

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	31 July, 2018
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer:	Geraint Owen
Contact Telephone Number	32335
Title of Item:	Employment Annual Report

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

Approval of the Annual Report.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

In order to reflect and agree on the corporate strategy in this crucial field into the future.

3 INTRODUCTION

The intention of this report is to present an annual update of the details regarding the workforce and their employment together with outlining objectives for developing our employees and setting the direction for the future.

You are reminded that the Local Consultative Joint Committee (the joint forum between the recognised union representatives and Elected Members) receives an annual report on activity in the human resources field but that report focuses on the operational relationship between the employer and the workforce representatives.

1. The Council's Workforce

The numbers employed on a full-time and part-time basis within the Council for the last three years are noted here. Note that these numbers include staff who work in our schools but not those staff employed on a casual basis during holiday/sickness periods of the permanent workforce.

	31/3/16	31/3/17	31/3/18
Full Time	2,965	2,847	2,953
Part Time	3,029	2,981	2,938
Total	5,994	5,828	5,891

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



The details show an increase of 63 in the number of individuals employed by the Council at the end of March this year compared with the same time in 2017 i.e. an increase of 106 full-time employment contracts but a reduction of 43 part-time posts. This increase is primarily as a consequence of the Special Educational Needs Joint-Committee staff transfer to Gwynedd Council's employment as opposed to this number of new posts being created on the Council's staff establishment.

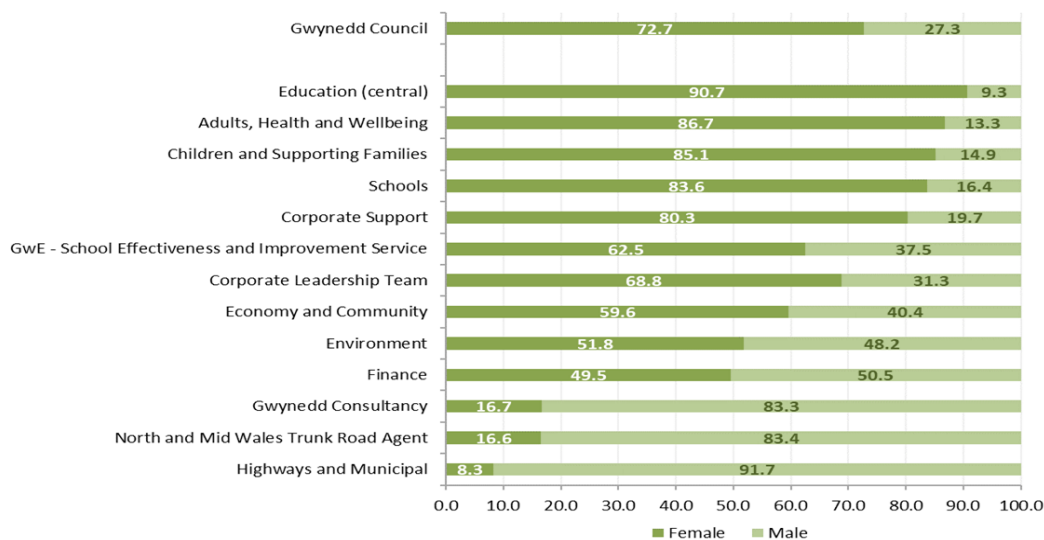
2. Workforce Split by Gender

A further analysis is seen here of the number of men and women employed on a full-time and part-time basis during the same period. The details show an increase of 30 men over the three years and a reduction of 133 women, even though there was an increase in the number of women employed on a full-time basis during the last financial year (this again primarily as a consequence of the Special Educational Needs Joint Committee staff transfer to this Council's employment).

		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Full-time	Men	1,370	1,360	1,387
	Women	1,595	1,487	1,566
Part-time	Men	299	327	312
	Women	2,730	2,654	2,626
Total	Men	1,669	1,687	1,699
	Women	4,325	4,141	4,192
Total %	Men	27.8%	28.9%	28.8%
	Women	72.2%	71.1%	71.2%

Please see a further analysis of the split between men and women in the Council's departments as at March 31 2018.

Female / male split of Gwynedd Council staff by Department, 31 March 2018



Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

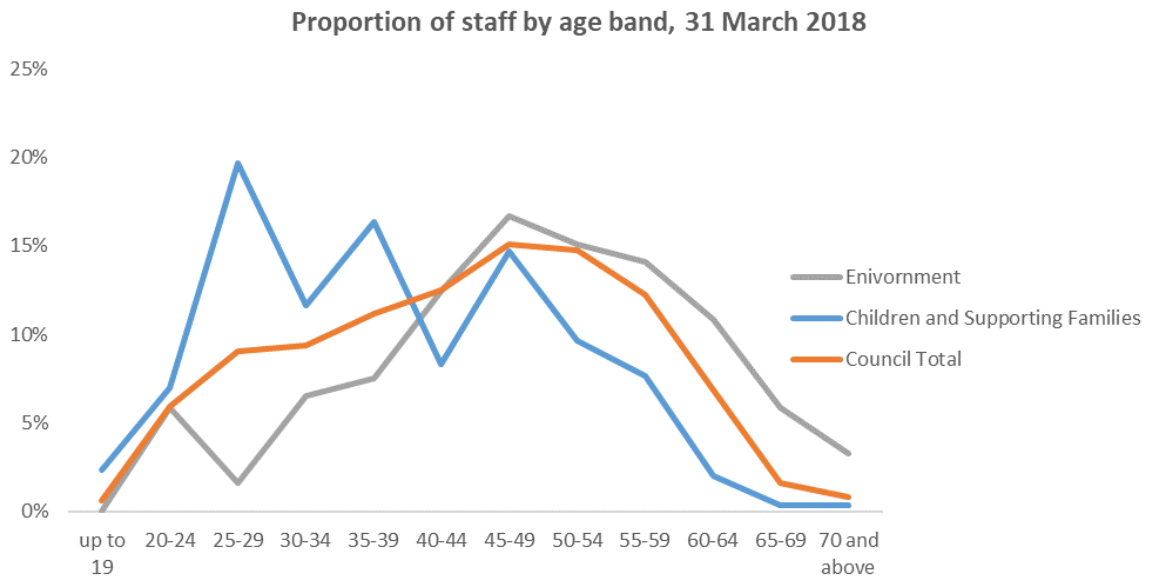
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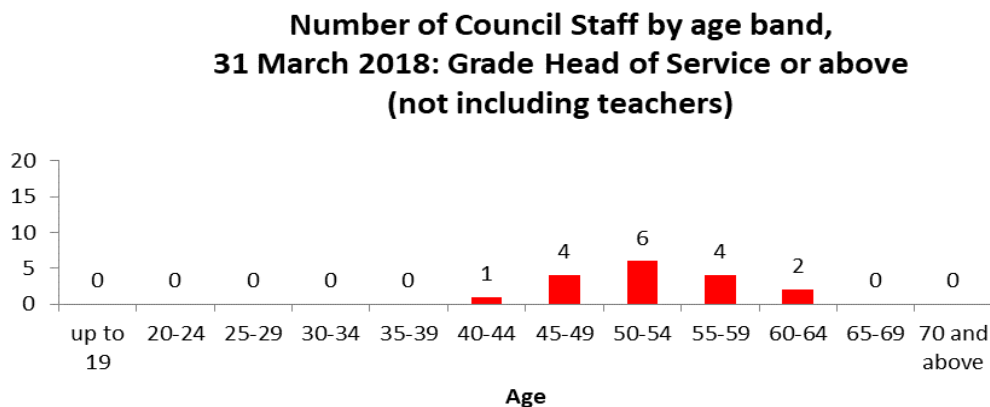
3. Age profile of Council staff

The age profile of Council staff as at 31 March 2018 is noted here. It shows that over 64% of the Council's existing workforce is older than 40 years old (63% in 2015/16) whilst 36% are older than 50 years old (34.5% in 2015/16). This small but gradual increase in the number of staff who are older than 40 years old (and 50 years old), together with the fact that there has been a reduction in staff turnover over the past two years, is an important factor to consider as part of the current attention being given to workforce planning.

The graph below shows the Department with the youngest age profile together with the Department with the oldest age profile as well as the age profile for the whole Council.



The following is an example of a graph that provides a clear picture of the existing age profile of the Corporate Management Group (heads of departments, directors and Chief Executive).



Keeping a record, analysing and sharing this information is crucial to enable managers to plan for the future and, in that sense, consider the steps which need to be taken pro-actively in order to ensure service continuity.

4. Staff Turnover

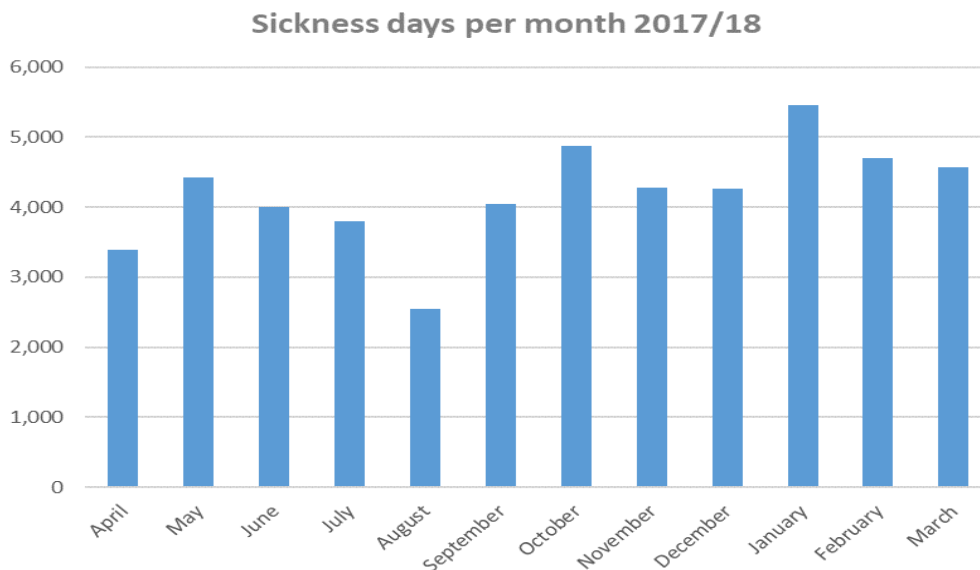
Historically, turnover within the Council has been comparatively stable but there has been a pattern of a small increase during recent years up until 2015/16. Turnover for this year has however fallen and this is in contrast to the national pattern within the public sector in general (most recent figures published for this sector shows a turnover of 15% on average).

The largest turnover is seen within some of the Economy and Community Department's services (16.5%), Highways & Municipal (10.7%) whilst turnover is at its lowest within Gwynedd Consultancy (5.6%), Environment (6.5%) and the Education Department (7.1%).



5. Sickness Absences

The number of days lost due to sickness across the Council decreased to 8.72 days per head on average last year, in comparison with an average of 9 days per head in 2016/17 (8.44 days per head in 2015/16). The table below shows the levels of sickness absences, month by month, during the year.



Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

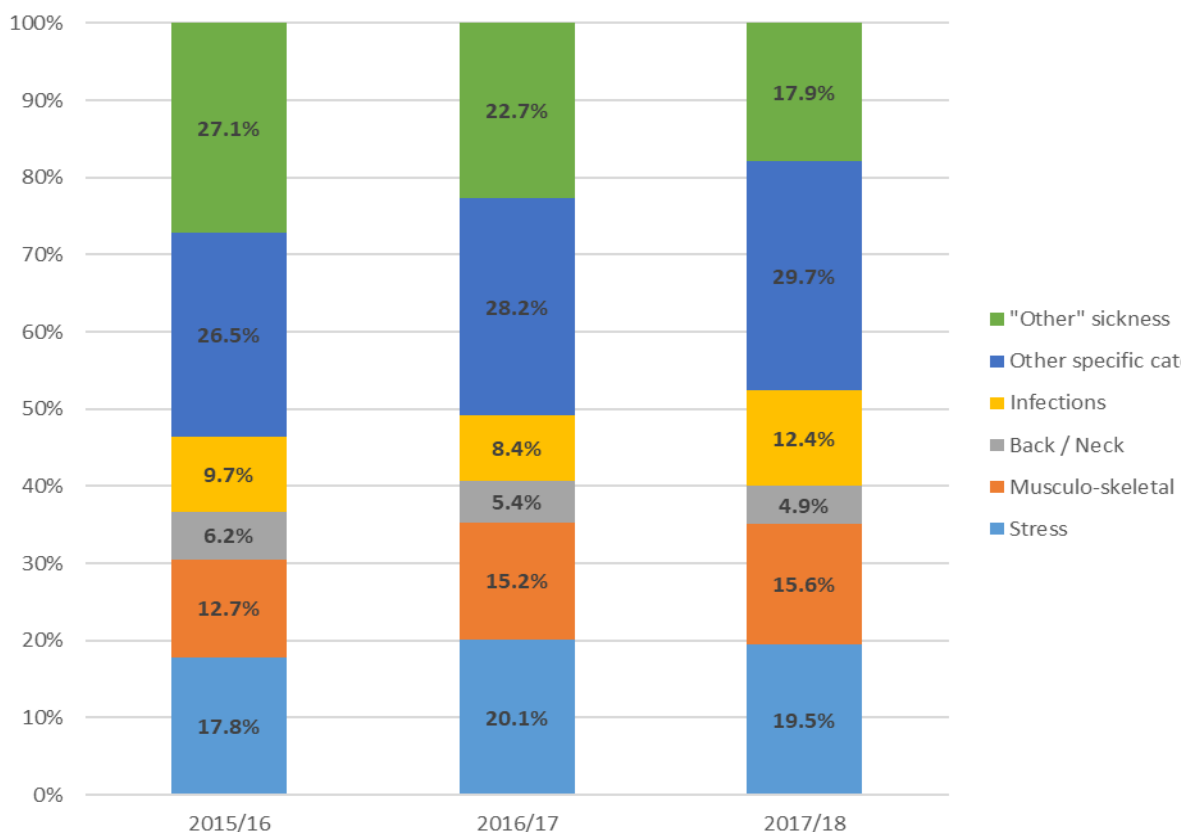


Sickness absence, in 2017/18, is at its highest within the Community Care Service (18.02 days), Residential and Day Care Service (16.56 days) and the Cleaning Service - Environment (14.38 days) whilst sickness absence is at its lowest within the central Education Department (3.4 days), Economy and Community – without Leisure (4.96 days) and the Leisure Service itself (5.1 days). A working group of officers meet regularly to review individual cases of absence and naturally focus their efforts within those services where sickness levels are high. The group’s work has borne some fruit during 2017/18 since the levels of sickness absence within the Residential and Day Care Service and the Cleaning Service – Environment, even though remaining high, has decreased.

It is important to note that 42.5% or 2,542 (2,518 in 2016/17) of Council staff were not absent at all due to sickness during the last year. Furthermore, it can be reported that the percentage of days lost to long-term sickness has decreased from 57% in 2016/17 to 54% in 2017/18.

The following table gives a further analysis of the type of sickness that has been recorded for absences over the last three years. This information is used to steer the discussion when considering the content of the programme to promote health and well-being annually.

Gwynedd Council sickness absence per category, 2015/16 to 2017/18



Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



The fact that the percentage of sickness absences recorded as "Other Illness" has decreased is very encouraging since there has been a specific effort to encourage staff to report on the nature of their illness in an attempt to provide the best possible support to them as part of their recovery.

Reducing the number of sickness incidents recorded as "Other" was one of the objectives reported upon last year and the year before as one of the objectives in this area and there was a suspicion that a number of absences due to stress were being hidden under "Other". This has not been proven to be true to date, as shown in the above graph i.e. the percentage of sickness absence due to stress has decreased slightly over the past twelve months. Even so, and in light of the fact that stress remains the reason for almost one in every five working days lost because of sickness, an officer has been seconded since January 2018, for an year in the first instance, in order to address the support provided to staff in this specific context with a view to add to the provision already provided via the Occupational Health Unit and other external agencies.

6. Learning and Development

As reported last year, the number of traditional training days provided by the corporate Learning and Development Service decreased from 3,043 in 2013-14 to 915 in 2016/17). Those number of days increased however in 2017/18 to 1,389 and this was specifically due to the significant time invested in supporting all Council service managers to put Ffordd Gwynedd into action. The emphasis on the combination of learning through experience, learning socially (such as coaching, mentoring, receive feedback) as well as traditional learning, is starting to be embedded within the Council and this is reflected in the training programme provided to all service managers during the past twelve months.

The number of e-learners (who used the resource) also further increased during 2017/18 from 1,433 in 2016/17 to 2,119 last year. It would be correct to state that this increase was partly as a result of campaigns to encourage staff to undertake e-learning in some specific areas e.g. domestic violence, prevention of terrorism, safeguarding. It would also be fair to note that the quality of the packages provided for this purpose by national establishments did not reach the mark and it is acknowledged that more work is required in order to ensure that the e-learning packages provided are able to convey the important messages more effectively and consequently providing staff with an useful and convenient learning experience. This work has been noted as one of the Corporate Support Department's priorities in the current Business Plan.

One of the other priorities in the Business Plan is to introduce an Apprenticeship Scheme within the Council. One of the Learning and Development Service's officers has been seconded to concentrate on creating and implementing this Scheme. Most of 2017/18 was spent putting the foundations in place and raising awareness about this important development whilst in 2018/19 however we will be looking to introduce a significant number of new apprenticeships. For this purpose, a number of recommendations will be presented for consideration by the Cabinet in the near future.

Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



7. Pay Structure and Equal Pay

The Pay Policy for 2018/19 was approved by the Council at its meeting on 8 March 2018 whilst the National Joint-Committee for Local Government Workers reached an agreement on pay increases for the next two years as from the 1st April, 2018. This has led to a pay increase of up to 9.1% to those staff on the Council's minimum wage with all other pay points up to point 19 in receipt of a higher pay increase than the 2% agreed upon for all other staff. This means that point 8 (which is the Council's minimum wage) is £8.61 per hour (in comparison with the £8.75 per hour acknowledged as the Living Wage by the Living Wage Foundation).

As from the 1st April, 2019, as the second part of the two year agreement, the Council's minimum wage will rise to £9.18 per hour with all pay points up to point 19 again in receipt of a higher increase than the 2% agreed upon for everyone else. This means that the Council's minimum wage will be higher than the Living Wage as from the beginning of the next financial year (this can be stated since it is highly unlikely that the Living Wage Foundation will place the Living Wage higher than £9.18 when the rate is reviewed in November this year). The changes as from April, 2019 will lead to a revised pay structure within the Council (and all other local authorities in Wales and England) and the transferring of staff salaries from one structure to the other will require co-operating with officers from the Finance Department and local union representatives.

An audit on equal pay within the Council by an independent reviewer was completed during the year. Confirmation was received that the Council does not differentiate between men and women for work of equal value. This opinion is a reflection of the fact that the Council has a recognised scheme for evaluating jobs and that the Scheme's criteria are consistently applied. However, the report also noted that the pay gap between men and women, which is true of society in general, also exists within the Council and that consideration should be given to what can be done to influence that situation. In this respect, reference can be made to the Council's commitment, as part of its five-year Business Plan, which is to research into how the gender pay gap can be reduced with a view to promote the number of women who are appointed to senior jobs within the establishment.

8. Leadership Development

There has been much emphasis on developing the political leadership since May 2017 and Cabinet members in particular have taken advantage of "The Five Behaviours" model which has been introduced within the Council. This model is in close alignment to the principles of Ffordd Gwynedd and forms part of the training provided to service managers in order to put Ffordd Gwynedd in action. Furthermore, a generic job description for service managers has been adopted whilst discussions have begun on revising the job descriptions of heads of department and senior managers in order to reflect the culture of leadership as opposed to managing within the Council.

It was also agreed to re-establish meetings of the Managerial College in its new form, not only as a means to ensure a follow-up to the specific training provided to

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



managers but also to encourage those managers to take joint responsibility for the development of this crucial group within the Council's workforce.

9. Workforce Planning

One of the work streams that has been prioritised within the Council's People Plan, and is given a prominent place within the Departmental Business Plan, is the support and encouragement given to managers to plan the future workforce. There is a demand for services to change quickly, which in turn can lead to challenges in terms of staffing those services. This work is an attempt to try to support the services as they prepare for such situations and also to support services which are currently facing staffing problems.

This work incorporates a number of work streams which will all assist services to plan and take steps to ensure service continuity and face new developments in the future e.g. specialists and managers of tomorrow scheme, managing and developing talent, improve the information available in respect of the Council's workforce.

The focus until now has been on some of the Adults, Health and Well-Being Department's services, where human resources advisers have been working together with the Department's managers in order to assist them in considering the future requirements of their workforce and what can be practically done in order to avoid recruitment problems within the care sector in general. This work will be extended to other areas of work during the year ahead with the emphasis on measuring the short, middle and long term impact of those steps taken.

10. Local Conditions of Employment

The work of reviewing and ensuring that staff's conditions of employment reflect the Council's culture is also one of the priorities within the People Plan. The Group which leads the project has already consulted upon and reviewed some conditions of service with a view to present some changes to be adopted during 2018/19 e.g. sickness absence scheme, flexible hours scheme, annual and special leave, purchasing additional leave, grievance procedure and disciplinary procedure.

Other changes to the local conditions of service were introduced as from the 1st July, 2018 following discussions held with union representatives since October, 2015. As you will be aware, it was not possible to ensure a collective agreement on these changes as a result of one of the unions, namely UNISON, being given an instruction by its National Office to not negotiate nor hold a ballot amongst their members locally.

Staff were informed of the decision, taken by the Cabinet on the 13th March, in a letter at the end of that month, which also provided a formal twelve weeks' notice that the changes would be implemented. A letter of apology for the tone of that letter was subsequently sent to staff and a series of meetings ensued with union representatives. Those discussions, by now, have led to a recommendation by the three unions to their members to accept the package which has already been

Contact:

01286 679868

01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru



introduced together with some additions agreed upon as part of those further discussions.

11. Recruitment and Appointment

The following provides statistical details regarding the number of jobs advertised by the Council over the last four years together with the number of applications received and the number of vacancies which needed to be re-advertised. Analysing these details again contributes to our ability to identify fields in which the Council needs to focus its attentions in relation to developing expertise and planning the future workforce.

Year	Number of jobs advertised	Number of Applications	Number of jobs re-advertised	Number of Applications for the second advert
2014	433	2055	29	138
2015	442	2525	30	106
2016	472	2312	47	179
2017	555	3281	57	240

The work of designating linguistic levels that are in keeping with the WJEC (Welsh for Adults) language levels has been completed and these new designations are already being used for recruiting and appointing since the 1st January, 2018. As reported last year, steps were taken to strengthen the resource for language training in anticipation of the fact that this development will lead to an increasing demand to refresh and teach Welsh to the appropriate level among Council staff.

As an example of good practice, Gwynedd Consultancy has taken huge steps with this development and by now arrangements have been made for most of those staff identified as requiring language training, whilst further discussions have commenced with the Leisure service to provide support for leisure centre staff in the near future. The Learning and Development Officer (Welsh Language) will be visiting all other departments in turn in order to identify and act on training requirements and to sharpen Welsh language skills within the current workforce, in parallel with supporting new workers who require the same assistance.

12. People Plan

The Cabinet approved the People Plan for the Council at its meeting on 1 November, 2016. Reference has already been made to some of the work streams that have been prioritised for attention. The Plan involves a work programme for the period 2016-18 and a review of the content and its prioritisation is required during the next few months with the intention of submitting an update in the Autumn in order to ask for approval by the Cabinet to the revised People Plan for the period 2019-21.

Early consideration of that review indicates that the Council should concentrate on the main priorities as opposed to all 24 individual projects listed in the current Work Programme. The investment of our efforts in the work streams which involve

- extending on-line self-service arrangements to Council staff
- workforce planning
- developing talent within the Council as well as via traineeships and apprenticeships
- further develop the system which utilises human resources information and data to influence decisions
- add to the support in respect of staff health and well-being
- review and update conditions of service in order to reflect the Council's current work culture

seem to offer themselves as priorities at the moment.

It is important to stress again this year how crucial it is for every manager and leader to take ownership of that which it is sought to realise within the People Plan and that we should not consider the work streams as matters for the officers co-ordinating them alone, as the ambition is one for the Council in its entirety.

CONCLUSIONS

All the statistical information contained here, with careful analysis, is of assistance to managers and those officers who advise them, to plan services and identify in a timely manner those matters which need further research and action. This becomes increasingly important within a work culture where decisions based on full and concrete evidence is crucial.

Furthermore, the other details submitted regarding progress within the various fields prioritised in the People Plan determinate the steps which are being taken, not only to address existing requirements within the workforce, but also anticipated future requirements.

The Cabinet is asked to approve the report for 2017/18.

OPINION OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

The report is an opportunity for the Cabinet to take an overview of the Council staff's situation and profiles. No comments in relation to propriety.

Head of Finance Department:

The report contains useful information for dealing with employment issues. However, the decision submitted for Cabinet approval does not create expenditure commitment, hence I have no comments to add to the report from a financial propriety perspective.

Contact:
01286 679868
01286 679490

cabinet@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

