

Complete Agenda

CABINET

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

DATE	Tuesday, 18th January, 2022
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 21/12/21

Present-

Councillors: Dyfrig L Siencyn, Dafydd Meurig, Gareth Griffith, Nia Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Ioan Thomas, Gareth Thomas, Catrin Wager and Cemlyn Williams.

Also present-

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

Item 6: Catrin Thomas (Assistant Head of Supporting Families)

Item 8: Huw Williams (Head of Gwynedd Consultancy) and Steffan Jones (Head of Highways and Municipal Department).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.
An apology was received from Councillor Craig ab Iago and Dafydd Wyn Williams (Head of Regulatory Department).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021 as a true record.

6. SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME

The item was presented by Cllr. Dafydd Meurig

RESOLVED

To approve one-off resources for two years, namely £193,217 in 2022/23 and £155,990 in 2023/24 from the COVID Recovery Fund towards the Supporting People Programme.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, noting that this was a one-off bid for funding to support the Supporting People cross-departmental programme. It was noted that the past two years of the Covid-19 crisis had been difficult and had highlighted how vulnerable some residents of Gwynedd were.

It was explained that over the past two years, the programme had dealt with matters involving fuel poverty and homelessness, but that the work being undertaken now needed to be formalised. It was noted that the programme was in place and attention was drawn to the schemes that would be prioritised such as food poverty, fuel poverty and digital inclusion.

The Corporate Director added that the report outlined the work which had been done cross-departmentally and with partners. Gratitude was expressed about the joint-working which had led to creating a programme which would make a difference in the short-term to the residents of Gwynedd. It was noted that the programme would do everything within the Council's ability to support residents whilst working on long-term schemes.

The Assistant Head - Supporting Families noted that the report summarised what had been possible to provide during the crisis. It was noted that, with the recovery period following the pandemic and an increase in the demand, there was a need for investment to ensure support for everyone. Gratitude was also expressed regarding the community efforts together with the work of the third sector over the past two years.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The report was supported, and thanks were given to the partners and the departments for working together on this programme. It was noted that poverty led to a detrimental impact on children and the need to support families that would come into the benefits system for the first time was noted.
- It was expressed that the situation was unusual, on the one hand taking pride in the fact that the Council was able to support residents but on the other hand the shame of living in a country with a Government which pushed individuals to having to use food banks in order to sustain their families.
- The food poverty projects were referred to and it was asked whether there were opportunities in terms of tackling food waste together with growing food in the community. It was proposed that this aspect of the programme could be renamed from food poverty to food resilience or Ensuring Food for All.
- It was highlighted that poverty was not a recent problem in Gwynedd and that it had been a problem for many years. It was stated that this funding was for a two-year period and it was also stated that poverty would not have disappeared by the end of this period. It was stressed that there was a need to address residents' needs and potential partners that it may be possible to work with were highlighted.
- Attention was drawn to the Schools Benefits Promoter and it was asked why they would only be funded for a year. It was noted that discussions had been held with the Education Department and it was noted that Heads had highlighted that housing and benefits support were the main needs arising within schools. As a result of this, it was added, a specific link for schools would be funded for a year in order to understand what the demand was and, in the long-term, it may be possible to refer individuals for specific services.

7. ESTABLISHING THE NORTH WALES REGION'S CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE

The item was presented by Cllr. Dyfrig Siencyn

RESOLVED

Agreed in principle to transfer the functions of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board via a delegation agreement to the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee, subject to;

- a. the statutory framework under development by Welsh Government allows for the delegations of the relevant operational functions to a Corporate Joint Committee,
- b. that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee agrees to establish a Sub-committee, with membership to be agreed with the Councils, to achieve the functions of the Economic Ambition Board.

This transfer was proposed in order to deliver a simpler governance model, and avoid duplication. A further detailed report on the framework for action would be submitted to a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that the North Wales Corporate Joint Committee had now been established under Welsh Government legislation. It was noted that the six counties of North Wales were now required to establish the Corporate Joint-Committee to discuss planning and transportation matters, and that discussing Economic well-being was optional. It was explained that this report requests the transfer of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board functions to the North Wales Corporate Joint-Committee.

The Head of Finance, who had been commissioned to co-ordinate the work of establishing the Joint-Committee, guided the members through the presentation and highlighted the main points. He emphasised that as the legislation was now in place, there was a need to make the appropriate arrangements to hold the first meeting of the Joint-Committee before the end of January in order to adopt the budget for 2022/23. Nevertheless, it was noted that the initial functions of the Joint-Committee would not commence until the end of June 2022.

It was explained that there was a legal duty to deal with planning matters, together with transportation, and that there was an optional power to deal with economic well-being which was currently being dealt with through the Economic Ambition Board. It was noted that the legal requirement and duties were immediate and there was an urgency to proceed. It was emphasised that much good work had been done regionally and that the work of establishing principles had already been done. The need to avoid duplicating discussions, keeping costs down whilst seeking to ensure that decisions were made as close as appropriately possible to the people was highlighted.

It was noted that the initial functions of the Joint-Committee included preparing and amending a Strategic Development Plan together with developing a regional transportation scheme. It was stressed that the Economic Ambition Board had been doing good work and that transferring it to the Joint-Committee would avoid duplication and would simplify the arrangements. It was noted that work would need to be done on specific fields before making the full decision.

In terms of governance, it was noted that the Sub-committees would do the heavy lifting in terms of the Corporate Joint-Committee and that an Audit Sub-committee and a Standards Committee would be needed. It was explained that the membership of the Sub-boards could be deputised which would share the burden between the Cabinet Members as well as co-opt members interested in the fields to the sub-boards. It was noted that Statutory Officers would need to be appointed, and that these officers could be borrowed from local authorities to undertake the work. It was noted that there was a possibility that Gwynedd would lead on the work as the Statutory Officers had been appointed to the Economic Ambition Board.

The next steps were outlined and it was noted that the Chair of Snowdonia National Park had been elected as the Park's representative on the Joint-Committee. It was stated that arrangements would be made to hold the first meeting in January. It was noted that it was mandatory to establish it and that there was an opportunity to implement it successfully and in a way that the Council and partners were happy with.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that, in recent years, there had been no support for the Joint-Committee regionally. It was explained that there was no option but to proceed with the plan and it was noted that scrutiny arrangements would be needed.
- It was noted that it was mandatory, and consequently, the Council needed to be a part of it in order to steer the arrangements. It was added that there was also a need to ensure that the Welsh language was given prominence within the Joint-Committee.
- It was explained that there was a need to accept that it was a step towards Local Government re-organisation through the back-door by Welsh Government, as well as moving democracy further away from the residents. It was stressed that there was option but to accept it but that this solution was a pragmatic one.

8. PERFORMANCE REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND MUNICIPAL AND GWYNEDD CONSULTANCY

The report was submitted by Cllr. Catrin Wager.

RESOLVED

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that it considered two departments, starting with the Highways and Municipal Department. Attention was drawn to the Clean and Tidy Communities project highlighting that this exciting project was one of the Council's priorities. It was stressed that there was a need to work with communities to ensure that areas looked clean and tidy. It was added that, during the previous Cabinet meeting, and investment was made in the teams to lead on this work.

It was noted that the work of de-carbonising the fleet continued and that two electric bin collection vehicles would arrive before the end of the year. It was

added that a grant of £300,000 has been received in order to invest in large vehicle charging points within the Council's locations.

The Playing Fields scheme was highlighted, emphasising that Playing Fields had an important role within society. It was explained that the department would recommence the scheme of contacting Community Council or community groups in order to give them an opportunity to look after and run the children's playing fields. It was noted that the department would submit a bid to the transformation fund to build on the work undertaken until March 2020.

In terms of the performance of the Highways Department, it was noted that there had been a reduction in the recycling rates across the county. The need to remind individuals to recycle was outlined, and that the service would continue over the Christmas period. It was noted that there had been an overspend in the Waste field and that this was a result of grant uncertainty, and it was explained that the department had commissioned reviews by WRAP to look in detail at the service and it was hoped to be able to report to the Cabinet shortly.

It was noted that the main priority of the Gwynedd Consultancy department was Managing Flood Risks in order to keep the residents of Gwynedd safe. Attention was drawn to the Wnion scheme in the Meirionnydd area where the department was collaborating with Snowdonia National Park and neighbouring farms to see how it could be possible to prevent flooding through natural control methods and promoting biodiversity in doing so.

A budgetary concern was highlighted within the Consultancy department as the income figure had reduced after Welsh Government had withdrawn from the Llanbedr By-pass scheme. Despite this, it was stated that the staff were busy seeking to recover the income through alternative schemes.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The report was welcomed and it was asked with the Wnion scheme in the Dolgellau area whether discussions would be held with the Local Members. It was noted that local discussions would be arranged in January.
- Attention was drawn to the recycling rates and it was outlined that there was a tendency for more recycling to occur over the summer months as opposed to the winter months. It was explained that the situation was seasonal historically and that tourism affected the flow of residual waste being collected. It was noted that the department faced a challenging period and that a specific scheme would be needed to move ahead to recycle 70% of waste by March 2023.
- It was highlighted that there was no mention of the departments' financial situation in the performance reports and the need for the information to be included in future was noted.
- Support was expressed for the Playing Fields scheme which was such an important matter for Gwynedd residents. Compared with other counties, it was noted that there had clearly been a lack of investment in playing fields in Gwynedd and that the department recognised the need to review and push ahead with the scheme.
- It was agreed that there was a need to prioritise the flood prevention work

as climate change was a concern for communities. It was added that development work was currently being done to identify priorities as there were clear risks on the coast and inland as well.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Gareth Griffith

DECISION

To accept and note the information in the report.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted noting that this was the department's second report under the new regime. It was explained that, in September, the department's situation was quite bleak, specifically the Public Protection Service. It was noted that the situation across the department had improved and that several bids for funding had been made in order to improve the department's situation. It was noted that the problem of appointing staff to the Public Protection Service had been highlighted nationally and that the department was looking at how to deal with this.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that, having been a part of the Performance Challenging Meeting, the report was a fair reflection of the department's performance. It was noted that the department had been under considerable pressure as a result of the pandemic, but that several services had improved in recent months.
- It was explained that there was a lack of detail about the savings situation within the department, but that it had been under increasing pressure.
- In terms of the Test, Trace and Protect service, it was asked whether there had been a recruitment problem as staff were appointed via another county. It was noted that the staff had been working extremely hard over the past year, but that the public's attitude towards them had changed in recent months. Nevertheless, with changes in the way the team worked, it had been easier for them to receive the information from individuals.

10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The report was submitted by Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn

DECISION

To approve the Forward Work Programme included with the meeting papers.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair noted his thanks and appreciation of Gareth Williams, who had been a democracy correspondent in recent years and

who was leaving his post at the end of the week.

It was noted that Welsh Government had started to release information about the settlement and it was explained that the settlement was better than had been seen over the past decade. It was noted that this highlighted the appreciation of Central Government of the work undertaken by Local Government during the pandemic.

The meeting commenced at 1.00 pm and concluded at 2.25 pm

CHAIRMAN

Agenda Item 6

CYNGOR GWYNEDD



Report to a Meeting of Gwynedd Council's Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	18th January, 2022
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen, Head of Corporate Support
Contact Tel. No.	32335
Item Title:	Celebrating St. David's Day

1. DECISION SOUGHT

- a. For the purpose of celebrating our Patron Saint's Day, to recognise St. David's Day 2022 as an additional holiday for those Council staff who work in accordance with local government workers' conditions of service, to be financed in accordance with paragraph 2.10 of the report.
- b. Authorise officers to investigate possible options to establish such an arrangement as a permanent one and for this purpose to hold further discussions with the recognised trade unions whilst continuing to lobby for the support of the Westminster Government to devolve the power to establish bank holidays to Welsh Government.

2. BACKGROUND AND REASON FOR THE REQUIREMENT OF A DECISION

2.1 At a meeting of the full Council on the 7th October, 2021, it was resolved as follows:

- a. *That the Council asks the Cabinet to consider officially recognising St David's Day by giving a day's leave to its workforce in order to celebrate our Patron Saint's Day on 1 March 2022 and every year thereafter.*
- b. *That the Council calls on the Westminster Government to devolve to Welsh Government the power to create bank holidays for Wales (via the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971) – in the same manner as already happens in Scotland and Northern Ireland.*

2.2 Annual leave is a contractual issue involving the employment of Council staff. This means that we are required, as the employer, to discuss the matter at a local level, as part of the local government workers' conditions of service, with representatives of the three recognised unions, namely Unison, GMB and Unite. In this respect, it is expected that the Council, as the employer, and the recognised trade unions reach a consensus on the way forward.

- 2.3 However, our school teachers' conditions of service is a matter that would need to be discussed at a national level and consequently it is not possible to establish St. David's Day as an additional holiday for teachers by securing a local agreement. On the other hand, the remainder of our schools' staff do work in accordance with the local government workers' terms and therefore any agreement made at a local level will be relevant to them.
- 2.4 In the context of that which can be agreed upon locally, officers have already brought the trade unions' attention to the proposal approved at full Council and have held an informal discussion on the options to be considered if the Cabinet concludes that an attempt should be made to establish an additional day's holiday. These are the options:
- Approve an additional day's annual leave to all relevant staff, to be taken annually on the 1st March or on the closest working day if the 1st March falls on the weekend – with those staff who would be required to work on that day able to take the additional day at another time during the year.
 - The Council already provides an additional day and a half on top of staff's annual leave entitlement. It is possible to propose that one day of that additional day and a half can be utilised for the purpose of ensuring a holiday on St. David's Day. It should be noted that on implementing this proposal, a significant percentage of Council staff would lose the current freedom to take that one day's leave at a time of their choosing.
 - The Unions submitted another option to be considered which is a combination of the previous two options i.e. that the Council finances an additional half day's leave whilst re-allocating the current additional half day's leave in order to establish St David's Day as a holiday for staff.
- 2.5 The annual cost to the Council of approving an additional day's leave in order to celebrate St. David's Day would be approximately £200,000 (approximately £100,000 if the option of the Council financing an additional half day's leave whilst re-allocating the current additional half day's leave was to be approved). These costs are primarily due to the requirement to employ casual staff in order to ensure service continuity during staff absences on the additional day's leave.
- 2.6 Obviously, there would be no requirement to ensure a formal agreement with the recognised trade unions in respect of the first option but there would be a need to provide a period of consultation with a view to ensuring a collective agreement with union representatives if the Cabinet favoured either of the other two options. This means that there would be insufficient time to introduce the possible amendment to the conditions of service by St. David's Day 2022.
- 2.7 This leads to one other short term option, which is the option recommended as the decision which is being sought, whereby the Cabinet approves an additional day's leave for this year only and establishes that day for the purpose of celebrating St. David's Day (with the exception of those staff who would be required to work on that day who would be able to take that day's leave at an alternative time during the year). This would lead to a one-off cost of approximately £200,000 but would also allow the necessary time in order to investigate possible options to establish such an arrangement as a permanent one by means of further discussions with the recognised trade unions.

- 2.8 Even if the Cabinet did not wish to proceed to establish a permanent arrangement at this point, the approval of one day's additional leave for this year would follow the path recently taken by some other public organisations e.g. Snowdonia National Park, Conwy Council.
- 2.9 By resolving to initially establish an additional day's holiday for this year only, it would also provide the opportunity to identify possible further options to those three which have already been identified, as noted in paragraph 2.4 of this report. It must be acknowledged that there is a cost to realising these options and this period over the coming months will provide an opportunity to also identify any other additional possible options.
- 2.10 For this year, as highlighted in the Head of Finance's comments, it is possible to fund the cost of realising this proposal from net underspend. However, if a permanent arrangement is to be realised for the following years, a specific provision will be required within the Council's revenue budget. Since we have not as yet fully investigated all options and established the costs associated with those options, a permanent resolution is not possible at this point. Therefore, following the establishment of all the possible options, the Cabinet will need to evaluate the cost of realising a permanent arrangement against other Council priorities.
- 2.11 Again, in this context, Cabinet members are reminded that it would not be possible to include teachers since the Council has no power to amend those conditions of service at a local level. Obviously, if we were to establish an additional day's holiday on a permanent basis, then we would wish to include teachers in such an arrangement. It is therefore also recommended that the Council should persist in calling on the Westminster Government to devolve power to Welsh Government for the purpose of establishing bank holidays in Wales.
- 2.12 It can be confirmed that the equality implications have been assessed and that the recommendation put forward is compatible with the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010.

3. REASONING AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 3.1 At its meeting on the 7 October, 2021, the Council also called on the Westminster Government to devolve the power to establish bank holidays in Wales to the Welsh Government, as is already the case in Scotland and Northern Ireland in terms of the Scottish and Northern Irish Governments. The Council Chair subsequently wrote to the Westminster Government and a response was received on the 10th December, 2021 from the Under-Secretary at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which noted that the Westminster Government had no plans to change current arrangements for establishing bank holidays in Wales (see the correspondence in appendix 1 & 2).
- 3.2 On the basis of this extremely disappointing response, it is evident that the current Westminster Government has no intention, at this moment in time, to devolve this power and it will not therefore be possible to respond positively to the full Council's wishes by means of a decision by Welsh Government for the time being.

- 3.3 Consequently, the recommendations are submitted to the Cabinet as the only current practical possibilities of establishing St. David's Day 2022 as a holiday for Council staff.

4. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

If the Cabinet favours the option to establish St. David's Day as an additional holiday for 2022 only and is keen to further consider options for the longer term, it will be possible to immediately adjust staff's annual leave entitlements for the current year whilst also conducting further discussions with the recognised trade unions in respect of future arrangements, with a view to report on the recommendations in June of this year.

5. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

Monitoring Officer:

The report notes that the recommendation stems from a request to the Cabinet by the Full Council on the 7th of October to consider designating St David's Day a staff holiday. As the decision is a Cabinet matter there is no obligation to implement this Council decision and the Cabinet must give appropriate consideration to the recommendation. The reasoning for a one-off recommendation is set out and acknowledges the further consultation and discussion requirements in order to establish a permanent arrangement if desired. I'm content that the recommendation is appropriate.

Head of Finance:

I can confirm that officers from the Finance Department have assisted the author of the report in identifying the costs that the Council would face in designating St David's Day as a holiday for the workforce and I am satisfied that the financial information as set out in the report is a fair reflection of those estimates.

The Revenue Budget 2021/22 - End of November 2021 Review report, which is a separate item on this meeting's agenda, states that the pressures on a number of budgets of a Corporate nature are not as great as anticipated this year and a decision is sought to transfer the net underspend on these budgets to the Financial Strategy Support Fund. This transfer, if permitted by Cabinet, would significantly exceed the costs of designating St David's Day as a holiday for the workforce. It would therefore be appropriate and reasonable to compensate from the Financial Strategy Support Fund those departments that would see a one-off increase in their costs as a result of this decision, as necessary. On the other hand, if the Cabinet were to decide not to transfer the underspend it would still be available to be used for this purpose.

Cadeirydd y Cyngor
Chairman of the Council
Y Cynghorydd / Councillor Simon Glyn



Gofynnwch am/Ask for: **Eirian Roberts**
☐ (01286) 679018 Ein Cyf / Our Ref: ER
☐ (01286) 671072 Eich Cyf / Your Ref:
E-bost / E-mail: eirianroberts3@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

The Right Hon. Kwasi Kwarteng, MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
1 Victoria Street
London. SW1H 0ET

17 November, 2021

Dear Mr Kwarteng,

I wish to draw your attention to the following motion which was unanimously adopted at a recent meeting of Gwynedd Council:-

“RESOLVED:-

- 1. That the Council asks the Cabinet to consider officially recognising St David’s Day by giving a day’s leave to its workforce in order to celebrate our Patron Saint’s Day on 1 March 2022 and every year thereafter.**
- 2. That the Council calls on Westminster Government to devolve to Welsh Government the power to create bank holidays for Wales (via the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971) - in the same manner as already happens in Scotland and Northern Ireland.”**

The proposer set out the context to his motion by tracing the history of St David, patron saint of Wales, and his significance to the Welsh people, and also emphasised that the motion served to reclaim an element of self-respect in terms of our separateness and identity as a nation.

Some of the comments made during the discussion included:-

- Agreement with the principle, and support for the call to establish St David’s Day as a bank holiday in Wales.
- That it was scandalous and an embarrassment that powers to create bank holidays have been granted to the Governments of both Scotland and Northern Ireland, but not to the Welsh Government.
- That it has been an affront to the Welsh people for centuries that, as a country, we do not have the power to celebrate our patron saint’s day. The cost is always put forward as an argument, but a bank holiday is a great boost for the economy of rural areas.
- That we, and anyone who lives in Wales, has a duty to support our patron saint, regardless of background and tradition.

I look forward to receiving your response to this motion so that I can report back to the forthcoming meeting of the Council.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Simon Glyn
Council Chairman

Swyddfa'r Cyngor
Caernarfon
Gwynedd LL55 1SH
01766 771000
www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Paul Scully MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of
State

**Department for Business,
Energy & Industrial Strategy**
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Councillor Simon Glyn
Gwynedd Council

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E enquiries@beis.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk

By email: eirianroberts3@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Our ref: MCB2021/27892

10 December 2021

Dear Councillor Glyn,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 November to the Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, regarding the motion on officially recognising St David's Day as a bank holiday in Wales. I am responding as this matter falls within my ministerial portfolio.

While we appreciate that the people of Wales want to celebrate their patron saint, more people work across the English/ Welsh border than across the English/ Scottish border. This closer degree of integration could cause greater business disruption. If we had separate bank holidays in England and Wales, the impact on both employees and businesses is difficult to predict.

While an additional bank holiday may benefit some communities and sectors, the cost to the economy of an additional bank holiday remains considerable. An assessment following the additional bank holiday for the Diamond Jubilee in 2012 showed that (across the UK as a whole) the additional bank holiday cost the economy around £1.2 billion.

Each devolution settlement has been developed against a backdrop of different histories, economic, social and cultural and legal systems. Different factors will require separate considerations. What works in one place may not work for another and we should not assume that devolution is the right solution because the matter is devolved elsewhere.

For this reason, the Government has no current plans to change the well-established and accepted arrangements for bank holidays in Wales.

The UK Government remains committed to working together with all the Devolved Administrations to ensure that the UK's institutions are working collectively as one United Kingdom. We appreciate the ongoing close working with the Welsh Government, while also respecting their devolved nature, ensuring we build a strong, enterprising economy across the United Kingdom.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Scully', written in a cursive style.

PAUL SCULLY MP
Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets
Minister for London

Agenda Item 7

REPORT TO THE CABINET 18 JANUARY 2022

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member – Finance

Subject: Revenue Budget 2021/22 - End of November 2021 Review

Contact Officer: Ffion Madog Evans, Senior Finance Manager

1. Decision sought

The Cabinet is requested to:

- Accept the report on the end of November 2021 review of the Revenue Budget, and consider the latest financial situation regarding the budgets of each department / service.
- Note that the financial impact of Covid continues in 2021/22, which is a combination of additional costs, income losses and a slippage in the savings programme, as the Council has given priority to safeguarding the health and lives of the people of Gwynedd in response to the crisis.
- Note that the Welsh Government's Covid support system via the hardship fund is continuing, but that it does not address overspend due to a slippage in the savings programme.
- Note that there is a significant overspend in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Highways and Municipal Department this year.
- Approve the following recommendations and virements (as explained in **Appendix 2**).
 - On Corporate budgets, that:
 - An underspend of (£20k) relating to capital costs is earmarked to a fund to finance the capital programme.
 - A net underspend of (£1,846k) on Corporate budgets goes to the Financial Strategy Support Fund to assist with the financial challenges facing the Council, particularly due to the Covid crisis.

2. Introduction / Background

It is the Cabinet's responsibility to act, as necessary, in order to secure appropriate control over the Council's budgets (e.g. approval of significant variations or supplementary budgets).

This end of November report is submitted on the latest review of the Council's revenue budget for 2021/22, and a summary of the position per Department is outlined in **Appendix 1**. The current projections suggest that the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Highways and Municipal Department will overspend at the end of the year, whilst the remainder of the Council's departments operate within their budget.

In **Appendix 2**, further details are provided relating to the main issues and the budget headings where significant variances are anticipated, along with specific recommendations where appropriate.

3. Covid

As we have already reported to the Cabinet, the financial impact of the Covid crisis has been substantial to the Council, with a combination of additional costs along with loss of income, to the value of over £20 million in 2020/21 and £10.4 million so far this year. See the details in **Appendix 3**.

After the Welsh Government established a hardship fund to compensate Local Government costs and income losses, in Gwynedd, monthly applications worth over £8.4 million have been submitted to the Welsh Government to compensate the Council for the additional expenditure for the period up to the end of November, with £5.5 million already received.

In terms of income losses, the value of the application for the first half of the year exceeded £1.7 million, with £1.4 million already received from the Welsh Government.

4. The Savings Situation

Following a review of the savings situation, it appears that over £32.8 million, namely 94% of the amended savings schemes since 2015, have now been realised. Without a doubt, a delay was seen in the realisation of some savings schemes as a result of the Covid crisis.

It was seen that the delay in realising the savings was most prominent in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department with schemes to the value of £855k, whilst the Highways and Municipal Department had £666k.

5. Council Departments

What is very obvious this year is the substantial pressures facing the adults care field and the waste field, whilst the allocation of additional resources and removal of savings schemes result in a projected balanced financial position for the Children and Families Department. The main issues are as follows:

5.1 Adults, Health and Well-being Department

An overspend of £995k is anticipated for this year, with a failure to realise savings worth £855k being an obvious factor of the overspend. The main overspend fields are the older people, learning disabilities and community care services. The effect of Covid has had a substantial impact on the Adults, Health and Well-being Department again this year, with over £3 million already claimed from the Welsh Government for the increased pressure up to the end of November.

The Cabinet Members will recall approving bids to the value of over £1.6 million for the increasing pressure on the 2021/22 budget, including in the Learning Disabilities, Older People and Physical Disabilities field.

5.2 Children and Families Department

After the Council allocated £1.8 million in additional funding to the Children and Families Department in the 2021/22 funding cycle in order to meet the increasing pressure, as well as abolish savings schemes to the value of £1.1 million that were not delivering, the current financial projections are very promising, with a forecasted underspend of £113k.

The latest statistics confirm that the pressure in different fields is lower than the 2020/21 levels, but that overspending continues in the Post-16 and Specialist/Derwen fields.

5.3 Highways and Municipal Department

The municipal field continues to overspend, with the most prominent problems in the field of waste collection and disposal. The department is facing difficulty in realising savings in a number of areas to the value of £666k. The department has also faced additional costs relating to complying with regulations as a result of Covid, and the Welsh Government has already compensated us to the end of October, and it is anticipated that the Welsh Government will continue to compensate us for the additional costs for the remainder of the year.

5.4 Byw'n lach

During 2020/21, Byw'n lach felt the implications of the crisis, with a significant financial loss amounting to almost £2.7 million for the financial year. The financial loss was recovered in full by claiming through the Welsh Government's Hardship Fund, as well as the Furlough Scheme.

In terms of this year's projections, claims to the value of around £1.4 million will be submitted to the Government for the period up to the end of November. With the expectation that the Government's financial support will continue for the remainder of the financial year. Therefore, although a report was submitted to the Cabinet on 9 March 2021, which noted that the Council was underwriting the losses incurred by Byw'n lach, it does not appear that the loss will fall upon the Council this year.

5.5 Corporate

Prudent projections when setting the 2021/22 budget were responsible for additional tax outputs and responsible for the underspend on Council Tax Reductions. The pressure on a number of budgets, is not as much as projected for this year.

6. General Conclusion

Again, this year, the financial impact of Covid is very obvious on the figures, with a failure to realise savings a prominent factor in both departments that are overspending most, namely the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Highways and Municipal Department. The Council's financial position is balanced as a result of an underspend by the majority of departments, as well as Corporate budgets.

7. Next steps and timetable

The accountants will continue to claim for the additional costs and the income losses relevant to Covid from the Welsh Government.

Act on the recommendations submitted and present a follow-up report to the Cabinet on 18 May 2022 regarding the situation at the end of the financial year 2021/2022.

Local member's views

Not relevant

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

Nothing to add regarding propriety.

Head of Finance:

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Summary of departmental budgets' net positions

Appendix 2 - Details of budgets and the significant variances

Appendix 3 - Government Grant in light of the Covid crisis

2021/22 Revenue Budget - Summary of the position by Department

	End of November Review				Estimated End of August 2021/22 Position £ '000
	2021/22 Proposed Budget £'000	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22 £ '000	Recommended Adjustments £'000	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22 £ '000	
Adults, Health and Well-being	57,875	995	0	995	1,370
Children and Families	19,304	(113)	0	(113)	(36)
Education	98,048	(54)	0	(54)	(89)
Economy and Community	5,043	(86)	0	(86)	(203)
Highways and Municipal	25,671	862	0	862	982
Environment	3,691	(178)	0	(178)	(228)
Gwynedd Consultancy	(130)	5	0	5	(30)
Housing and Property	5,567	(306)	0	(306)	(175)
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,073	(87)	0	(87)	(94)
Corporate Support	6,984	(83)	0	(83)	(92)
Finance (and Information Technology)	6,567	(56)	0	(56)	(62)
Corporate Budgets <i>(Variances only)</i>	*	(1,866)	1,866	0	0
Totals (net)	230,693	(967)	1,866	899	1,343

Transfer to the Financial Strategy Support Fund	1,846
Transfer to the Capital Programme Financing Fund	20
	<u>1,866</u>

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field: -	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adult Services						
Older People's Services						
Residential and Nursing - Homes	15,957	15,067	(890)	0	(890)	(825)
Domiciliary Care	7,451	8,084	633	0	633	616
Others	(123)	690	813	0	813	905
	23,285	23,841	556	0	556	696
Physical Disabilities Services	2,531	2,486	(45)	0	(45)	(165)
Learning Disabilities Services	21,379	21,890	511	0	511	724
Mental Health Services	3,629	3,844	215	0	215	(2)
Other Services (Adults)	3,264	3,185	(79)	0	(79)	88
Adults Services Total	54,088	55,246	1,158	0	1,158	1,341
Provider Services (shows net budget)						
Residential Care	(54)	(353)	(299)	0	(299)	(371)
Day Care	(2)	(140)	(138)	0	(138)	(131)
Community Care	223	765	542	0	542	640
Others	(4)	(17)	(13)	0	(13)	(16)
Provider Services Total	163	255	92	0	92	122

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Adults, Health and Well-being Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Other Services</u>						
Departmental Central Services <i>(including Department savings)</i>	3,424	3,573	149	0	149	236
Care Workforce Additional Expenditure due to Covid-19	200	125	(75)	0	(75)	0
Use of the Department's Underspend Fund	0	(329)	(329)	0	(329)	(329)
<u>Other Services Total</u>	3,624	3,369	(255)	0	(255)	(93)
<u>Adults, Health and Well-being Total</u>	57,875	58,870	995	0	995	1,370

Adults, Health and Well-being

Older People's Services - a reduction in demand for residential and nursing, and although there was a reduction in demand for Home Care last year due to Covid, increasing demand was evident this year. In 'Other' overspends on Supported Accommodation with the costs of the Hafod y Gest scheme and Awel y Coleg accounting for a significant proportion of the relevant overspend, there was also an increase in the number of direct payment packages and the inability to achieve savings.

Physical Disability Services - new residential and nursing case and increased pressure on supported accommodation but reduced demand for home care.

Learning Disability Services - costly new cases in supported accommodation and increased pressure on direct payments which is being reduced by one-off funding this year.

Mental Health Services - increasing pressure on residential and nursing and support schemes.

Provider Services - staff costs are over budget and loss of income are issues in Community Care, whilst staff turnover has led to underspends in many older people's homes and the implications of Covid disrupting Day Care provision thus underspending.

Departmental Central Services - some savings plans remain unrealised but impact reduced by staff turnover and grant receipt.

Budget 2021/22 - this year, the department received over £1.6 million worth of bids for increased pressure on the 2021/22 budget including for Learning Disability, Older People and Physical Disability.

Expenditure / Covid19 Grant - The impact of Covid has had a significant impact on the Department for Adults, Health and Well-being, again this year over £3 million already claimed by the Welsh Government towards the additional pressures up to the end of November.

Savings - A failure to achieve savings is a clear factor in the department's overspend with £855k remaining to be realised.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Children and Families Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Service Management	591	573	(18)	0	(18)	(13)
Operational	2,082	2,257	175	0	175	147
Placements						
Out-of-County Placements	4,701	4,568	(133)	0	(133)	(196)
Fostering through an Agency	1,633	1,517	(116)	0	(116)	(129)
Fostering – Internal	2,406	2,435	29	0	29	80
Support Services and Others	1,688	1,651	(37)	0	(37)	(52)
	10,428	10,171	(257)	0	(257)	(297)
Post-16	1,238	1,303	65	0	65	116
Specialist/Derwen	1,826	2,089	263	0	263	259
Youth Justice	252	215	(37)	0	(37)	(37)
Early Years	137	83	(54)	0	(54)	(35)
Youth	889	707	(182)	0	(182)	(150)
Others	1,861	1,793	(68)	0	(68)	(26)
Children and Families Total	19,304	19,191	(113)	0	(113)	(36)

Children and Families

Following the allocation of over £1.8m of additional funding to the department for 2021/22 together with the removal of £1.1 million worth of savings, this year's forecast is therefore much more promising with an underspend forecasted by the end of the year.

Operational - overspend on support schemes, but are below levels seen pre-Covid period, as well as overspend on staff costs.

Placements - bid allocation and removal of savings have had a significant impact on this area which has been overspending significantly over recent years. Although there have been 5 new out-of-county placement cases this year, the average number is down to 21.7 compared to 22 for 2020/21. Average numbers also down for agency fostering are 31.5 this year compared to 33.4 in 2020/21. In Internal Fostering, the Skills Payment and Staying On scheme are forecast to overspend.

Post 16 - this area has been the subject of a bid worth £100k this year, which has helped to reduce the budget pressures arising from the impact of a full year of cases.

Specialist / Derwen - the impact of an increase in demand for specialist support and support schemes over recent years is responsible for the overspend, as well as a shift in emphasis in how the service is provided, with increasing pressure on direct payments, now obvious.

Youth Justice - staff turnover means that this heading is underspending.

Early Years - the use of grants to fund core expenditure and receipt of grants in childcare field are the reasons for the underspend.

Youth - Higher grant receipt this year against core expenditure plus underspend following remodeling of service. Service activity effected by Covid and therefore reduced expenditure.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Education Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Devolved Schools	82,309	82,309	0	0	0	0
Schools Quality Services	(813)	(1,122)	(309)	0	(309)	(313)
Infrastructure and Support Services						
Transport	5,518	5,619	101	0	101	262
Ancillary Services	461	839	378	0	378	177
Others	3,324	3,289	(35)	0	(35)	(51)
	9,303	9,747	444	0	444	388
Leadership and Management	2,240	2,088	(152)	0	(152)	(129)
Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion	5,009	4,972	(37)	0	(37)	(35)
Education Total	98,048	97,994	(54)	0	(54)	(89)

Education

School Quality Services - the underspend is due to a combination of grant receipts, staff turnover, reduced spending and reduced demand on some budgets.

Transport - although an additional £291k of funding has been allocated for this area for 2021/22, the latest estimates suggest a £164k overspend on Taxi Transport this year. Extra pressures on the budget came with the relocation of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai's educational courses to Llangefn, and an increase in the demand in taxis for pupils at Hafod Lon and Pendalar special schools. Grant receipt and one-off underspend on school buses this year reduces the reported overspend.

Transport has been subject to a strategic review to try and manage the increase in expenditure, with the need for further work from the Education Department and the Environment Department continuing, so that it is possible to take advantage of efficiency opportunities.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Ancillary Service - staff overspends, losses of school meals income and the care element of breakfast clubs. Covid-affiliated schools' additional cleaning requirements are also evident, with a proportion of the relevant income losses and additional expenditure being claimed by the Welsh Government.

Infrastructure and Support Services - Other - less demand on various budgets.

Leadership and Management - grant receipt and underspend on a number of various budget headings.

Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion - a mixed picture that is a combination of vacancies and underspends on a variety of headings, while circumstances relating to one particular centre remain and account for an overspend of £223k.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Economy and Community Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	375	375	0	0	0	0
Community Regeneration and Support Programmes	374	432	58	0	58	12
Maritime and Country Parks	438	222	(216)	0	(216)	(251)
Leisure Contracts	1,078	1,099	21	0	21	25
Sports Programmes	32	32	0	0	0	0
Economic Development Programmes	(77)	(23)	54	0	54	0
Marketing and Events	288	302	14	0	14	0
Gwynedd Libraries	1,627	1,571	(56)	0	(56)	(33)
Museums, Arts and Gwynedd Archives	908	947	39	0	39	44
<u>Economy and Community Total</u>	5,043	4,957	(86)	0	(86)	(203)

Economy and Community

Community Regeneration and Support Programmes - one-off additional spend on regeneration programmes this year.

Maritime and Country Parks - a combination of reasons responsible for the forecast underspend including staff turnover, exceeding income at Hafan Pwllheli, due to the increasing number of tourists to the area and therefore the demand for moorings following the easing of Covid restrictions over the summer period. It was also seen that the beaches income exceeded the income targets following a busy tourist season for the area.

Leisure Contracts - the leisure provision was transferred to Cwmni Byw'n Iach on 1 April 2019, but responsibility for running the property remains with the Council, from the latest projections it is forecasted that there will be an overspend of £21k by the end of the year.

As Covid has impaired the ability of the leisure centers to open and the provision of a service, thus having an impact on the ability to generate income, money to compensate for additional costs and income losses due to Covid has been received from Welsh Government, which is £1.4 million to the end of November 2021 (£2.7 million in 2020/21).

Economic Development Programs - additional expenditure on various schemes this year.

Gwynedd Libraries - underspend is mainly due to staff vacancies and staff turnover.

Gwynedd Museums, Arts and Archives - Covid has had a detrimental effect on income levels, there has been a slippage in Neuadd Dwyfor's opening schedule following the refurbishment, which in turn has led to a lack of income this year. Problems persist in Storiell with a deficit forecast of £42k by the end of the financial year.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Highways and Municipal Department (including Trunk roads)	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Highways Services (including Trunk roads)	9,990	9,842	(148)	0	(148)	(65)
Engineering Services	468	577	109	0	109	136
Municipal Services						
Waste	11,135	11,831	696	0	696	663
Others	4,078	4,283	205	0	205	248
Highways and Municipal Total	25,671	26,533	862	0	862	982

Highways and Municipal (including Trunk roads)

Highways Services - forecast underspend on various budget headings, together with increased income which helps offset the delay in realising savings plans.

Engineering Services - failure to realise savings plans including CCTV and Barmouth Bridge (Pont Abermaw) savings but negotiations are ongoing to seek a solution.

Waste - a number of matters are responsible for the overspend, but mainly on waste collection and recycling. Although the department has taken steps to change shifts and waste collection cycle arrangements, implementation has been delayed. The new arrangements are in place in Dwyfor and Arfon and have been operational in Meirionnydd since the beginning of the financial year, so transitional costs associated with staff and sickness are evident this year. There is also an increase in the tonnage of recyclable and recyclable waste collected, which is an increase of 6% and 9% since the 2019 levels. In addition, there is a projected overspend on the costs of handling recyclables, fleet costs and trouble to realise savings.

Other Municipal Services - a mixed picture which is a combination of factors with some of the main reasons including loss of grounds maintenance income, additional pressures on commercial waste budgets, public conveniences and street cleansing and savings remaining undiscovered.

The impact of Covid19 has had a significant impact on the department in terms of additional expenditure and loss of income, with over £1.3 million already claimed by the Welsh Government this year (£2.4m in 2020/21).

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Environment Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Department Management	704	633	(71)	0	(71)	(82)
Planning and Building Control Service	391	393	2	0	2	145
Street Care and Transport Services						
Network Management (Transport)	391	112	(279)	0	(279)	(281)
Parking and Parking Enforcement	(1,845)	(1,707)	138	0	138	(89)
Integrated Transport	1,827	1,992	165	0	165	150
	373	397	24	0	24	(220)
Countryside and Access	625	636	11	0	11	10
Public Protection	1,598	1,454	(144)	0	(144)	(81)
Environment Total	3,691	3,513	(178)	0	(178)	(228)

Environment

Management - staff turnover and general underspend resulting in one-off savings on the Management heading.

Planning and Building Control Service - income forecasts have improved since the review at end of August following the submission of significant applications in recent months. Underspend on various budgets including statutory notices and appeals.

Street Care and Transport Services

Network Management (Transportation) - exceeding the streetworks fees income, as well as vacant posts and underspend on many of the budget headings.

Parking and Parking Enforcement - lack of parking income which is reduced by underspends on various budgets including employment costs.

Integrated Transport - an overspend on public bus contracts is forecasted, with the work of conducting a review to consider the provision now recommencing following a delay due to the Covid crisis.

Public Protection - an increase in the number of vacancies and forecasted increase in income has led to a further underspend. Reduced expenditure on a number of budget headings this year including food and water samples and advertising.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Consultancy Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Roads and Engineering Services	(692)	(724)	(32)	0	(32)	(102)
Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Unit (SuDS)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flood Risk Management Unit	584	584	0	0	0	29
Building Service	(22)	15	37	0	37	43
Consultancy Total	(130)	(125)	5	0	5	(30)

Consultancy

Roads and Engineering Services - an increasing number of staff vacancies have had a negative impact on the levels of income being recouped from schemes by external organisations such as other Councils and the Welsh Government.

Flood Risk Management Unit - improvement in forecasts with a balanced position now forecast by year end.

Construction Service - staff turnover which results in a lack of income generation.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Housing and Property Department	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Management	209	153	(56)	0	(56)	(33)
Housing Services						
Homelessness	1,105	1,072	(33)	0	(33)	53
Private Sector Housing	393	391	(2)	0	(2)	(5)
Others	398	363	(35)	0	(35)	(74)
	1,896	1,826	(70)	0	(70)	(26)
Property Services						
Property	3,479	3,338	(141)	0	(141)	(92)
Caretaking, Catering and Cleaning	(17)	(56)	(39)	0	(39)	(24)
	3,462	3,282	(180)	0	(180)	(116)
<u>Housing and Property Total</u>	5,567	5,261	(306)	0	(306)	(175)

Housing and Property

Management - underspend due to staff turnover and training costs account for the position.

Housing Services - again this year in Homelessness, significant pressure on the Temporary Accommodation service arising from the Covid crisis, in terms of moving the homeless off the street. It is expected that the Welsh Government will compensate the Council for a significant proportion of the related £2.3 million of additional expenditure. Another noticeable pressure this year is the cost of meeting the maintenance of the private Housing Leasing Scheme, with catching up to do with the maintenance work following the delay due to Covid. Concurrently, underspends on staff costs in Homelessness and in the Gypsy and Traveller field under 'Others'.

Property Services - vacancies and secondments are largely responsible for the forecast underspend on the Property side, with a combination of reduced expenditure on services and supplies and increased income in Caring, Catering and Cleaning.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW

Central Departments	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Management Team and Legal	2,073	1,986	(87)	0	(87)	(94)
Finance (and Information Technology)	6,567	6,511	(56)	0	(56)	(62)
Corporate Support	6,984	6,901	(83)	0	(83)	(92)
Central Departments Total	15,624	15,398	(226)	0	(226)	(248)

Central Departments

Corporate Management Team & Legal - staff turnover and vacancies account for the underspend with a proportion of the underspend arising from the Corporate Director vacancy.

Finance (and Information Technology) - the underspend is due to a combination of reasons, including a one-off underspend due to vacancies and receipt of income in a number of fields.

Corporate Support - staff turnover and a number of services exceeding their income, however, the impact of Covid has had a negative impact on the Printroom's internal income, with a projected shortfall of £70k by the end of the financial year. Underspend on supplies and services across the department also contributes towards the overall underspend position.

REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22 - END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW						
Corporate (Reflects variances only)	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Estimated 2021/22 Position	Estimated Gross Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Use of Other Sources or Other Adjustments Recommended	Estimated Adjusted Over / (Under) Spend 2021/22	Estimated Over/(Under) Spend August Review 2021/22
Field:-	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax	*	*	(359)	359	0	0
Council Tax Reductions	*	*	(332)	332	0	0
Capital Costs	*	*	(20)	20	0	0
Interest Received	*	*	0		0	0
Corporate Provision	*	*	(545)	545	0	0
Budgets and Bids returned	*	*	(463)	463	0	0
Other	*	*	(147)	147	0	0
Corporate Total	*	*	(1,866)	1,866	0	0

Corporate

Council Tax - up to the end of November, the Valuation Office allowed 305 properties to transfer from Council Tax to Non-Domestic Rates (506 in 2020/21, 397 in 2019/20, 453 in 2018/19). Nevertheless, a favorable position of additional tax yield is anticipated due to prudent assumptions in setting the 2021/22 budget. £6.5m of Council Tax Premium is planned to be received during 2021/22 and to be earmarked for consideration for the Housing Strategy.

Council Tax Reductions - a reduction in the numbers who claim the discount in Gwynedd compared to 2020/21 together with setting prudent estimates.

Capital Costs - existing treasury management policy means that external borrowing can be avoided, which creates an underspend against the capital costs budget. It is suggested that the underspend be diverted to a fund to be used to assist with the financing of the capital programme.

Corporate Provision - due to circumstances the demand on the provision has not been as high as anticipated when setting the budget.

Budgets and Bids returned and Others - the pressure on many budgets is not as great as anticipated this year.

It is recommended that (£20k) relating to capital costs be allocated to the capital program funding, with the remaining net underspend on Corporate budgets of (£1,846k) going to the Financial Strategy Support Fund to assist in meeting the financial challenges facing the Council particularly as a result of the Covid crisis.

		Welsh Government Hardship Fund					Furlough				
		Compensation for Additional Expenditure		Compensation for Loss of Income			Contribution towards Wages				
Month	Claim	Claim Value	Grant Received	Claim	Claim Value	Grant Received	Claim	Claim Value		Grant Received	
								Byw'n lach	Rest of the Council	Byw'n lach	Rest of the Council
		£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000		
April	1	483	474	1	1,020	811	1	116	5	116	5
May	2	811	760				2	35	5	35	5
June	3	824	823				3	26	4	26	4
July	4	1,434	1,088	2	687	567	4	27	3	27	3
August	5	787	733				5	26	2	26	2
September	6	891	808				6	16	2	16	2
October	7	1,392	773	3	-	-	7				
November	8	1,773	-				8				
TOTAL		8,395	5,459		1,707	1,378		246	21	246	21

Overview of all Claims:

	Claim Value £'000	Grant Received £'000
TOTAL	10,369	7,105
Byw'n lach Element	1,147	1,092
Rest of the Council	9,222	6,013

Agenda Item 8

REPORT TO THE CABINET 18 JANUARY 2022

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ioan Thomas, Finance Cabinet Member

Subject: Capital Programme 2021/22 –
End of November Review (30 November 2021 position)

Contact Officer: Ffion Madog Evans, Senior Finance Manager

The decision sought

- To accept the report on the end of November Review (30 November 2021 position) of the capital programme.
 - Approve the revised financing as shown in part 4 of the report, that is:
 - a decrease of £15,000 in the use of borrowing,
 - an increase of £3,134,000 in the use of grants and contributions,
 - an increase of £104,000 in the use of capital receipts,
 - an increase of £75,000 in the use of revenue contributions,
 - a decrease of £1,000 in the use of the capital reserve, and
 - an increase of £363,000 in the use of renewal and other reserves.
-

1. Introduction / Summary

This technical report is presented as part of the 2021/22 budget review procedure. The main purpose of the report is to present the revised capital programme and to approve the relevant financing sources. There is a summary in parts 3 and 4 of the report, with the recommendations in part 6:

Part 3: Analysis by Department of the £127.675m capital programme for the 3 years 2021/22 – 2023/24.

Part 4: The sources of finance for the net increase of approximately £3.660m since the previous review.

Part 5: Detail on additional grants since the establishment of the original budget.

The Cabinet has the authority to adapt the capital programme. Approval is sought for the proposed programme (part 3) and financing (part 4).

The remainder of the report is for information.

2. Main Findings

The main findings that arise from the revised position are:

- There are firm schemes in place to invest approximately £52.1m in 2021/22 on capital projects, with £27.4m (53%) of it being financed by attracting specific grants.
- The effect of the Covid19 emergency on the capital programme can still be seen in the reported figures in Appendix C, with only 37% of the budget having been spent by the end of November this year, compared to 31% for the same period a year ago and 51% two years ago (2019/20, prior to the Covid19 disruption).
- An additional £22.1m of proposed expenditure has been re-profiled from 2021/22 to 2022/23 and 2023/24, but no loss of funding was caused to the Council where schemes have slipped.

3. Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2023/24

See below the revised proposed capital programme as at the end of November 2021.

DEPARTMENT	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				INCREASE / (DECREASE) SINCE THE PREVIOUS REVIEW £'000
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	TOTAL	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Education	8,999	14,909	4,310	28,218	2,664
Environment	13,748	1,019	121	14,888	(975)
Corporate Support	60	-	-	60	60
Finance	944	1,282	838	3,064	3
Economy and Community	3,245	1,666	180	5,091	701
Housing and Property	8,920	21,250	6,929	37,099	(468)
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	3,383	3,361	625	7,369	2
Children and Supporting Families	1,785	482	-	2,267	35
Highways and Municipal	9,273	5,995	3,134	18,402	167
Consultancy	1,834	7,013	42	8,889	1,471
Corporate	-	1,828	500	2,328	-
TOTAL	52,191	58,805	16,679	127,675	3,660

4. Changes to the Sources of Finance

The budget for the three year programme shows an increase of £3.660m since the previous review. The proposed sources of financing for this are noted below:

SOURCE OF FINANCE	END OF NOVEMBER REVIEW				INCREASE / (DECREASE) SINCE THE PREVIOUS REVIEW
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	TOTAL	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Supported Borrowing	8,164	6,610	6,610	21,384	-
Other Borrowing	2,074	7,863	3,289	13,226	(15)
Grants and Contributions	27,423	11,843	247	39,513	3,134
Capital Receipts	236	750	0	986	104
Departmental & Corporate Revenue	2,685	34	0	2,719	75
Capital Fund	843	9,345	204	10,392	(1)
Renewals & Other Funds	10,766	22,360	6,329	39,455	363
TOTAL	52,191	58,805	16,679	127,675	3,660

5. Additional Grants

Since the previous review at the end of August, the Council succeeded in attracting the following additional grants totalling £4,936k. A number of adjustments including a reduction in the use of grants brings the total movement to £3,134k (see Appendix A for more information) :

- £2,331k Schools Repairs and Maintenance Grant
- £1,452k Welsh Government Grant for Flood Alleviation
- £409k Economic Stimulus Fund grant
- £308k 21st Century Schools Grant – Ysgol Trefferthyr Childcare
- £285k Welsh Government Grant towards countryside schemes
- £151k Grants from Welsh Government towards Maritime and Country Parks' schemes

6. Recommendations

The Cabinet is asked to:

- **accept the 2021/22 to 2023/24 revised programme, and**
- **approve the relevant sources of finance (part 4 above).**

7. Reasons for Recommending the Decision

It is necessary to ensure appropriate financing arrangements for the Council's plans to spend on capital, and the Cabinet must approve the capital programme and its sources of funding.

Incorporating funding via grant is a point of order, but it is also necessary to deal with situations where there has been a change in expenditure profiles between years and the value of capital receipts and contributions.

These are recommendations to ensure definite sources of funding for the 2021/22 – 2023/24 capital schemes.

8. Relevant Considerations

These are technical issues regarding the financing of schemes and relevant implications and debates have already been addressed when the individual schemes were adopted.

9. Next Steps and Timetable

To implement the recommendations to finance the programme.

View of the Local Member

Not relevant.

Views of the Statutory Officers**Monitoring Officer:**

No observations to add from a propriety perspective.

Head of Finance:

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

Appendices

- Appendix A: Main changes per source of finance
 - Appendix B: Movement from 2021/22 to 2022/23
 - Appendix C: First 8 months' expenditure in 2021/22
-

Details of Main Changes

See below the relevant schemes that have caused the main changes to the sources of finance since the previous review :

	2021/22	2022/23- 2023/24
	£'000	£'000
Grants and Contributions		
• Schools Repairs and Maintenance Grant (<i>Education Department</i>).	2,331	
• 21st Century Schools Grant – Ysgol Treferyth Childcare (<i>Education Department</i>).	308	
• Economic Stimulus Fund grant (<i>Economy and Community Department; Highways and Municipal Department</i>).	409	
• Grants from Welsh Government towards Maritime and Country Parks' schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>).	151	
• Welsh Government Grant for Flood Alleviation – additional grants and replacement for an element of the Local Borrowing Finance Initiative (LGBI) (<i>Consultancy Department</i>).	543	909
• Reduction in the utilisation of Local Transport Fund (LTF) Grants from Welsh Government towards several different and schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>).	(1,154)	
• Reduction in the utilisation of Active Travel Fund (ATF) Grants from Welsh Government towards several different schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>).	(106)	
• Welsh Government Grant towards countryside schemes including sustainable landscapes (<i>Environment Department</i>).	285	
• Adaptation to the Homelessness Grant funded scheme from Welsh Government – third party to be paid directly rather than via the Council (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>).	(530)	

Other Borrowing			
• Highways and Municipal Vehicles (<i>Highways and Municipal Department</i>).	(15)		
Capital Receipts			
• Adjustment to the match funding for the Llandygai Recycling Centre (<i>Highways and Municipal Department</i>).	104		
Departmental and Corporate Revenue			
• Contributions from schools towards schemes (<i>Education Department</i>).	26		
• Adjustment to the match funding for the Llandygai Recycling Centre and other schemes (<i>Highways and Municipal Department</i>).	(93)		
• Match funding contributions/additional funding towards several schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department; Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department; Housing and Property Department; Corporate Support Department</i>).	142		
• Technical Adjustment (<i>Corporate</i>).	406	(406)	
Capital Fund			
• Technical Adjustment (<i>Corporate</i>).	(406)	406	
Renewals and Other Funds			
• Match funding towards Country Parks' schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>).	32	50	
• Vehicles and equipment renewals (<i>Children and Families Department; Highways and Municipal Department</i>).	175		
• Contributions towards several schemes (<i>Consultancy Department; Housing and Property Department; Corporate Support Department</i>).	102		

Details of Budget Re-profiling

See below the main schemes that have been re-profiled since the original budget:

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000
Schools' Schemes (21 st Century and Other) (<i>Education Department</i>)	(5,370)	5,370
Caernarfon Coast and Town Regeneration (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(140)	140
Maritime, Country Parks' and Leisure Schemes (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(366)	366
Neuadd Dwyfor Investment Scheme (<i>Economy and Community Department</i>)	(114)	114
Maesgeirchen Integrated Centre Scheme (<i>Children and Families Department</i>)	(232)	232
Penygroes Health and Care Hub (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(750)	750
Adults Day Care Establishments' Schemes (<i>Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department</i>)	(1,161)	1,161
Vehicle Renewals (<i>Highways and Municipal Department; Consultancy Department</i>)	(1,219)	1,219
Municipal Schemes (<i>Highways and Municipal Department</i>)	(48)	48
Flood Alleviation Schemes (<i>Consultancy Department</i>)	(5,816)	5,816
Transport Schemes (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(176)	176
Town Improvements (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(20)	20
Car Park Resurfacing (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(219)	219
Vehicle Charging Points (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(356)	356
Environment Department Specialist IT Systems (<i>Environment Department</i>)	(48)	48
Housing Grants and Other Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(2,210)	2,210
Housing Strategy Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(6,187)	6,187
Office Adaptation Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(123)	123
Capitalised Repairs and Maintenance schemes (<i>Housing and</i>	(126)	126

<i>Property Department)</i>		
Council's Carbon Management Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(1,347)	1,347
Asbestos Removal Schemes (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(400)	400
Economic Stimulus Schemes and Industrial Units (<i>Housing and Property Department</i>)	(2,925)	2,925
Finance System Upgrade (<i>Finance Department</i>)	(14)	14
IT Equipment Renewal (<i>Finance Department</i>)	(500)	500
Asset Scheme Resources not allocated until 22/23 (<i>Corporate</i>)	(1,328)	1,328

Note:

The above re-profiling will not result in any loss in grant.

There is a variety of valid reasons behind the re-profiling in many cases, but the delay prior to implementing these schemes can mean that the services have to cope for longer with current assets which have not been improved.

Capital Expenditure First 8 Months 2021/22

SUMMARY	CAPITAL PROGRAMME FULL YEAR (reviewed November) 2021/22 £'000	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE FOR THE 8 MONTHS TO 30/11/2021 £'000
Education	8,999	3,496
Environment	13,748	3,752
Corporate Support	60	59
Finance (and Information Technology)	944	300
Economy and Community	3,245	1,341
Housing and Property	8,920	4,525
Adults, Health and Wellbeing	3,383	1,014
Children and Supporting Families	1,785	448
Highways and Municipal	9,273	4,335
Consultancy	1,834	119
Corporate	-	-
TOTAL	52,191	19,389

Note:

The percentage that has been spent this year (37%) is higher than the position this time last year (amount spent in 8 months in 2020/21 was 31%), but lower than two years ago (51% in 2019/20, prior to the Covid19 disruption).

Agenda Item 9

REPORT TO THE CABINET

Date	18 January 2022
Cabinet Member	Councillor Ioan Thomas, Cabinet Member – Finance
Subject	Savings Overview: Progress Report on Realising Savings Schemes
Contact Officer	Dewi Morgan, Head of Finance

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1 To accept the information in the report and to note the progress towards realising the savings schemes for 2021/22 and previous years.
- 1.2 To note that the impact of Covid19 contributed to slippage in the savings program, as the Council had given priority to safeguarding the health and lives of the people of Gwynedd in response to the crisis.
- 1.3 In preparing the 2022/23 budget, as set out in Appendix 3 for the 2022/23 savings plans:
 - acknowledge that the situation had now changed so much that savings schemes totalling £489,750 cannot be achieved by deleting them from the budget, namely
 - End to End Review (Children and Families Department) worth £279,750
 - Transfer of playing fields to others (Highways and Municipal Department) worth £210,000
 - move the delivery profile for schemes worth £1,290,250 to 2023/24 and subsequent years
 - note that the savings value of the remaining schemes to be deducted from the 2022/23 budget, as set out in Appendix 3, is £595,000.

2. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report is an overview report on the Council's savings' position for 2021/22 and previous years and also looks at savings schemes planned for 2022/23.
- 2.2 Progress against savings schemes worth £966,720 in 2021/22, together with the savings yet to be achieved from previous years, will be reported following a review of the position at the end of November 2021.
- 2.3 It can now be reported that savings of £32.8 million have been realised since 2015/16, which is 94% of the required £34.8m over the period. 45% of the 2021/22 savings have been realised to date and a further 19% are on track to deliver on time this year.

2.4 Delivering on the individual schemes is the responsibility of relevant Cabinet members, who challenge the performance of the departments, including the progress of the savings schemes. It is the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Finance to keep an overview of the full picture.

3. RE-ASSESS SAVINGS

3.1 The Council has financial planning arrangements that have already identified significant efficiency savings in order to minimise service cuts for Gwynedd residents. In January 2021, the savings schemes were reviewed to assess which historic schemes were now unachievable, and a revised program of savings was drawn up for 2021/22 following the writing off, slippage and re-profiling of the savings schemes.

3.2 The table below shows the value of the savings that were written off or deferred to 2022/23:

Table 1: Savings written off or deferred to 2022/23

	Deferred to 2022/23 £	Written off £
2017/18 - 2020/21 schemes	1,037,750	848,040
2021/22 schemes	511,250	595,450
TOTAL	1,549,000	1,433,490

3.3 Following a review of the departmental savings position which was presented to Cabinet on 12 October 2021, it was noted that realisation of savings was most evident from the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Highways and Municipal Department. During November 2021, a meeting was held between the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance and the Highways and Municipal Department and the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to discuss the schemes which are proving to be challenging for them, these schemes will be considered further when drawing up the 2022/23 budget.

4. SAVINGS SCHEMES 2015/16 – 2020/21

4.1 **Appendix 1** summarises each department's attainment against the savings target that had been set for them from 2015/16 - 2020/21, **a total of nearly £34m. It is encouraging for me to be able to report that over £32m, or 96% of these schemes have been realised**, but a risk of realising the savings on a few schemes remains.

4.2 This marginal slippage mainly derives from some 2019/20 and 2020/21 schemes, and the challenge of realising them continues.

- 4.3 25 schemes totalling nearly £820k have slipped. Responding to the Covid crisis has meant slippage in some of the savings schemes but the Departments are not anticipating problems in realising them.
- 4.4 There are a further 6 schemes worth a total of £652k with risks to complete. 4 schemes from the Department for Adults, Health and Well-being, and 1 scheme each from the Highways and Municipal Department and the Economy and Community Department. Responding to the Covid crisis has meant slippage in some elements of the savings schemes, but it may now be necessary to consider whether the savings are truly achievable or whether alternative schemes and approaches need to be proposed to realise the savings.

5. DEPARTMENTAL SCHEMES 2021/22

- 5.1 **Appendix 2** summarises the position in terms of realising the savings schemes for 2021/22. The total savings target is £967k with a value of £436k, which is 45% of schemes already having realised and a further £188k, or 19% are on track to deliver on time by the end of the financial year.
- 5.2 Clearly the departments have focused on responding to the crisis since March 2020.
- 5.3 There have been slippages on 4 schemes across the Council totalling £214k but they are progressing which includes 1 scheme each from the Environment Department and the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and 2 schemes in the Highways and Municipal Department.
- 5.4 Risks to deliver savings of 3 schemes across the Council totalling £129k are envisaged which include *Income generation by fraud prevention* scheme (£20k) in the Finance Department, *Review of operating arrangements* of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department (£34k) and *Increase waste collection fees from businesses* by the Highways and Municipal Department (£75k). The Departments are working to progress these schemes.

6. SAVING SCHEMES UP TO 2021/22

- 6.1 It is inevitable that realising over £32.8m in savings (out of a total of £34.8m) since April 2015 has been challenging and I am grateful to all of the departments and Cabinet Members for ensuring this success.
- 6.2 The table below summarises the latest position of savings schemes since April 2015 which states that 94% of all schemes having realised.

Table 2: Summary of the status of all savings schemes since April 2015

Status of Savings	Portal	£m	%
Realised	1	32.8	94.3
On track to achieve savings in full and on time	2	0.2	0.5
Delay, but moving forward	3	1.0	3.0
Some risks to achieve - slip or fail	4	0.8	2.2
Significant risks to realise in full or partially	5	0.0	0.0
Total savings		34.8	

7. DEPARTMENTAL SCHEMES 2022/23

7.1 The 2022/23 savings are listed in **Appendix 3**. Following a recent review of the 2022/23 programmed savings schemes by the Chief Executive, Corporate Director and Finance Officers, what is clear is that it must be acknowledged that the situation has now changed so much that 2 saving schemes totalling £489,750 cannot be achieved. 1 scheme 'End to End Review' worth £279,750 in the Children and Families Department and 1 scheme 'Transfer Playgrounds to others' in the Highways and Municipal Department, that should be removed from the budget.

7.2 Due to a number of factors including the impact of Covid it is no longer feasible for savings of £1,290,250 to be achieved in 2022/23, which includes a £155,000 savings scheme in the Economy and Community Department and 4 savings schemes worth £1,135,250 in the Adults, Health and Well-being Department. The savings schemes should therefore be re-profiled to 2023/24 and subsequent years as set out in **Appendix 3**.

7.3 Following the deletion and slippage of savings noted in 7.1 and 7.2 above, note that the savings value of the remaining schemes to be deducted from the 2022/23 budget, as set out in **Appendix 3**, is £595,000.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Therefore, I ask the Cabinet to note the achievement outlined in this report towards realising the savings schemes up to 2021/22. In addition, to note that the impact of Covid contributed to slippage in the savings program and support Departments to move forward with the savings program despite the crisis.

8.2 It is recommended that the Cabinet approves the actions to delete and slip savings identified in part 7 of the report and **Appendix 3** and accept that the revised savings available to support the 2022/23 budget will be £595,000.

Local Member's Views

Not relevant

Views of the Statutory Officers**The Monitoring Officer:**

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance:

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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Overview of 2015/16 - 2020/21 Savings Schemes per Department

Appendix 2 - Overview of 2021/22 Savings Schemes per Department

Appendix 3 - Overview of 2022/23 Savings Schemes

OVERVIEW OF 2015/16 TO 2020/21 SAVINGS SCHEMES PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2020/21	Realised Schemes	Schemes that have slipped but in the process of implementation.		Schemes with some risks in achieving the savings		Head of Finance Department's comments
	£		£	£ - number		£ - number	
Education	1,889,360	1,889,360	-		-		All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Schools	4,037,000	4,037,000	-		-		All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Environment	2,751,213	2,695,593	55,620	3	-		There has been slippage on three schemes; <i>Achieve savings through cheaper purchasing</i> (£20k), <i>Increase water quality assessment fee to reflect the cost of providing the service</i> (£12.5k) and <i>Rationalisation and Integration of the back office in the Environment Department</i> (£23.12k).
Corporate Support	2,351,468	2,351,468	-		-		All schemes of the period have been achieved.
Finance	1,756,636	1,736,636	20,000	1	-		Realisation of savings of £20k slipping on the <i>Income generation through fraud prevention</i> scheme.
Economy and Community	2,896,422	2,766,422	85,000	3	45,000	1	There has been a slippage with 2 schemes <i>Reconcile/review parking fees</i> totaling £60k and <i>Delete 1 post from the Tourism and Marketing Service</i> worth £25k. There is a risk of realising the remaining savings of £45k on the <i>Establish parking fees on Dinas Dinlle beach and increase launch fees across Gwynedd beaches from £10 to £15</i> scheme.

OVERVIEW OF 2015/16 TO 2020/21 SAVINGS SCHEMES PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2020/21 £	Realised Schemes £	Schemes that have slipped but in the process of implementation. £ - number		Schemes with some risks in achieving the savings £ - number		Head of Finance Department's comments
Adults, Health and Well-being Page 56	6,969,411	6,193,051	302,360	6	474,000	4	There are some risks of achieving the savings of 4 schemes namely <i>Integration and Transformation of Older People's Services</i> which has a target of £210k in 2019/20 and several factors are contributing to the ongoing challenge of achieving it, <i>Collaboration with the third sector to take over day care provision in Crickieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog</i> (£100k), <i>Reviewing physical disability care packages by meeting objectives in an alternative way</i> (£100k) and <i>Automate the Department's financial processes</i> (£64k) but the Department is working to progress these. A further 6 schemes totaling over £302k have slipped but the Department is acting to move these forward; the largest 3 being <i>Review of Continuing Healthcare packages</i> (£150k), <i>Improving work processes by undertaking the Ffordd Gwynedd review and using the finance modules of the new IT system within the Adults Department</i> (£40k) and <i>Restructuring the Business Service</i> (£49k).
Children and Supporting Families	2,295,738	2,295,738	-	-	-	-	The Cabinet on 26 January 2021 approved to delete part of the savings target for the <i>End to End</i> scheme worth £370k up to the end of 2019/20. The rest of the savings schemes have been realised.
Highways and Municipal	6,038,160	5,593,410	311,750	9	133,000	1	With the <i>Fleet Arrangements</i> scheme (£133k) there has been a delay due to the re-opening of negotiations with the Unions and then the Covid situation. This scheme is now receiving additional attention and it is hoped to move forward in April 2022. A further 9 schemes totaling nearly £ 312k have slipped but the Department is working to move these forward, the 4 largest scheme are <i>Garden Waste: increased income generation or cost reduction</i> (£66k), <i>Recycling Centers: new fees</i> (£90k), <i>Departmental Restructuring</i> (£50k) and <i>Cilgwyn Closure Scheme</i> (£35k).
Consultancy	602,670	602,670	-	-	-	-	All schemes for the period have been achieved.

OVERVIEW OF 2015/16 TO 2020/21 SAVINGS SCHEMES PER DEPARTMENT

Department	Total Savings 2015/16 to 2020/21	Realised Schemes	Schemes that have slipped but in the process of implementation.		Schemes with some risks in achieving the savings		Head of Finance Department's comments
	£		£	£ - number	number	£ - number	
Corporate Management Team and Legal	403,240	383,220	20,020	2	-	-	There is a slippage on 2 schemes namely <i>Savings in the Coroner's budget</i> scheme, worth £13.8k, as it is based on a projection that was made a few years ago but it has not yet taken place and the <i>Two day reduction of administration support to the Election and Legal Services</i> scheme (£6.22k).
Housing and Property	641,180	616,180	25,000	1	-	-	Due to Covid 19 there has been a slippage on the <i>Reduce reliance on temporary accommodation scheme by investing in purpose built accommodation</i> . The pods are now ready in Caernarfon and other units in Bangor will be ready soon.
Sub-total	32,632,498	31,160,748	819,750	25	652,000	6	
Managerial Savings	1,200,360	1,200,360	-	-	-	-	All schemes of the period have been achieved.
TOTAL	33,832,858	32,361,108	819,750	25	652,000	6	In financial terms (£), 96% of 2015/16 – 2020/21 savings schemes have been realised.

OVERVIEW OF 2021/22 SAVINGS SCHEMES

Department	Total 2021/22 Savings		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and with some risks in achieving the savings		Head of Finance Department's comments
	£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		
Education	65,000	1	65,000	1	-		-		The one scheme that had a target in 2021/22 has been realised.
Environment	73,750	4	16,250	2	20,000	1	37,500	1	The scheme <i>Achieving cheaper purchasing (eg office equipment and IT)</i> worth £20k is on track to deliver on time. The <i>Provision of electric car charging points in car parks</i> scheme worth £37.5k has been delayed, but is progressing.
Corporate Support	117,750	4 *	45,250	2	72,500	2	-		Two schemes are on track to realise the savings in a timely manner namely <i>The Deletion of one HR officer post</i> and <i>one HR consultant post (20% staff reduction) by changing our operating model</i> (£60k in 2021/22) and <i>Deleting the Organisation Development Service</i> (£12.5k in 2021/22). An alternative scheme was approved in Cabinet on 12/10/21 to replace the remaining savings (£28k) of the second scheme mentioned above.
Finance	100,000	3	80,000	2	-		20,000	1	There are risks of achieving the savings of the <i>Generating income through fraud prevention</i> scheme (£20k in 2021/22). Two alternative schemes were approved by Cabinet on 28/9/21 to replace the <i>Attracting extra income through an Internal Collection Agency</i> scheme (£75k in 2021/22).
Economy and Community	-		-		-		-		No profiled savings target for 2021/22.
Adults, Health and Well-being	78,750	2	-		-		78,750	2	The Department anticipates some risks in realising the savings of the <i>Review the operational arrangements within the Adults Department</i> scheme (£33.75k) as barriers on other schemes and Covid have impeded the ability to move the scheme forward. The <i>Better co-ordination of service with the Department for Children and Families at the point of transfer age</i> scheme has been delayed but is progressing (£45k).

Department	Total 2021/22 Savings		Realised Schemes		Schemes on track to be completed on time		Schemes slipping and with some risks in achieving the savings		Head of Finance Department's comments
	£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		£ - number		
Children and Supporting Families	23,170	1	23,170	1	-	-	-	-	The one scheme that had a target in 2021/22 has been realised.
Highways and Municipal	206,250	3 *	-	-	-	-	206,250	3	There are risks of achieving savings from the <i>Increasing fees for business waste collection</i> scheme (£75k in 2021/22). The Covid situation has disrupted commercial agreements and is therefore unlikely to achieve the saving this year. There has been a slippage in realising the savings of the <i>Barmouth Bridge - not paying Network Rail for the right of way over the bridge</i> scheme (£26.25k in 2021/22). The Department is still in discussions with Network Rail. There has also been a slippage in the <i>Changing CCTV system monitored by officers into an 'officer free' system</i> scheme (£105k in 2021/22).
Consultancy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No profiled savings target for 2021/22.
Corporate Management Team and Legal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	No profiled savings target for 2021/22.
Housing and Property	302,050	5	206,670	3	95,380	2	-	-	Two schemes left to deliver and are on track for a timely delivery.
Managerial Savings	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	
TOTAL	966,720	23	436,340	11	187,880	5	342,500	7	In financial terms (£), 45% of 2021/22 savings schemes have already been realised and a further 19% are on track to be delivered on time by the end of the financial year. Obviously, departments have focused on responding to the crisis during the period since April 2020.

* scheme partially realised in one financial year but yet to be realised in full.

SAVING SCHEMES 2022/23

APPENDIX 3

Department	Scheme Title	2022/23	Delete	Slippage *	Revised 2022/23
		£	£	£	£
Environment	Provision of electric car charging points in car parks	12,500			12,500
Corporate Support	Reduction in the number of Councillors	100,000			100,000
Finance	Attract additional income through an Internal Collection Agency	25,000			25,000
Economy and Community	Invest in improvements that would make Neuadd Dwyfor more efficient and prepare to look for an alternative model for the future	70,000			70,000
	In the long term, aim to reduce the subsidy for the newly formed Leisure Company by 20%	155,000		155,000	0
	Economy and Community Total	225,000			70,000
Adult, Health and Well-being	Integration and transformation of Older People's Services	300,000		300,000	0
	Develop 3 other extra care housing projects in Gwynedd (Pwllheli, Ffestiniog, South Meirionnydd areas)	300,000		200,000	100,000
	Review operational arrangements within the Adults Department	101,250		101,250	0
	Extend the principles of the Alltwen Pilot Scheme across the service	534,000		534,000	0
	Adult, Health and Well-being Total	1,235,250			100,000
Children and families	End to End review	279,750	279,750		0
Highways and Municipal	Transfer of playgrounds to others	210,000	210,000		0
	Rationalise Fleet workshops from 3 to 2 in the County	32,500			32,500
	Changing CCTV system monitored by officers into an officer free system	105,000			105,000
	Changing waste collection arrangements to smaller shifts and circuits (which may mean changing collection day for residents)	150,000			150,000
	Highways and Municipal Total	497,500			287,500
Total		2,375,000	489,750	1,290,250	595,000

* Slippage of schemes into 2023/24 except for the Adult's 'Develop Care Housing project' scheme which will not be able to be delivered before 2025/26.

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to Gwynedd Council Cabinet meeting

Meeting date: 18 JANUARY 2022

Cabinet Member: COUNCILLOR IOAN THOMAS

Contact Officer: DEWI A MORGAN, HEAD OF FINANCE

Contact Number: 34684

Subject: FINANCE CABINET MEMBER'S PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE REPORT

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To receive and note the information in the report.

THE REASONS WHY A DECISION IS REQUIRED

To ensure effective performance management.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has happened in the areas for which I am responsible as the Cabinet Member for Finance. This will include outlining what has happened against the promises of the 2018-2023 Gwynedd Council Plan; where the performance measures are at; and the latest regarding savings plans and cuts.
- 1.2 I would like to remind you that all the matters have already been the subject of discussion and have been scrutinised by myself in a meeting of the Department's Management Team on Wednesday 15/12/2021, which also included the Corporate Director and representatives of the Audit and Governance Committee. A positive discussion was held, where the Department's senior managers had sound answers to the Councillors' questions.
- 1.3 I am very pleased to note that the performance of the Finance Department has remained generally good over the last months, despite the challenges we have faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Department has also made satisfactory progress on the priority projects.

2. GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS 2018-2023 [Improvement Priorities]

2.1 The progress made to date against the Department's priority projects is set out below. These priorities address the Department's main risks.

2.2 Transferring holiday units from Council Tax to Business Rates

2.2.1 We intend to continue to press for reform in this area over the next few years, using evidence we are continually collecting, to get Welsh Government Ministers to understand the scale of the problem that exists in Gwynedd. We will also support the Environment Department as they continue to press the Welsh Government to amend the Town and Country Planning Order to include a specific use class for residential housing used as holiday accommodation, together with the introduction of a mandatory licensing regime to enable the business to operate. The aim is that no property without proper permission for use as short-term holiday accommodation should be eligible to transfer from a Council Tax band to the non-domestic rates list. The Council invests the income from the Council Tax premium into our Housing Action Plan to try to mitigate some of the detrimental effect second homes have on the availability of housing for local people. As properties transfer to holiday units there is the potential for fewer properties to be subject to the premium.

2.2.2 As a recent key step, the Finance Department co-ordinated the Council's response to the Welsh Government's consultation on local taxation, before it closed on 17 November 2021. The consultation document contained 13 specific questions, together with an opportunity to present any other related points.

2.2.3 We await the Welsh Government's response to the consultation before considering the next steps.

2.3 Achieving Savings

2.3.1 The Council has financial planning arrangements that have already identified significant efficiency savings in order to minimise service cuts for Gwynedd residents. In January 2021, the savings schemes were reviewed to assess which historic schemes were now unachievable, and a revised program of savings was drawn up for 2021/22 following the removal, slipping and re-profiling of savings schemes.

2.3.2 It can now be reported that savings of over £32.8 million have been realised since 2015/16, which is 94% of the £34.8 million required over the period. We have already realised 45% of the 2021/22 savings plans with a further 19% on track for timely delivery this year. Through the robust arrangements we have in place to monitor how departments are achieving savings, we will ensure that this revised program is achieved. We will also support departments with the costs of transformation, as they introduce new working arrangements.

2.3.3 A detailed report on each department's savings schemes will be presented to the Cabinet on 18 January 2022.



3. PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 An overview of the Department's performance to date is noted below.
- 3.2 The Gwynedd Statement of Accounts following the audit, together with the External Auditors' report on the Accounts (the "ISA260 report"), was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 14th October. Once again this year, an unqualified opinion was issued. That is, in the auditor's opinion, the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the financial position of Gwynedd Council as at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended, and have been properly prepared in accordance with the appropriate standards.
- 3.3 The Pension Fund's annual report was also successfully completed before the statutory date of 1st December. A successful annual meeting was held in November, attended by many employers, staff, committee members and board members.
- 3.4 The Covid pandemic continues to affect the Department's arrangements, with collection rates for non-domestic rates lower than the previous corresponding period; by the end of November 2021 the collection rate (i.e. collection within the year) was 68.34%, which is a reduction on 72.4% for the same period in 2020/21 and 77.5% in 2019/20.
- 3.5 Another effect of the pandemic that continues is the increase in the number of self-isolation support claims, 766 claims were received in November, which is an additional burden on the Benefits Service. The effect of this was seen in the increase in November in the average number of days taken to process a new benefit claim of **20.68** days compared with a performance of 16.7 days in the same period in 2020/21.
- 3.6 It is appreciated that the Internal Audit Service released 5 officers to assist with the Test, Trace and Protect Service, spending approximately 95 days assisting the TTP Service. The side-effect of this is that only 24.53% of the audit plan has been completed, i.e. where the audit has been closed or a final report released. There is a possibility that Internal Audit officers may need to be released to assist the Benefit Service in dealing with additional Winter Fuel payments, as well as dealing with the increase in demand for self-isolation payments. The Audit Plan will be reviewed in light of this, with the emphasis on prioritising higher/high risk audits. Any amendments to the Audit Plan will be reported in the usual manner to the Audit and Governance Committee.
- 3.7 The value of miscellaneous debts remains an issue and has increased since what was reported in July. All debts need to be kept under review, but Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board's historic debt needs to be resolved quickly. Discussions on several levels between Council officers and the Health Board are underway to try to resolve the situation.

3.8 The resilience of the Council's internal systems and network availability remains healthy. There has been significant work to strengthen our ability to defend cyber attacks and our ability to recover should an attack break through our defences. The impact of a Log4J type attack would be devastating, so activity to minimise these risks continues. Although the availability of Gwynedd's internal IT systems is high (99.95%), one national system is a cause for concern, with the performance of WCCIS (care services system) not meeting the expected standards.

4. FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

4.1 It is anticipated that the Finance Department will have an underspend financial position of £56k at the end of the 2021/22 financial year, with a combination of reasons responsible for the underspend including one-off underspends for vacancies, together with income receipts in a number of areas. A detailed review of the department's 2021/22 financial position will be undertaken as part of the end of November review for the whole of the Council, which will be reported to the Cabinet on 18 January 2022.

4.2 By the end of 2020/21 the Finance Department realised over £1.7 million of savings over a period of six years since 2015/16. The Finance Department succeeded in realising £151k, being 88% of its savings schemes relating to 2020/21, with 80% of the 2021/22 savings schemes already realised this year. See **Appendix 1** which includes the savings schemes.

4.3 The Covid-19 crisis led to a delay in the realisation of one scheme 'Generating Income by Preventing Fraud' worth £20k in 2020/21 (12% remaining from 2021/22 schemes) and £20k relating to 2021/22, following the suspension of interviews regarding fraudulent claims in the Benefits field during the period of the crisis. Interviews continue to be suspended due to current circumstances, so a further delay in realising the £40k is anticipated.

VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

No observations to add in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance:

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

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Finance Department's Savings



Finance Department's Savings

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Realised	471,010	374,601	115,215	66,430	558,650	150,730	
Generating income by selling fleet tracking system							5,000
Tax savings on the new Additional Voluntary Pension scheme for Council employees							45,000
Savings through self-financing rather than external borrowing							30,000
Generating income by preventing fraud						20,000	20,000
Savings Total	471,010	374,601	115,215	66,430	558,650	170,730	100,000

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	18 January 2022
Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Education
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams
Contact Officer:	Garem Jackson, Head of Education

THE DECISION SOUGHT

To receive and note the information contained in the report.

REASONS FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

To ensure effective performance management.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has been achieved in the areas for which I have responsibility as Cabinet Member for Education. This will include outlining what has happened so far in 2021-22 against the promises of the Council Plan 2018-23; issues and where are the performance measures on it; and the latest on savings plans and cuts.
- 1.2 I would like to note that the issues have already been the subject of discussion and scrutinised at Departmental Performance Challenge meetings, which also included representation from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 The projects that are prioritised in the Council Plan are moving forward and on course to deliver against our promises and purpose despite some construction market challenges. Some other issues have been brought to our attention through challenging our performance, as well as some national developments that are likely to influence our future work. I am particularly pleased with the Department's performance, and will elaborate on the progress of the report.

2. THE COUNCIL'S PROJECTS PLAN 2018-2023

2.1 The progress made to date against the Department's priority projects is set out below. These priorities address the Department's main risks, as well as investing in adapting schools, or building new schools so that Gwynedd's children and young people can be educated in the best possible learning environment. Overall, I feel that all projects are currently going in the right direction against the promises we have made in the Council Plan.

2.2 21st Century Schools Program - Every pupil has the opportunity to fulfil their potential Bangor's Catchment Area

Despite the pandemic I am delighted that the new Ysgol y Garnedd building for up to 420 learners opened in October 2020. The project has won two Excellence in Construction in Wales 2021 awards.

Ysgol y Faenol is also in the process of a major extension to house up to 315 learners. The timetable has been affected by the pandemic, but significant parts of the extension have now been built, and work will be completed by the end of the Spring 2022 Term.

A new classroom has been added to Ysgol Glancegin and completed for use by the school at the beginning of this educational year.

Initial feasibility work has been completed to identify the needs of Ysgol Ein Harglwyddes, and there is agreement to locate the new school on the site of Ysgol Glanadda (now closed) and this location is in line with the aspirations of the community.

The condition of the existing building and learning environment at Ysgol Tryfan in Bangor is poor, and as a result we are about to begin the process of considering the potential opportunities for a first class learning environment, ensuring appropriate progression to the investment that has already been made in the primary schools in the Penrhosgarnedd area of the city.

2.3 Cricieth's Catchment Area

I am delighted that the Cabinet has supported the proposal to increase the capacity of Ysgol Treferthyr to 150 learners, and build a new school due to the poor condition of the existing building. As part of the planning application process to relocate the school to the A497 site, two technical issues have arisen regarding the site, and work has been commissioned in response, which is affecting somewhat on the original schedule.

2.4 Post 16 Education in Arfon

Although this project has been delayed by the pandemic following a series of virtual meetings with stakeholders in the Autumn of 2020, we hope to be able to restart the project in early 2022.

2.5 Condition and Suitability

The impact of the prices of building materials due to Covid and Brexit has affected our ability to realise some of our plans to improve the condition and adapt some school buildings over recent months. The Department now co-operates with the Housing and Property Department in revisiting these plans and considering what can be practically achieved on a priority basis due to having to meet higher costs with the available budget.

2.6 Welfare Gap and Achievement

Support for children and young people's wellbeing over recent months has continued to focus on responding to the challenges and after-effects of the pandemic. Since I last reported to you, we have established cross-departmental project arrangements for the work streams we have prioritised as a Council. Some of those workstreams are progressing well, such as the ages of 0-5 and 16-24, along with support for learners with ALN. Since September 2020 all schools in Gwynedd are implementing the Accelerated Learning Program with funding from the Welsh Government to respond to the impact of the lockdown period on the wellbeing and attainment of certain groups of learners aged 5-16. Over the coming months, I am keen to receive evidence from the Department and the school improvement service (GwE) on what impact this program and funding has had on the wellbeing and attainment of children and young people.

2.7 Transform the ALN Provision

This project is currently focused on preparing for the Learning Needs and Education Tribunal for Wales Act (2018). This Act came into effect in September 2021, with some elements of the Act being delayed in the first year e.g. post-16 period.

As a result, the service has recently been focusing on offering training, workshops and drop-in sessions to assist the first few weeks of the new legislation coming into force. In addition, the ALN service has been constantly trying to convince the Welsh Government that there will be additional costs involved in implementing the new legislation. It is pleasing to note that the Welsh Government now recognises that implementing the legislation is not cost neutral, and is looking at the likely additional costs at present.

2.8 Digital Education Strategy

I am extremely proud of what we are trying to achieve through the digital education strategy and the way in which we are prioritising the education of our children here in Gwynedd. Just over £ 1.3m has been invested in the network over the last two years. In addition, a significant number of devices have been shared in accordance with the strategy. There are enough shared iPads to provide one in every four learners in the Foundation Phase, with enough Chromebooks shared so that all learners from years 3 to 6 have a device each. Windows 10 devices are also being prepared for all pupils in years 7, 10 and 11. All Gwynedd teachers will receive a standard device through the strategy over the coming months in the hope that this will spark imagination and further stimulate the innovation and effectiveness of the digital learning aspects across the sectors.

2.9 Meirionnydd Collaboration

Progress on this project has been slow and affected by the obvious challenges of the pandemic and the bustle of secondary schools. However, we have gathered the views of headteachers and governor representation from each secondary school on the potential challenges they face in providing quality secondary education in the area, such as the recruitment of teachers, middle managers and leaders. It is now planned to circulate a questionnaire in the new year in order to seek the views of learners, staff, parents and headteachers that will inform the future direction of the project.

2.10 Promoting the use of Welsh among Children and Young People

Following an extended period of home tuition, and the national concern expressed about the detrimental impact of Covid on Welsh language standards, we have collected data through various questionnaires in order to gain a better overview of the Welsh language skills of our children and young people.

The evidence from the questionnaires shows that oracy skills are the biggest concern across the county, and each school has set out an action plan in response to the situation. It is intended to re-submit the questionnaire at the end of the educational year in order to measure the impact of any action.

3. PERFORMANCE AND MEASURES

3.1 I would like to draw your attention to the following issues, which are not related to the Priority Projects, but are being addressed by the department because they affect the well-being of children and young people, or the performance of services.

3.2 Safeguarding - Safeguarding the welfare of Gwynedd's children and young people is a key priority for the Department and the Council, and increasingly as a result of the pandemic with many learners staying home due to self-isolation requirements. The Department has recently created a new Welsh language training pack for Designated Child Protection Persons in schools and education centres in conjunction with the Welsh Government Safeguarding in Education Group. Gwynedd schools have also received information about the Welsh Child Protection Procedures introduced by the Welsh Government in April 2020 and key staff in the Department and Gwynedd schools have received basic training on those procedures.

3.3 Catering and Cleaning - This service has been instrumental throughout the pandemic in ensuring a safe environment for learners and staff in our schools, as well as ensuring the provision of school lunches. Staffing challenges in the context of long-term illness, the effects of Covid and recruitment difficulties are affecting this service on a daily basis. In response, the service has taken advantage of the Welsh Government's Kickstart scheme to offer work placements from January onwards for 16-24 year olds in receipt of Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

I also very much welcome the recent announcement by the Welsh Government that they want to ensure free school meals for all primary pupils across Wales. In light of this announcement, I will be asking the Department to begin work on considering the needs of the service so that this Welsh Government commitment can be realised in a timely manner.

3.4 Language Centres - I am delighted that the Cabinet has approved a new vision for putting the learner at the centre of supporting them and the county's newcomers to acquire the Welsh language. The £1.1million capital investment from the Welsh Government is moving ahead, and following a tender process, work on the Bangor, Towyn and Porthmadog sites is about to begin. We have also recently received confirmation that the Department has been successful in its grant application of £154,000 to realise two projects to update immersion provision to reflect the requirements of the Curriculum for Wales and the Digital Education Strategy, as well as equipping Gwynedd school practitioners the principles and practices of language immersion.

- 3.5 In terms of the Department's measures, our service units have received the 'Ffordd Gwynedd' session from the Chief Executive on 13 December 2021, to ensure that the purpose and measures of each service unit are appropriate and meaningful, and so I will report in more detail on the Departments measures next time.
- 3.6 It must be acknowledged that the report only summarises all the work of the Department and schools over the last few months, and as a result I would like to acknowledge and note my appreciation for the heroic work that has been going on in the Department and in our schools in response to the pandemic with the focus always on the education of our children as well as the safety, health and well-being of all our learners and staff.

4. FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

- 4.1 The Education Department underspent by £100k at the end of the financial year 2020/21. Based on a review at the end of November 2021 it is anticipated that the Department will have underspent by £54,036 by the end of this financial year, which is a combination of a one-off underspend on a number of budget headings which is being reduced by an overspend on headings such as Transport and services School Catering and Cleaning.
- 4.2 Although this year's position appears favourable with a number of one-off factors helping the financial position, there is a chance that a significant overspend under some headings is expected in 2022-23, but that there will be no one-off underspend to mitigate the impact. The main heading is the Pupil Transport budget. The Department is already reviewing expenditure in the hope of reducing costs in the long term. A bid for additional resources has been submitted for the 2022-23 budget round, as it is unlikely that the costs will be reduced in the short term.
- 4.3 The Education Department has £65k of savings for 2021-22 that have already been realised.

5. STATUTORY OFFICERS 'COMMENTS

i.) The Monitoring Officer:

"No observations to add in relation to propriety."

ii.) Head of Finance:

"I am satisfied that the report conveys a fair picture of the Education Department's financial situation, including the significant developments that are outlined in part 2 of the report. The Council has received an Accelerated Learning Program grant in 2020/21 and 2021/22 for the purposes outlined in 2.6. I am happy to confirm that all the savings projects for 2021/22 have already been realised."

I note that paragraph 4.2 of the report refers to presenting a financial bid. All bids that have been presented will receive due attention in accordance with the appropriate procedure."

