

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Date: 2 January 2018

Title of Item: Performance Report Cabinet Member for the Environment

Purpose: To accept and note the information in the report

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dafydd Meurig

Contact Officer: Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive

Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on what has been happening in the fields within my remit as Cabinet Member for the Environment. This includes outlining the latest developments against pledges within the Strategic Plan; where we have reached with the performance measures; and the latest in terms of plans for savings and cuts.
- 1.2 The only promises which are relevant to the Strategic Plan are the savings schemes and an update on these is provided in part 5.
- 1.3 I would remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the Management Team which also includes two representatives of the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.4 On the whole, I am happy with the performance of the measures for which I am responsible, or that relevant steps have been taken to improve performance.

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2 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1 To accept and note the information in the report
- 2.2 Reduce the savings target for travel savings from £390,000 to £240,000 and move the delivery year from 2018/19 to 2019/20, however, requesting for the scheme to be implemented before 1 April 2019 if it is ready.

3 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 3.1 In order to ensure effective performance management.

4. PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 **Appendix 1** reports on the performance measures that are associated with my portfolio. The use of graphs is developing in order to report on measures in a simple and comprehensive way.
- 4.2 The **Planning Service** is responsible for facilitating and managing developments in the interests of our communities, the economy and the environment.
- 4.3 I have been keeping an eye on the performance measure **How quickly all applications have taken on average to be determined (C2)** following the deterioration seen in the previous report to 61 days. The cumulative average of the measure for the year is 60 days to determine an application, with the performance of every reporting period between 63 and 50 days.
- 4.4 I have challenged the performance, and in a response, the Service noted that the staffing factors and delay stemming from the Planning Committee which had caused the performance to decline, continued to have an impact. However, they are hopeful that the proposed constitutional changes following the recommendations of the Scrutiny Investigation will reduce the Planning Committee's workload. This should, in turn, have a positive impact of the Service's performance.
- 4.5 It is noted that the performance of the measure **How quickly have all Enforcement cases taken on average to be resolved (C6)** has once again deteriorated recently, by increasing from 92 days back to 146.5 days. Likewise, it is seen that the **Percentage of enforcement cases resolved within 12 weeks of receipt during the year (C7)** has reduced to 45.45% compared with 82% in the report submitted in September. The Service notes that the staff capacity has caused performance to slip, following the Service losing an officer in the previous savings cycle.
- 4.6 The discussion in regards to the measures is continuing, as I am still not sure if the measure reports on what matters to the citizen namely that we find a solution to any complaints. The Service is continuing to consider the best way to measure its performance in this field. It is also looking at its procedures to ensure that cases are prioritised effectively and that a service that safeguards and adds value for the citizen is provided.
- 4.7 The purpose of the **Public Protection Service** is to support businesses and safeguard public health and environmental standards and trading standards for the public

and ensure that licensable activities are provided in a way which protects the public and supports businesses.

- 4.8 In the period in question, it is seen that the **Percentage of high risk businesses inspected in line with the programme (G2)** which are inspected late has increased to 8% compared with 7% noted in the previous report. The Service noted that the main reason why the programme had slipped was due to workload compared with the resources, especially taking into account the number of businesses inspected which are only open during the summer. The Service has by now inspected 47% of the business.
- 4.9 It is noted that the **Percentage of the significant breaches that were resolved through intervention from Public Protection (G5)** has increased to 81% compared with 57% noted in the previous report. Although this appears to be a significant improvement, it appears that the improvement is due to the increase of officers' recording. It is therefore important to encourage officers to record their work in full to ensure that it is seen and recognised. The Service also noted that the on-going cases are ones where the investigation is continuing, or are cases where a prosecution is under way.
- 4.10 The information regarding the **Average number of days taken to determine a taxi licence application (G7)** that the performance has improved to 8.95 days compared with 10.24 noted in the previous report. However, it is seen that a number of cases are taking a longer period of time to solve. I have recommended that the Service separate the licence applications by drivers from the vehicle licence applications in order to see the performance more clearly. The Service noted that the applications are processed quickly once all the information has been submitted.
- 4.11 The **Property Service** is responsible for supporting the Council's Departments by providing suitable property for providing services and ensuring that the Council's property portfolio is managed effectively and efficiently.
- 4.12 We see that the data measuring the **Time (in days) taken to respond to a request for maintenance work (Property1)** remains consistent at 9.5 days. Some calls continue to take much longer than average to solve, usually in cases where the work is complicated or specialised in nature. The Service intends to install software that will improve control over calls and contractors. The Service is also continuing with a scheme to employ tradesmen in order to improve the prioritisation of resources, which should lead to standardising the response time to calls and improve the service for the people of Gwynedd.
- 4.13 The method of gathering the information for the **Safety and Scheduled Work Unit Customer Satisfaction Percentage (Property5)**, has been changed, and the satisfaction percentage has fallen. This has led to two developments. Firstly, the Service is gathering better feedback when gathering views, which enables them to improve the service. Secondly, the Service, as many other services, has found that their clients have tired of providing feedback on every piece of work accepted. It is understood that this matter is being addressed by the Chief Executive as part of the review on the implementation of our corporate performance management arrangements.
- 4.14 There has been a recent change in the method of measuring **Feedback from the users of new buildings, two years after opening (Property7)**, by asking for a score out of ten rather than only asking if the client is happy. This change has led to receiving many more valuable responses going forward.

- 4.15 It can be seen that the **Number of appeals to the independent adjudicator which are approved (Property11)** has remained at zero so far in 2017/18.
- 4.16 The Estates and Facilities Unit has been reviewing its purposes and measures, and has submitted measure **Estates and Facilities Unit's Customer Satisfaction Percentage(Property 12)**. The Service notes that the responses have been completely positive in terms of the quality of work, with all the complaints relating to the time taken to carry out the work. The time the Unit takes to carry out the work is a direct result of the workload and a reduction in the number of staff following the recent cuts. Temporary additional staff have been employed to increase the Unit's capacity. There is also an intention to carry out a Ffordd Gwynedd exercise in this Unit, and there is an intention for the Communities Scrutiny Committee to scrutinize the procedure of administering the smallholdings portfolio.
- 4.17 The **Integrated Transport Unit** in its entirety facilitates people's ability to travel from one place to another across a network that is safe whilst also raising their awareness of and educate them about safety.
- 4.18 Work is in progress in the Street Works Unit and the Countryside Unit to develop suitable measures. It has led to a clear and very comprehensive graph in the report on the measure **Percentage of public transport journeys that are punctual (Transportation01)**. The task of perceiving measures has led to refocus the work towards the needs of the people of Gwynedd, whilst moving away from decisions made in the past to try to reduce costs.
- 4.19 The task of perceiving measures which reflect the work of the **Countryside Service** continues. I will report on this in the future.

5 FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

Acheiving Current Savings

- 5.1 Very good progress has been made towards realising the 2017/18 plans with 97% of savings having been acheived or on track. However, it is possible that some slippage will be seen whilst working towards two savings schemes:
- Savings Plan Rh33 (Smallholdings rent review), where the department responsible has begun the work.
 - Savings Plan Rh42 (Public Protection – charging a fee for advice), because it is intended to begin charging a fee in quarter 4

I foresee little other slippage, with the savings having been achieved fully by 2018/19.

5.2 Planning Future Savings

In addition to discovering its own savings, the Department is responsible for leading a Council-wide project to reduce future travelling costs.

The initial work shows that the original estimates were far from being correct as they had considered that savings would be possible within grant-funded schemes etc. which is incorrect.

When not considering those fields where there would be no savings, the potential amount falls from the £390,000 originally identified, to £240,000.

Further work shows that this amount is likely to fall further given that a number of our staff work from centres where a lease car would not be justifiable in that particular centre. Although, having said that, the outline business case shows that there are possible savings, however if they are to be realised, care should be taken to ensure a completely viable scheme.

It is therefore recommended that the savings target should be moved from 2018/19 to 2019/20, requesting for the scheme to be implemented before 1 April 2019 if possible.

Views of the Statutory Officers:**i. Chief Executive:****ii. Monitoring Officer:**

I note the desire to amend the constitution following the scrutiny investigation and I support moving this forward to a Decision. No further comments regarding propriety.

iii. Head of Finance Department:

I confirm that the comments in section 5 are a fair reflection of the situation regarding the Environment Department's situation in relation to achieving savings.

Regarding the "reducing travelling costs" savings plan, with the Cabinet's consent to the recommendation in section 2.2 of the report, I will be reviewing the amount and reprofiling the timescale of the saving in the Council's Finance Strategy (£240,000 to be achieved in 2019/20)

Appendices**Appendix 1 - Performance Measures**