

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



## Report to the Cabinet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	10 March 2020
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Garem Jackson, Head of Education
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<b>Item Title:</b>	Post-16 Education

### 1. DECISION SOUGHT

Permission is sought to hold discussions with stakeholders to consider the current provision and highlight the key considerations in order to recognise the direction and opportunities to strengthen post-16 education provision in Arfon. Subsequently, a further report is expected to be submitted to Cabinet in order to report back on the outcome of the discussions.

### 2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

The Education Department is seeking permission to hold a discussion with stakeholders about existing post-16 provision in Arfon.

The landscape for post-16 education is changing with the Welsh Government proposing to introduce a new act during 2020. Therefore, it is timely for the Authority to review whether the existing provision is effective for the needs of the county's young people now and for the future.

In Gwynedd, the foundations of our post-16 education system dates back forty years. Given the proposed national change/reform, there is an ideal opportunity for Gwynedd to innovate and create a post-16 education system that is fit for purpose, which combines the vocational, technical and academic, ensuring that all learners fulfil their potential.

Discussing the current provision would provide stakeholders with an opportunity to express their views on the existing system in the context of the vision, and consider opportunities to:

- support providers to ensure high quality, modern, sustainable education for learners,
- ensure consistency in choice and learning experiences for young people,
- prepare learners for the opportunities which will emerge from the economy of the future.

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## 3. INTRODUCTION

In January 2018, a report was submitted to the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee which noted the intention to undertake an assessment of the current provision and noted that the findings of the assessment could inform further discussion on the path of post-16 provision in the county for the future.

In addition, at its meeting on 12 June 2018, the Cabinet endorsed the principle of considering the current post-16 provision, ensuring that the Authority would not miss an opportunity to strengthen the provision in Arfon, should there be a case to do so. To this end, a figure of £18m has been identified from Band B, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme.

As part of the work to consider the area, *Iaith Cyf* was commissioned to carry out research on behalf of the Department, conducting interviews with headteachers, focus groups with learners, and gathering the views of parents and learners through questionnaires, in order to enrich and validate the evidence base gathered from desktop research.

Following consideration of the evidence and information gathered as part of the research, a “Post-16 Education Overview” report (**Appendix 1**) was produced. Although the general research has been conducted on the post-16 provision in Gwynedd, a more detailed overview of the provision in Arfon is given in the attached report. As a result, post-16 provision in the Bala area will be addressed in a separate area of work.

## 4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

The appendix to this report sets out our vision for post-16 students in Gwynedd, namely to:

- i. Ensure fairness in the choice of courses and provide flexible and sustainable high quality learning experiences which equip them as independent learners with the correct information and skill to progress.
- ii. Provide effective transition into post-16 education provision, developing and maintaining access to a broad range of appropriate pathways for the individual learner and ensuring that post-16 provision evolves as the requirements of the learner and local economy changes in future.

To achieve this, we, our partners and our stakeholders need to pave the way, acknowledging what we do well, what we can improve, and developing an ambitious system to ensure the best for the learner.

The rationale and justification for recommending the decision is further detailed in the attached report. In particular, the case for change section sets out the need to address changes in education, as well as the need to prepare for the economy of the future.

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## 5. NEXT STEPS & TIMETABLE

Subject to receiving Cabinet support for the recommendation to initiate local discussions, in the summer term 2020, a series of working groups will be held with representation from Arfon's post-16 provision stakeholders, such as governors, headteachers, teachers and learners. Following this, there will be an opportunity for Gwynedd residents to contribute to the discussion online or in face-to-face sessions. All of this will ensure the key contribution of stakeholders and residents in developing and identifying potential solutions that would be in line with the vision for Arfon's post-16 provision.

Should the Cabinet decide to approve the recommendation, it is anticipated that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet to report back on the results of the local discussions.

## 6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

### **The Well-being of Future Generations Act**

The Education Department has a role in promoting the well-being objectives of the Act amongst pupils in the county through its activities and projects. The Act sets a duty on public bodies in Wales to improve economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. As part of the duty, the Council has published well-being objectives that outline the way it will improve well-being in the "2018-23 Gwynedd Plan". Consideration will be given to the requirements of the well-being act and an assessment will be conducted in the context of the Act's well-being goals following local discussions to develop and identify possible solutions that would be in keeping with the vision for Arfon's post-16 provision.

### **Equality**

The Education Department has a responsibility to promote equality as well as general duties to ensure fairness and foster good relations. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to consider the impact of any change to a new policy or procedure on people with protected equality characteristics, namely race, gender, disability, language, religion or belief and age.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been produced as part of the work of drawing up a current overview of post-16 education provision in Gwynedd, and the Assessment will be updated regularly in the light of local discussions to develop and identify possible solutions that would fit with the vision for Arfon's post-16 provision. See **Appendix 2**.

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## Views of the statutory officers

### Monitoring Officer:

*“The recommendation permits the door to be opened for discussion with the wide range of stakeholders who are involved with the provision of post 16 education. The steps proposed are appropriate and proportional when this is considered. It is also appropriate that on its conclusion the results of the work are reported back to the Cabinet for consideration. I am therefore satisfied of the propriety of the recommendation”*

### Chief Finance Officer:

*“I welcome the intention to review post-16 education provision in Arfon, and initial discussions with stakeholders, and then with all residents, is an appropriate way of proceeding. Having received the results of the discussions a further report will be brought to the Cabinet which will enable it to consider and identify the characteristics of the provision for the future. I am therefore supportive of the decision sought”*

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## Appendix:

Appendix 1 – Post-16 Education Overview

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

## Background Papers:

laith Cyf’s report “An assessment of the current post-16 education provision in Gwynedd” April 2019	<a href="http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation">www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation</a>
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