 In terms of the department's measures, I am generally happy with their performance. I wish to draw your attention to three in particular, which illustrate the department's story during the period in question in that report.
- 3.5 We continue to see an increase in the numbers of people contacting the Department for Information, Advice or Assistance, it increased to 585 in September. This is a 19% increase compared to the same period last year.
- 3.6 However, even with demand increasing, it is pleasing to note once again that our strategy to keep families together and not bring children into care unnecessarily is bearing fruit. With 872 children open to the department at the end of September, 83% of them are supported to continue to live with their families. We are again seeing a fall in the number of looked after children, from 281 in April to 268 in September. These measures show that our decisions are timely and accurate; and that we have a range of intensive and specialist support packages to keep children safe and with their families.

4 FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

- 4.1 The Cabinet has discussed the department's main savings scheme, the End to End Plan, in January 2021, when a proportion of the target was deleted. However, the department is continuing to look to achieve the amended savings target by improving the efficiency of its work arrangements. The department is currently working on an efficiency plan to achieve its 2022-23 targets.
- 4.2 For 2021/22, as part of the bids system, the Department received £1,824,000 worth of permanent bids to meet the unavoidable pressure mainly on looked-after children placements. Early forecasts this year suggest that the combination of additional resources together with deleting savings worth £1,149,000, has assisted with the Department's financial position and, therefore, based on the current situation, it is anticipated that it will be possible to stay within the budget.

5 Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. The Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety

ii. Head of Finance:

I confirm that the information presented in paragraph 4 of the report, on the financial position and savings, is a fair and accurate reflection of what happened in the budgeting

process for 2021-22 and what has already been reported to Cabinet following the financial review of the position at the end of August

a. Views of the Local Member:

- i. Not a local matter.

b. Results of Any Consultation:

- i. None to note.
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Appendices

A Report to a meeting of the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date:	30 November 2021
Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dafydd Meurig
Contact Officer:	Aled Davies, Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has taken place in the areas within my remit as Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being. This includes outlining the latest developments against pledges within the 2018-2023 Gwynedd Council Plan; the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the savings and cuts plans.
- 1.2 I would like to remind you that all matters have already been scrutinised at a meeting between me, the Corporate Director and a representation from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Care Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 Given the significant challenges that we continue to face in the field of care as a result of the pandemic, I am pleased to report that progress has recently been made on the Department's priority projects. It must be acknowledged that there is always more that could be achieved, but it is a pleasure to begin to experience the fruits of the hard work undertaken across the field in conjunction with our partners.

2 GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS 2018-2023

- 2.1 Please see below an update on these projects. For each project, we note in a table what we said we would achieve by the end of March 2022. A green status against the action denotes that we have, or a likely to achieve what is noted by the end of the year, or shortly

afterwards. Highlighted in red are the elements we are not likely to have achieved in line with our intention.

- 2.2 An explanation is given on any action with a red status, explaining the reason why we are not likely to achieve, followed by an update on some of the other aspects of the project where there has been progress since I last reported to you.
- 2.3 **A suitable and sustainable care provision for the future** - a programme to address the factors that could affect our ability to continue to provide appropriate care services for the people of Gwynedd.

2.3.1 Table 1

Seek to understand the "actual cost of care" to consider possible options for our care commissioning arrangements in the future	
Ensure that we understand the need for nursing beds provision in the county, and proceed with the Penrhos Site project in order to address the shortages in Pen Llŷn	
Work towards further increasing the number of dementia beds in the county	
Consider whether our support services, e.g. day care and respite continue to be suitable to address the needs of the people of Gwynedd, or whether there is a need for us to do something differently	
Consider how we can improve the suitability of our care provider buildings when attempting to satisfy additional infection control measures.	
Complete a bespoke dementia unit at Llan Ffestiniog, but has not been able to open due to the Covid-19 crisis	
Complete the work of building an additional dementia unit at our home in Barmouth	
Complete modifications to our home in Dolgellau in order to be able to offer more bespoke care for individuals with severe physical needs	
Collaborating with Adra housing association on an Extra Care Housing development in Pwllheli	
Seek to identify opportunities for similar developments in other parts of the county, with priority being given to the Dolgellau and Meirionnydd area more broadly	
Strengthen our quality assurance services to ensure adequate support for care providers to help to maintain quality services for the residents of Gwynedd.	

- 2.3.2 We have not been able to open the new unit in Llan Ffestiniog as we are unable to recruit sufficient staff. The challenge of recruiting new staff to the field is a major concern and progress on this is reported in section 2.5 of this report. Although considerable efforts have already been made to recruit staff to the new unit, we will once again do everything we can to increase our staffing capacity at the Home so that the unit can be opened safely.
- 2.3.3 Though the work of developing Extra Care Housing in Pwllheli is going ahead as expected, there is a slippage to report in terms of trying to seek opportunities in other areas in the County. Specifically, in terms of Dolgellau, we are currently unable to find a suitable location.

- 2.3.4 We have managed to strengthen the Quality Assurance service somewhat on a temporary basis, but a bid has been made for additional permanent revenue budget for April 2022 in order to achieve this in full in accordance with the support of the Care Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3.5 In my previous report to you in July, I referred to the work that had started to try and gain a better understanding of the 'actual cost of care', specifically in the Residential and Nursing field. Work has been carried out with a sample of providers across north Wales in order to compare their costs with a recognised funding model which is used across England and Wales. The initial information that arises from this work highlights a significant financial gap when compared with the current fees in place by authorities in the north. Discussions are being held with the Welsh Government on this and the probable financial implications for local authorities.
- 2.3.6 This problem is highlighted specifically when attempting to commission Nursing care since the beginning of this financial year. Most of the county's nursing homes now reject our standard fees and insist on higher fees. Despite conducting further and detailed work with these independent providers, our current situation means that our costs are increasing. The situation is also detrimental to our residents in terms of the ability to offer an extensive choice of care homes in their communities. This financial risk has been highlighted with the Finance Department.
- 2.3.7 Since I reported to you in July, work is progressing on the project to redevelop the Penrhos site, and the pre-planning consultation took place during November. We have also recently commissioned, jointly with the Health Board, specialist legal guidance from an external company. This will give us clarity on the different options we have in terms of possible delivery models that would enable us to have a direct role in providing on-site Nursing care.
- 2.3.8 Construction of an additional Dementia Unit at our Barmouth Care Home is progressing and is likely to be completed shortly. I also trust that the modifications will be completed in Dolgellau early in the new year in order to be able to offer bespoke care for individuals with severe physical needs. We anticipate that we will see the benefits of the developments for our residents in early 2022.
- 2.4 **Redesigning our Care Services** - a programme to transform our health and care services jointly with the Health Board in order to respond to the county's care needs in the future.

2.4.1 Table 2

Empower the integrated teams (teams that include care staff as well as health staff), to be able to achieve what matters to the adults of Gwynedd. This will include looking at appropriate training and removing any technological barriers	
Award new home care contracts in each area, with the aim of implementing the new model early in 2022/23	
Strengthen our Occupational Therapy service, including developing a specialist manual handling service to enable individuals to live as independently as possible	
Adding to the network of community hubs that support and create opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities by developing plans for Canolfan Dolfeurig in Dolgellau	
Re-open our community mental health hub in Pwllheli, after it had to close as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, and looking at options to develop further hubs across the county	

- 2.4.2 There has been a slippage in the schedule in terms of opening the domiciliary care tender as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. There are plans now to open the tender in January 2022, which will mean that providers will have new contracts in place by the following summer. In preparation for this, detailed work is underway to ensure effective communication with all stakeholders. In addition, steps are being taken to ensure that any reviews of people's care needs take place before the transition period begins. Work on training staff to administer medication began on 1 November, and what will be learnt from the experiences of the first group of trainees will be valuable in drawing up a comprehensive business case aimed at ensuring that the care workforce as a whole have these skills.
- 2.4.3 Work is continuing on the development of the new model of domiciliary care provision. It was reported to you in July this year that a number of the Council's domiciliary care teams had moved to work shift patterns. This offers better flexibility to the individuals who receive care and better stability for staff. I can also update you that we have recently experienced positive examples of providers negotiating with each other to ensure that staff do not travel unnecessarily. Examples like this are nice to see and demonstrate once again that steps are being taken to move closer to the new working model.
- 2.4.4 It was reported in July that we had managed to secure permanent funding to establish a specialist Manual Handling Service that will strengthen the work of the Community Resource Teams. We have now appointed to four permanent posts and are in the process of appointing to the fifth temporary post. We have also appointed two Occupational Therapy trainees which will mean we can develop the required future workforce.
- 2.4.5 I was pleased to be able to report last time that the Community Mental Health Hub in Pwllheli had reopened. We have also been looking at options to develop further hubs across the county. The Caernarfon area has been identified as an area where there is a gap in preventative provision for adults, and over the coming months we will discuss further how best to respond to this.
- 2.4.6 Recently, we have set up well-being hubs for people up to the age of 25 in Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog. The service will be provided by Gisda and will provide emotional and practical support for individuals. Over the next year, we will monitor these developments, and hopefully witness the positive impact of the provision on residents soon.
- 2.4.7 It was reported to you in July that we had almost completed an extension to our Learning Disabilities Residential Home in Pwllheli, in order to make it easier for families to visit safely due to COVID-19 regulations. Another planned development to add to our network of community hubs for individuals with learning disabilities is the development of Canolfan Dolfeurig in Dolgellau. Planning work is ongoing and discussions are taking place with the National Park. If there are no further complications, it is expected that construction will begin summer 2022. While this work is taking place, we will make temporary use of Llanelltud Community Hall and other facilities to ensure provision in the area.
- 2.5 **The workforce and recruitment to the care field** - a programme to address the challenges of attracting and retaining staff in the field in order to be able to cope with the increasing need that is likely to arise in the future.

Review the arrangements of the recent #GalwGofal recruitment campaign in order to consider how we will approach recruitment in the future	
Consider our registration and training arrangements as well as staff development arrangements, in order to increase flexibility and resilience in the field	
Develop a Grow our Own scheme to address the lack of expertise in some fields, such as Occupational Therapy.	

2.5.2 Staff recruitment and retention is extremely challenging at present, and the shortage has resulted in an inability to meet all the demand for Domiciliary Care in many of our communities. Though the actions agreed to in the Council's Plan are moving ahead as expected, problems with recruiting new staff and retaining experienced staff across the care field continue. The difficulties arise from:

- Difficulties recruiting new staff to the field
- Experienced staff leaving to go to other jobs within the Health and Care field more widely and to other sectors
- Sickness absences high at present
- Effects of Self-Isolating
- The workforce is tired with the Covid crisis continuing.
- Unpaid carers burning out

2.5.3 Unfortunately, these issues will not be resolved over night as some of the answers involve a significant financial investment, and changing people's perception of the field. For example, improving employment conditions such as salary, and ensuring that there are prominent and attractive career opportunities for our workforce in the future.

2.5.4 I reported in July that we had reviewed the success of our recent recruitment campaigns. Although there are always opportunities to improve materials and different ways of marketing, it is believed that the campaigns that have been carried out have been successful in alerting individuals to the opportunities available. But while this may attract individuals to make the initial contact and show interest, the numbers that eventually get a job in the field are low by comparison. There are various reasons for this, e.g. individuals rethinking after understanding more about the work - but it is also thought that the time it takes to appoint new staff to the care field is having a detrimental effect on the numbers we manage to appoint. We are therefore currently looking at our appointment processes to ensure that they are as effective and as appropriate as possible. One of the changes which have been made to date is that we will send an application form and information pack to individuals centrally (rather than this being done by the service / individual care home), with a follow-up phone call afterwards in order to see if they need support to fill in the application form. This will allow us to track the progress of the individuals who have expressed an interest in working in the field.

2.5.5 The main challenge currently facing care providers across the country is to ensure that we are able to fill staffing gaps on the front line. In response to these pressures, we are increasing our recruitment efforts but also targeting to attract seasonal staff working in the hospitality sector and possibly seeking employment during the winter months. We are hopeful that our efforts to attract temporary additional staff during the winter period will be successful and that some of them will enjoy the experience and stay on in the field for the longer term.

- 2.5.6 I am grateful to the Cabinet for approving £765,000 of one-off funding in October last year for extra care staff, but, unfortunately, recruitment difficulties mean that a significant proportion of the funding is as yet unspent.
- 2.5.7 I am pleased to report that we have put substantial pressure on the Government in Cardiff to hold them to the manifesto commitment to ensure that everyone in the care sector is paid the Living Wage. I believe that achieving this is key and needs urgent attention, but at the same time it should be noted that the concern that is regularly reported to us by many of our care providers is that paying the Living Wage is no longer sufficient to retain their experienced staff and attract new staff to the field. We are certain that a National Pay Structure is needed in the care field and we will continue with our efforts to ensure that this is one of our national priorities over the coming period.
- 2.5.8 Improving the terms of service of front-line staff is undoubtedly one of the main aspects that needs to be addressed, but it is also considered essential to ensure that our young people in our schools, colleges and beyond see the care sector as a field that offers prosperous, important and enjoyable careers. I am keen to see how we can do more on this and highlight the different pathways available in the field. We will be holding further discussions with the Education Department and the Economy Department, together with other key partners, in order to try to move this forward.

3. PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 The main measure of the **Older People, Physical and Sensory Disabilities Service** is 'Did we achieve what matters?' to the individual who is receiving our services. We have recently seen a decline in the percentage of individuals who have achieved what matters to them. The percentage has fallen from 78% to 72% in terms of those individuals who have fully achieved what matters to them, but then there is an increase when comparing how many have achieved this in part (19% to 24%). Of those reviewed during this period, this leaves 4% (i.e. 11 individuals across the county) who have not been able to achieve what matters to them. Please note that this measure does not include those individuals who are waiting for a care package to start.
- 3.2 There may be a number of different and unique reasons why individuals have not managed to achieve what matters to them, but in order to try to improve and respond to gaps in provision, the emerging themes are also reported: a delay in being able to assess and organise appropriate care to meet personal goals, stress on unpaid carers, reduced social opportunities, loss of confidence, loss of contact with family and friends.
- 3.3 Since I reported to you in the spring, the situation regarding the number of people waiting to be cared for at home has deteriorated, with the percentage of hours we cannot meet rising from 2.43% to 6.95% by now. This is of great concern and it is seen that the situation is at its worst in the Llŷn, Eifionydd/North Meirionnydd areas. The situation is very difficult for individuals and their families and we currently have over 100 individuals on our waiting list. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank those families who support their loved-ones during this difficult time. I am confident that every effort is being made to try and stabilise the market by targeting specific areas while seeking to recruit more staff, to provide assurance to independent providers through block contracts until the new domiciliary care arrangements are in place. We are also making every effort to prioritise, where possible, the most critical cases on our waiting list.

- 3.4 The data to date in 2021/22 show that the **Learning Disabilities Service** has achieved what matters in 74% of the cases recorded. In the remaining 26% of cases, the service has partly achieved what matters to individuals. There is no case where the Service has been totally unable to address what matters to the individual.
- 3.5 An analysis of the reasoning behind the data shows that the main reason why it was not possible to fully address what matters in each case was the impact COVID-19 restrictions were having on individuals, and the opportunities available to them as a result. Among the reasons given was that individuals were unable to attend work opportunities, day services, or go on holidays, because of COVID-19 restrictions for example. During the period of tougher Government restrictions, this was in many cases beyond the service's control. Recently, the service has been able to move on to offer more day and support services safely, restart some groups, and support individuals to go on holidays, etc. in line with their wishes.
- 3.6 I reported last time that we do not have performance measures in place for the **Mental Health Service**, and that this is something that we need to address. The Service does not use an electronic information recording system, which hinders our ability to develop a suitable performance measure to measure our purpose, and to extract information in a timely manner. This is an integrated Service which is led by the Health Board and introducing changes to working methods is something that needs to be done together. Although a solution to this is needed soon to give us the assurance that we know we are fulfilling our purpose and identifying opportunities for improvement, work is currently underway looking at data that is being gathered in the field to see if it can be used in a way that would improve our understanding of performance.
- 3.7 The purpose of the **Safeguarding Service** is to protect individuals who have support needs and are at risk of, or are, suffering abuse. During the last period, it can be seen that the number of safeguarding enquiries has decreased (108 compared to 134 enquiries). Although this is a positive trend, the time that it takes for us to respond to enquiries has deteriorated - a reduction from 93% to 91% in cases where we have been able to respond within seven days. With the number of enquiries reduced, I would have expected to see an increase in the response percentage, but I understand that one of the main obstacles to being able to respond promptly is that officers are waiting for information back from employees and there is currently a delay particularly with those cases that are linked to hospitals. I also understand that work is ongoing to adapt the report form and it is believed that this will improve the process going forward. I hope to see that improvement reflected in the performance measure soon. There has also been a decline in the measure we have which states, **of the adult protection referrals completed during the year, the percentage where the risk has been controlled**. The main reason for this is that some individuals refuse intervention or the closure report is incorrectly completed.
- 3.8 Another practical factor that has undoubtedly led to a further deterioration in the situation recently is the high level of sickness in the field at present. The sickness percentage for the Council's Domiciliary Care staff increased from 7.2% at the end of May this year to 12.5% at the end of October. The situation is of course distressing to vulnerable individuals and their families and is also seen to be having a detrimental effect on other parts of the system. In the absence of core services such as domiciliary care, Community Resource Teams staff now often have to use themselves as a resource to support individuals. This then leads to a reduction in the capacity to carry out assessments for those individuals who are new to the service. An obvious question arises here in terms of

what we as a Council can do to improve the situation and support staff who are suffering with the various side effects of Covid.

- 3.9 We have recently experienced difficulties in providing placements in care homes as a result of staffing problems, the intensity of care the individual needs, the COVID status of the home or the home undertaking renovation work. In response to this, and in order to understand the extent of the problem and identify trends, we are in the process of establishing a procedure for reporting on care waiting lists for the Council's homes.
- 3.10 One aspect that I need to update you on and which is having a significant impact on our performance and that of the Children and Supporting Families Department in various ways, are the problems that have been encountered since upgrading to a new version of the WCCIS system (*Wales Community Care Information System*). The system has been purchased nationally and we, like most other authorities across Wales, are totally dependent on it to run day-to-day services. Since I reported to you in July about the problems that existed, we had hoped that upgrading the system in October would have resulted in improved system performance but unfortunately this is not the case. The issue is being addressed at the highest level and I will keep you updated on any developments. We are currently tied to the national contract, but I believe that we need to consider our options carefully in the longer-term and assess the implications of some of the alternative options available.

4. FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

- 4.1 Based on a review at the end of August 2021, it is anticipated that the Department will overspend by £1,370,260 by the end of this financial year. The fact that we have not been able to deliver some of our main savings plans contributes significantly to this overspend.
- 4.2 A further review is currently underway and the outcome of this will give us a better idea of the likely situation by the end of March 2022. Although there is always a tendency for the first review of the year to reflect a challenging financial situation, due to the uncertainty at that time of receiving various substantial grants, I am concerned about the current situation and the challenge we face over the next couple of years.
- 4.3 I reported in July that the Cabinet had reprofiled some of the main savings plans so that they are delivered in 2022/23. This has eased the pressure and expectations on the Department this year in delivering savings, enabling the Department to have more time to ensure that a new Operating Model is embedded within the teams.
- 4.4 However, the value of the savings targets facing the Department in 2022/23 is going to be challenging given the significant ongoing work to transform services and change the way of working. To ensure we have the transformation facilitating resource needed to achieve this over the next three to four years, efforts are currently underway to utilise various funding sources. Reaching the end of the journey in this respect is absolutely necessary to guarantee that the structural and cultural changes that are taking place are sustainable for the future.
- 4.5 As you are aware, the most challenging savings plans for the Department relate to managing the demand on our services, with the ability to deliver dependent on the success of the work of transforming our care and health services jointly with the Health Board. Achieving this is, of course, going to be even more challenging if we find that demand is

increasing more than expected. The progress of this programme will be reported upon through the 'Redesigning our Care Services' Improvement Priority.

- 4.6 We have recently received substantial one-off grants from the Governments which need to be used by the end of March 2022. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners for their ideas and the collaboration in preparing the list of plans to improve and restore care services following the pandemic. Though I clearly appreciate the fact that additional funds are being provided to this field which is a help to deal with the pressure which currently exists, I would like to emphasise how crucial it is to have permanent additional resources in order to be able to fund some of the changes which really need to be made in the field.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

None to note.

6.1 Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. The Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

ii. Head of Finance:

I note that part 4 of the report expands on the financial risks facing the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, and the risks attached to the savings plans. The report acknowledges that the savings targets facing the Department is challenging for this year, and also for 2022/23.

Along with the Chief Executive, I have met with the Head of Department to review the practicalities of achieving the savings plans for 2022/23, and following detailed further work we will be reporting to the Cabinet through the budgeting process which is afoot.

6.2 Views of the Local Member:

- 6.2.1 Not a local matter.

6.3 Results of Any Consultation:

- 6.3.1 None to note.