

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

REPORT TO A MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Date of Meeting:	29 January 2019
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas, Cabinet Member for Education
Contact Officer:	Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive
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Title of Item:	Education Department Performance Report

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field for which I, as Cabinet Member for Education, have responsibility. This will include outlining the latest with the pledges in the Council Plan; where the performance measures have reached; and the latest in terms of the Department's savings and cuts schemes.
- 1.2. I wish to remind you that all the matters have already been discussed and scrutinised in Performance Challenging meetings, which also included representatives from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3. We have now started to implement the Council Plan 2018-23 that was approved at the Full Council meeting in March 2018. Here, I report on progress from October 2018 to December 2018.

2. THE DECISION SOUGHT

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

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

- 3.1. To ensure effective performance management.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

4.1. Transforming the Education System

- 4.1.1 In 2016, we consulted on a series of principles that should form the basis to any future change. the purpose of this project is to establish a plan to embed those principles to secure a viable education system that will ensure that every child in the county is given a fair opportunity to develop his/her potential.
- 4.1.2 These principles were adopted by the Cabinet on 18 December 2018. The principles consider sustainable models for the county's primary and secondary schools, along with the leadership models for our schools. The principles are already being considered in the delivery of the Band A and Band B C21 Schools

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projects, and these will be the fundamental principles for consideration when we respond to any opportunities for the future.

4.2. Strengthening Leadership

- 4.2.1 This project will encourage and promote the professional development of the current leaders of our schools, committing to the leadership development programmes that are available. We will also identify and target future leaders, ensuring that they have access to these programmes. This project is crucial for the success of the Education System Transformation project.
- 4.2.2. The Council, in collaboration with GwE, is already planning to put relevant training arrangements in place to support the development of future leaders. However, following the adoption of the above noted principles, further scoping work will be conducted on the options and additional opportunities to further strengthen leadership, the intention being to set work streams and clear targets for the project.

4.3. 21 Century Schools Programme

4.3.1 Bangor Catchment Area

This project aims to review the primary education provision in Bangor, and will seek to put a new plan into action that will improve the future provision.

Ysgol y Garnedd

An official decision was made on 21 November to build a new school for Ysgol y Garnedd and close Ysgol Coedmawr and Ysgol Glanadda. The planning application has been approved, and the land surveys and design have been completed. The builders will be on site in January 2019.

Ysgol y Faenol

The statutory consultation ended on 30 October, and was followed by a meeting of the Governing Body to report back on the observations received. The Body decided to proceed to issue statutory notices. Once the outline plan and the design have been agreed the detailed design can be produced.

4.3.2 Bala Catchment Area

The purpose of this project is to create a 3-19 Welsh-medium Learning Campus on the current site of Ysgol y Berwyn by September 2019 that will offer services to the local community.

The School has now been named Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn. The Head Teacher will commence in post during January 2019. On 29 November the staffing structure, job descriptions and appointment process were submitted, with a consultation period until 14 January. A draft appointments timetable has been established, and it anticipated that interviews will take place during February. The lessons learned from the process in Dolgellau have been used to facilitate the arrangements in Bala. An agreement has been drafted for the use of the social space.

This project is progressing in line with the schedule and there are no financial (capital) risks at present.

4.3.3 Post-16

As we have encountered difficulties in finding a suitable company to conduct an inclusion assessment across the county, we have concluded that we will have to undertake much of the work ourselves. Therefore, an internal team has been established deliver some elements within Step 1 of the brief, which is the desktop research. As a result of the delay in trying to find a qualified company, I have asked the Department to ensure that we invest the necessary resources in order to avoid any further delays, and to adhere as closely as possible to our timetable.

4.4 Transforming the Provision of Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion

4.4.1 The purpose of this project is to transform the additional learning needs and inclusion service, in order to ensure that children and young people who need it have access to the most suitable support to enable them to fulfil their potential.

4.4.2 Phase 1 of the work of transforming the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service has been completed (the necessary restructuring). However, there are a number of other aspects that require attention in Phase 2 in relation to the new act, the application of the Act, and the new arrangements within work processes across our schools. Regional Transformation work is ongoing in order to set a direction for the implementation of ALN Legislation.

4.4.3 A new website was launched for the ALN&I Service on 5 November, www.adyach.cymru

4.5 Young People using the Welsh language socially

4.5.1. The purpose of this project is to ensure a robust follow-up to the Language Charter project that is operational in Gwynedd's primary schools, and build upon it. A Secondary Language Strategy Coordinator was appointed during this period. The Coordinator will set the challenge for our secondary schools and will support them; thus, ensuring that every secondary school has an individual action plan that will reflect the linguistic context of the school and the community.

4.5.2. All the secondary schools have received support to the implement the language web with Years 7 and 8 during the 2018 autumn term.

4.5.3 Each secondary school has received support to implement the main priorities of the Language Strategy and to review their individual Action Plans, giving attention to the theme across the Curriculum. In this respect, an Action Plan has been produced to support the workforce of Ysgol Friars to develop its language skills.

4.5.4 A Welsh Government Commission has funded pilot Language Psychology: Training the Trainer sessions at a number of schools across the region, including Ysgol Bro Idris.

5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

- 5.1. The final summer 2018 results will be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on 24 January 2019. I would like to draw your attention to the summary below of the high number of English results 2018 and the impact on Gwynedd.
- 5.2. Approximately 58% of year 11 pupils in Gwynedd were registered for GCSE English for the first and only time in June 2018. Although it was a linear two-year course, schools were permitted to register learners early. Following this, Qualifications Wales published a report noting 'On balance, we believe the continued widespread use of early and multiple entry at GCSE poses risks to students and to the system, which are not easily justified. The practice also poses significant costs to the system'. The Cabinet Secretary for Education approved the report and there was a change in national policy that only the first grade attained by a pupil would count towards a school's whole-school performance indicator results.
- 5.3. Subsequently, almost all Gwynedd schools decided to register pupils for English once, at the end of the two year course. However, on the day of the results in August 2018, it was found that the C grade threshold had risen by 20 marks compared to the summer 2017 mark. There was a 11.8% reduction in A*-C grades attained by Gwynedd pupils compared to the previous summer. Although Qualifications Wales has published a highly technical report to justify its processes, Gwynedd head teachers and officers remain extremely dissatisfied and are of the opinion that the justification is inadequate.
- 5.4. The significant increase in the English C grade threshold, whatever the justification for it, has led to the following outcomes for learners and staff in Gwynedd.
 - a significant number of learners in Gwynedd attained a mark that was higher than the previous threshold for a C grade, but were awarded a D grade
 - as the B grade mark also increased by 10 marks, a number of learners missed out on a crucial qualification to enter teaching
 - learners have been unable to access their first choice of colleges and sixth form courses and their future opportunities have been affected because they do not have a C grade in English
 - impact on staff morale, their confidence in measuring standards; when a C grade rises by 20 marks in a year, how to they target, forecast, advise and support?
 - The confidence of our school leaders in the system is naturally fragile.

5.2 . Education Department Measures

- 5.2.1 As I reported in October, the Education Department is in the process of reviewing all its measures as every department goes through the Ffordd Gwynedd process. Also, proposed changes are being made to national indicators; therefore, I will be in a position to report further on the new measures and indicators next time.

6. FINANCIAL/SAVINGS SITUATION

2017/18 - 2018/19 Schemes

- 6.1. The 2018/19 element of the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Strategic Review has now been completed, with the 2019/20 element on track to be completed on time.
- 6.2 In relation to the Schools Additional Savings plan, savings of £198,000 and £65,000 are on track to be realised on time, with the savings already identified from the

schools restructuring schemes. In relation to the saving of £298,990, the schools are already aware of the time at which their budgets will be cut.

- 6.3 The scheme to increase the price of primary schools meals from £2.30 to £2.50 has been realised in 2017/18 and the budget for 2018/19 has been amended to reflect the saving of £43,750.

The latest income projections suggest that the income is £163k short of its target for this year, but it should be noted that there is an underspend of £109k on food purchases.

- 6.4 The income target of £194k for the Pre School Child Care Scheme was set on the presumption that 55% of parents would pay for the care. The latest projections suggest that 38% of parents pay for the care, which would lead to an income deficit of £60k.

6.5 **Transport Overspend**

In our performance challenge meeting, we analysed the various reasons why there was an overspend in the school transport budget.

The main reasons are as follows:

£149,000 due to new contracts following the opening of Ysgol Hafod Lon – this was contrary to the initial assumption, and further work is needed to understand the reason for this.

£125,000 due to new contracts in the field of behaviour. There is no transport budget for this field and this will require attention when examining the additional learning needs arrangements.

£73,000 due to an increase in the Dolgellau and Cymerau ABC units as both units are open four days a week, while the previous provision at Ysgol Eifion Wyn was open five days a week.

£69,000 due to the impact of re-tendering over the summer.

£69,000 due to new mainstream contracts.

The remaining overspend was due to minor elements.

One other concern that was raised during our discussions was the fact, following detailed analysis, that the figures originally reported were not reliable. There are a number of possible factors responsible for this.

It was found that we have specific examples of extremely expensive journeys that raise questions about who is responsible for the overall monitoring of this.

At the performance challenge meeting I noted that all these matters needed to be considered in order to ensure appropriate management, and the Chief Executive intends to convene a meeting of relevant officers in January to address the matter.

I will report further at the next performance challenge meeting.

7. **ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

7.1. Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. Monitoring Officer:

No observations in relation to propriety.

ii. Head of Finance Department:

I note that there are significant developments in Education which have financial implications, including the capital investment mentioned in part 4.3 of the report, and the delegation of additional learning needs budgets in part 4.4.

Regarding savings from increasing the price of primary school meals (part 6.3) and pre-school child care (part 6.4), it is logical that price increases will reduce demand initially. If the Department's savings schemes continue to generate insufficient income, then alternative measures must be considered in order to balance the departmental budget.

The increasing overspend in pupil transport costs (part 6.5 of the report) was noted in my budget review report submitted to the Cabinet meeting on 22 January. It is a concern that this overspend continues, and I note that the intention to call a meeting of the relevant officers (from the Education and Environment departments) to secure appropriate control, and to report to the Cabinet Member for Education's next performance meeting.

7.2. Views of the Local Member:

7.2.1 Not a local matter.

7.3. Results of Any Consultation:

7.3.1 None to note.

Appendices:

None.

Background Documents:

None.