

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Meeting Date: 13 February 2018
Report by: Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive
Title: Reorganisation in order to improve support for families

Decision sought

To note the Chief Executive's intention to conduct a limited reorganisation in order to give greater focus to family support work and offer any observations on the proposals before implementation.

Background

1. Over the past months there have been internal discussions regarding how the Council could do more to help families who need support.
2. Indeed, the Children and Families Department are currently developing a family support strategy which is designed to provide care and support to families before their needs become more complex and severe in order to ensure better longer term outcomes for children and young people.
3. This is also linked to the Council's desire to do more to help our citizens deal with the effects of poverty which frequently (but not always) affect the same families.
4. This aspiration is reflected in the corporate plan which is presented to the Cabinet today.
5. The Children and Families department are already undertaking good work in this area, but we have seen over the years that the work is not as integrated as it could be, and there are gaps in our efforts as well as those of our partners.
6. Our internal discussions have shown that we need to place greater focus on the preventative agenda, and the family support strategy will be a step in that direction.

7. In order to ensure this focus, the cabinet member for Children and Families has come to the conclusion that we need to appoint a Senior Manager in the Children and Families Department to focus on this area of activity.

Responding to the need

8. I agree with this analysis and this need and the usual way of responding would be to present a bid for the money to establish such a post.
9. However, as the Cabinet Member for Finance's report shows, it is highly likely that the financial pressure we face will mean that we will need to find substantial savings in the years to come. This means that we could well be facing the need to reduce rather than increase the number of managers that we have.
10. I have therefore considered whether we can fulfil this need by a different route.
11. I consider that this can be done by transferring the Senior Manager for Learning and Communities from the Economy and Communities Department to the Children and Families Department to undertake this work.
12. I intend that the Youth Service should transfer with her (as it can be part of the solution to assist young people who need support) and I would anticipate that the Senior manager would also take the lead on coordination of work in the area of poverty.
13. 'I have already discussed the matter with the individual under consideration and with both the Head of Economy and Communities and Head of Children and Families, and whilst it will mean that the Head of Economy and Communities will have to cope with one less Senior Manager and redistribute responsibilities to other senior managers in her service, this is possible.
14. There may be a small cost as duties have to be redistributed but that should be minimal. The reduction in Senior Management will count towards the Economy and Communities Department's eventual savings target.
15. I will also need to give some thought as to the governance arrangements which need to be in place to give direction to the work as supporting children, young people and families can often involve coordinating the efforts of a large number of services and agencies.
16. The Cabinet is offered the opportunity to note any views which they would wish me to take into account before I implement the proposal.

Observations by the Statutory Officers

Monitoring Officer

It is appropriate that the Cabinet receives information and an explanation of these proposed changes in particular given that it is currently involved in a review of provision in these areas.

Head of Finance

The ability to move senior management resource to meet a priority need is a sign of a strategic and flexible organisation. I note that the proposal to reorganise will avoid having to identify additional resource to meet the need. The focus being placed on the preventative field will be key in managing demand and the Children and families Department's ability to manage their budgets in the future. I therefore support the proposal.