

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Report for a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date:	18 September 2018
Title of Item:	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate and Legal Support
Purpose:	To accept and note the information in the report
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Nia Jeffreys
Contact Officer:	Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive

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 Corporate and Legal Support. This includes outlining progress against the pledges within the Council's Plan; the progress of the performance measures; and the latest in relation to the plans for savings and cuts.
- 1.2 I will remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the Corporate Support Department and the Legal Service's management team, which also included a representation from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 On the whole, I am happy with the progress of the lead projects within the Strategic Plan and the performance measures for which I am responsible.

2 THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1 To accept and note the information in the report.

3 COUNCIL PLAN PROJECTS

- 3.1 **Promoting the use of the Welsh language within the Council's Services**
- 3.2 The work of promoting the use of the Welsh language within the Council's Services is continuing, with the focus on ensuring the provision of Council services through the medium of Welsh. One element that has been highlighted is the weaknesses within the recruitment process, where the linguistic requirements for posts are not always clear. To assist with the situation we have developed new language designations that are more

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detailed. We will also continue to promote the support that is available for staff who wish to improve or polish their language skills, and to ensure that the Council does not distance itself from the community through its language use.

3.3 The Welsh Language in Public Services

3.4 An initial meeting was held with the Local Services Board's Welsh Language Sub-group in June to identify possible work streams. We will now further develop these work streams to focus on the citizen's experience of engaging with public services through the medium of Welsh.

3.5 Keeping the Benefit Local

3.6 The work of encouraging local businesses to compete for Council work is ongoing. The service continues to engage with the business community to ensure that businesses are qualified and receive support to submit high quality tenders. The service is also attempting to ensure that contractual requirements do not unnecessarily restrict competition, and provide businesses with comprehensive feedback following a tendering process. The Council's local expenditure continues to increase gradually year on year, with an increase from 56% in 2015-16 to 62% in 2017-18, and I am pleased with this.

3.7 In a previous challenge meeting my predecessor asked whether more of the Council's planned maintenance work could be internalised to ensure that it was undertaken by local workers. Following investigation it was concluded that it would not be practical to change the current situation because of the range of expertise needed and the seasonal nature of the work. Of course, we have already internalised an element of the small responsive maintenance work, which has led to an improved response and a decrease in costs.

3.8 I have some concern whether we have harvested the savings that are being delivered by the good work in this field, and I have requested that work takes place to investigate this.

3.9 Empowering Units to Implement Ffordd Gwynedd

3.10 I am pleased to note that 130 managers and some other officers have now received six days training to empower them to implement Ffordd Gwynedd. The training has already prompted an eagerness to examine the Council's systems to ensure that all services place the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything they do. While this places an increased demand on the small team that support Ffordd Gwynedd, it is very positive to see service managers driving the work forward.

3.11 The original Ffordd Gwynedd Strategy has now come to an end, and we need to consider the next steps to ensure that the principles are further

embedded throughout the Council. There is work in the pipeline to produce a suitable plan for the future.

3.12 **Savings Schemes**

3.13 There are no signs that the continued cuts in funding from Welsh Government to pay for key services that we provide will come to an end in the near future. We are therefore undertaking the necessary background work to prepare to consult with the Council's elected members and the people of Gwynedd on their priorities once our likely financial settlement is announced.

3.14 I am satisfied with the progress made to date on this plan, and am pleased to see effective collaboration in bringing together the various elements.

4 PERFORMANCE

4.1 A full report on the performance measures associated with the portfolio is provided in **Appendix 1**. I am responsible for remits within the **Corporate Support Department** and the **Legal Service**.

4.2 The Council's **Communication and Engagement Service is responsible for** the content of the Council's website. Between April and June 2018, 499,576 individuals used the Council's website. 470 chose to express their opinion on the website, and 372 (79%) gave a 5/5 score. From the 98 (21%) that noted a score that was below 5/5, 51 chose to submit a complaint or comment. The service has acted promptly to resolve the complaints, with 65% of the complaints resolved within three working days, and 86% resolved within seven working days. At the end of the reporting period there were two 'open' complaints, which are the subject of developmental work to improve the information available on the website.

4.3 Another aspect of the communication and engagement service's work is to collaborate with the Council's departments to facilitate a two-way dialogue with the people of Gwynedd. The comments received by the service remain extremely positive, with a 10/10 score received for the six schemes supported between April and June. Following an enquiry about press statements and similar communications released by the Service, it became evident that they were uncertain how much attention the statements attracted. To assist the Service and myself to measure the effectiveness of the Council's communication, I have asked the service to examine methods to measure the impact of the Council's public statements.

4.4 The **Community Safety Unit** is one component within the Council's **Business Support Service**. The Unit collaborates on a regional and multi-agency basis to reduce crime and disorder, address substance misuse, reduce re-offending and address antisocial behaviour. The Unit provides support for the Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership. One important part of the Unit's statutory duties is to lead Domestic Homicide Reviews, with two currently ongoing. These Reviews can lead to a drain on the Unit's

resources, and the Unit would find it difficult to cope with the additional workload if another review had to be conducted. As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the Unit intends to circulate a questionnaire to partnership members to establish their views on the available support.

- 4.5 The **Council's Research and Analytics Service's** purpose is to develop the ability of the Council and other bodies to use information and evidence to make the best decisions for the people of Gwynedd. The service's quiet and diligent work has already paid dividends and has supported many service developments within the Council. Recently, it was also awarded a GwE contract by tender. This work will analyse education staff's linguistic skills across GwE's area, and, in due course, the skills and programmes developed for delivering this work will be used for other purposes. I am pleased that the service had been awarded this work, and I am certain that it will benefit from the experience of tendering for work and managing external customers.
- 4.6 **Health, Safety and Well-being Service** - While the work of qualifying Managers to conduct Health and Safety assessments has been progressing, it has become evident that it is difficult, in spite of all the engagement and persuasion, to convey the message regarding the importance of Health and Safety to a small core of managers. We must investigate this, and the Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate Support Department are undertaking further work. We intend to address this within the Council's employment capabilities framework to ensure that any manager who does not attend and / or does not implement the appropriate training is held accountable.
- 4.7 The **Galw Gwynedd and Gwynedd Shops Unit** provides prompt and accurate assistance to our customers to access Council services by providing answers, guidance and service. During the reporting period from April to June, Galw Gwynedd answered calls within an average of 53 seconds, with 6.28% calls missed. This maintained the service levels, while answering more calls than the same period last year.
- 4.8 There was an increase in the number of calls to the Council Tax Service asking about the premium during the first months of 2018. At one time, 46,704 customers had tried to get in touch, with only 18.56% of the calls answered by the Council Tax Service. Galw Gwynedd, the IT Service and the Council Tax Service collaborated to improve the situation, which led to 61% of calls being answered during June.
- 4.9 In relation to this, we are of course trying to give the public more choice when dealing with the Council, and to increase the numbers that are able to submit request for services online, by promoting **self-service**.
- 4.10 "ap Gwynedd" is now live, and Gwynedd's residents can inform us about pot holes; dog fouling; broken street lighting; and fly-tipping by using the phone app. The number of self-service accounts and log-ins are also

continuing to increase (33,090 accounts, an increase of 7,500 compared to this time last year and double the number of log-ins).

- 4.11 We have encountered initial difficulties with the on-line school payment system (for example, one school only had 15-20% of parents using it), but we are aware of the reasons, and there are plans to promote this service and to increase the number of parents using it across the County.
- 4.12 Having challenged the performance of the **Legal Service** I am happy with the progress of the work, with services stating that they were satisfied overall. There was one data protection incident during the period in question, although no sensitive or harmful data was disclosed. I am satisfied that the correct steps were taken to improve internal arrangements to try to prevent a similar incident in future.
- 4.13 Only the main performance matters are noted above. While I have held various detailed discussions on other matters within the units, I am satisfied that the performance of those other units are within the range of expected performance.

6 **FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS**

- 6.1 All the savings plans for 2017/18 have been realised. There is currently work underway to examine options if further savings are needed from 2019/20 onwards.

7 **NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 7.1 None to note.

8 **ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

8.1 **Views of the Statutory Officers:**

i. Monitoring Officer:

No Comments in terms of propriety

ii. Head of Finance Department:

I can confirm the accuracy of the financial aspects of the report by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Support and Legal, and I am pleased to confirm the contents of part 6 of the report, which is that the saving plans have been achieved

8.2 **Views of the Local Member:**

- 8.2.1 Not a local matter.

8.3 **Results of Any Consultation:**

8.3.1 None to note.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Performance Measures