

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Report for a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

Date:	15 January 2019
Title of Item:	Performance Report of the 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

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 reporting on where we have reached with measuring performance, and the latest in terms of savings and cuts schemes.
- 1.2 I wish to remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and I have scrutinised them at meetings of the Management Team held specifically for that purpose. These meetings also include two representatives of the relevant Scrutiny Committee, although, disappointingly, no representative was present at the last meeting.
- 1.3 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 where needed.

2 THE DECISION SOUGHT

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

3. PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 **Appendix 1** reports on the performance measures.
- 2.2 The **Planning Service** is responsible for facilitating and managing developments in the interests of our communities, the economy and the environment.
- 2.3 I have been monitoring the performance measure **How quickly all applications have taken on average to be determined (C2)** as the performance on the measure became unstable at the beginning of this year. The performance has now stabilised, with the cumulative average now at 63 days. When challenging performance, the Service noted that the effect of the new Delegation Scheme now appeared in the performance, and that it is being monitored by keeping a separate record. The new method of recording shows that applications determined by the Committee take more time to determine, however, this is to be expected as it is the more complex or contentious applications that are submitted to the Committee.

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- 2.4 **Satisfaction** with the service remains relatively high (87.8%), with the discontent expressed associated with the process of contacting the service. However, a number of satisfied customers have noted that the system of having pre-application planning advice and an opportunity to amend plans, is valuable.
- 2.5 The task of obtaining a meaningful measure in the Enforcement field continues. To that end, the service has introduced new methods of recording and prioritising complaints, in order to make the most of the resources available. When challenging the service, I noted that it was important that these new methods of prioritising did not lead to missing any calls, thus failing the people of Gwynedd.
- 2.6 Following the adoption of the Joint Local Development Plan in the summer of 2017, the Joint Planning Policy Unit has been working hard to develop and adopt Supplementary Planning Guidance in order to expand upon the Planning policies. Although I have received some criticism that the completion of the work is slow, I am confident that the thorough work being done on the guidance will ensure the best possible end product.
- 2.7 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 that protects the public and supports businesses. The **Percentage of food establishments meeting the food hygiene standards (G6)** measure notes that 98.92% of food establishment comply, with only 1.1% failing to do so, namely 24 businesses. With these, the service works with businesses to rectify the situation.
- 2.8 The measures for the **Percentage of food establishments that have received Food Hygiene (G8) and Food Standards (G9) inspections**, show that the service continues to be behind with the Food Hygiene and Food Standards inspections programme. At the end of the previous period, around 9% of the programmed Food Hygiene inspections, and around 23% of the programmed Food Standards inspections had not been completed.
- 2.9 When I challenged its performance, the Service noted that the slippage in the programme derived from the lack of capacity that has already been highlighted in previous performance reports. Additional officers have now been appointed, and the service has adopted more efficient arrangements by carrying out food hygiene and food standards inspections during the same visit, where possible.
- 2.10 The information about the **Average number of days taken to determine a taxi licence application (G7)** shows that the performance has improved to 7.78 days, compared with 9.96 in the previous report. It was also encouraging to note that the average for processing drivers licences has also dropped to 28. On challenging the Service, it was noted that licences for taxi companies and vehicles were processed very quickly - within two days on average. The increased average is due to an increase in the applications for drivers' licences. The procedure of carrying out a DBS check is slow, in particular as certificates are now sent to the applicant, rather than the Service, as a result of new regulations. The service also noted that the procedure of arranging hearings before the Licensing Sub-committees further delayed the process, and that the service intended to collaborate with the legal service in order to look at the delegation scheme in an attempt to improve the situation.

- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 We see that the data measuring the **Time (in days) taken to respond to a request for maintenance work (Eiddo1)** has remained static between 8.1 and 8.4 for the last period, with the policy of internalising craftspeople and reducing dependency on external contractors, continuing to be effective. The Service reported that the performance of the **Percentage of maintenance unit customer satisfaction (Eiddo2)** measure, has improved recently, raising from 86% to 90%. Upon challenge, the Service noted that the negative feedback tended to refer to a lack of updates during a piece of work. Unfortunately, the additional demand occurring from supporting the Telecare service has intensified the work pressure. Nevertheless, the service is in discussions in order to increase the resource available in order to be able to provide the best possible customer care.
- 2.13 The performance of the **Percentage of buildings with appropriate security systems in place (Eiddo4)** measure has deteriorated substantially recently, from 91% to 73%. On challenging the Service, it was noted that a member of staff had been on sickness absence, and that no other member of staff had the expertise to carry out the work. As the work of the Service is a high-risk field, I am glad that the Service commissioned an external company to fill the gap.
- 2.14 The performance on the **Satisfaction Percentage of the Pest Control Unit (Eiddo5)** measure, continues to be high. I should note that there have been occasions where messages have not been effectively transferred from the self-service system to the pest control staff. I have asked the Service to ensure that this is resolved as no customer should have to contact twice in order to receive a service.
- 2.15 The **Integrated Transport Unit** measure in its entirety facilitates people's ability to travel from one place to another across a network which is safe whilst also raising their awareness of and educating them about safety.
- 2.16 The measures **Number of complaints received about public transport services contracted to the Council (Cludiant02)** and the **Number of complaints received about commercial public transport services (Cludiant03)** are important measures for the service. A total of 10 complaints were received regarding public transport services, and the complaints show some frustration with the service. Although the situation with Gwynedd public transport has stabilised since the summer, the decision made by the Transport Commissioner to ban one bus company meant that the Council had to make arrangements for another company to operate additional routes, at short notice. By now, the picture has stabilised again and I have asked the Service to continue to work hard to arrange the best possible service for the people of Gwynedd.
- 2.17 The **Traffic, Projects and Street Works Unit** is responsible for processing traffic orders. On average, it takes 266 days for a traffic order to become operational. In order to understand where improvements can be made to their systems, the Unit has been experimenting with various methods of grouping orders. It has also been recording the performance in a way that makes it much easier to see where there are potential barriers to improving performance.
- 2.18 The task of identifying measures that reflect the work of the **Countryside Service** continues. I will report on this in the future.

- 2.19 Three Ffordd Gwynedd reviews are in hand at present. In the Planning field (run in parallel with the Building Control review), a great deal of analysis work has been carried out, and I am confident that a report will be shared in due course. The Countryside Unit has commenced a review, and is busy collecting data. The Estates and Facilities Unit is yet to begin, but I am confident that it will commence the review in the near future.

4 FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS

4.1 Realising the Current Savings Plans

All the savings plans of the Environment Department until the end of the 2018/19 year have been realised.

5. Council Plan Priorities

- 5.1 In the Council Plan for 2018-23, it is noted that the Environment Department has three local priorities. The local priorities are matters raised by Councillors as matters of concern in their wards.
- 5.2 It was noted that there are concerns in the Caernarfon, Dyffryn Nantlle and Bala areas regarding the lack of parking spaces. No progress has been made on this priority thus far.
- 5.3 In the Dyffryn Nantlle and Caernarfon areas, concern was expressed about the safety of roads outside schools. The department has held discussions with the schools to discuss their concerns, and they are currently holding assessments on the sites to see how the risks to users can be reduced.
- 5.4 In many areas, it was felt that the condition of the coast path needed to be improved. In the Porthmadog area, improvements have been made near Tŷ Moelwyn, with work being done to see where further improvements can be made. In the Tywyn and Aberdyfi area, calls are being made to complete the cycle path, and a bid has been submitted to the Welsh Government's Active Travel Fund in order to develop the scheme further. Calls are also being made to build a multi-use path between Pwllheli and Llanbedrog, and we will be submitting an application to Welsh Government in order to develop the bid further.

Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. Monitoring Officer:

No comments in terms of propriety

ii. Head of Finance Department:

I confirm that the comments in part 4.1 of the report are a true reflection of the position in terms of realising the savings that are the responsibility of the Environment Department

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Performance Measures