
SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26/11/15

Present:

Councillors: Anwen J. Davies, Alan Jones Evans, Aled Ll. Evans, E. Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Sian Wyn Hughes, Elin Walker Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Sion W. Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, R. Hefin Williams and R. H. Wyn Williams

Officers: Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Manager – Democratic and Delivery), Gareth James (Members' Manager – Scrutiny and Support), Glynda O'Brien (Members and Scrutiny Support Officer)

Also Present:

In respect of Items 5, 6, a 7:

Cllr. Mair Rowlands, Cabinet Member - Children and Young People
Cllr. W. Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member Care, Adults and Health
Marc Roberts, Care and Social Services Inspectorate
Morwena Edwards, Corporate Director
Marian Parry Hughes, Head of Children and Family Support Department
Manon Williams, Area Manager
Alwena Leadbitter, Senior Practitioner

In respect of Items 8 a 9:

Iwan Trefor Jones, Corporate Director
Arwyn Thomas, Head of Education
Garem Jackson, Education Improvement Officer
Gwern ap Rhisiart, S E N and Inclusion Senior Manager
Eleri Llywelyn Owen, Project Manager
Ffion Hughes, Support Officer

ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved: Due to the absence of both the Chair and Vice-chair from the meeting, Councillor Selwyn Griffiths was elected to chair this meeting.

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Siân Wyn Hughes (p.m.), Linda Ann Wyn Jones (p.m.), Beth Lawton (a.m./p.m.), Dewi Owen (a.m./p.m.), Peter Read (a.m./p.m.), Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member – Education, a.m./p.m.) , Dylan Davies (Meirionnydd Governors Representative- a.m./p.m.), Mrs Rita Price (The Catholic Church – a.m./p.m).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received from any members present.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

Schools' Savings Target

This item was not included on the Agenda, however, the Chair agreed for it to be discussed as an urgent item under Section 100B (4)(b) Local Government Act 1972 as the matter had arisen since the last committee meeting, a recent resolution had been made by the Schools' Budget Forum on 18 November 2015 and the view was that it should be scrutinized prior to implementation.

The Chair explained that a request had been received from Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd for the committee to discuss the schools' savings target, and the member was invited to elaborate further.

Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd referred to a recent discussion at a meeting of the Schools' Budget Forum on 18 November 2015 that was a contentious meeting, when it was resolved to recommend to the Cabinet that a cut of £1.3m be made in the primary sector and £680,363 in the secondary sector. The Member was of the view that there was tension between primary and secondary, large, medium and small schools and the cut would entail classrooms of up to 40 children in some schools and in turn this would have an impact on the County's education standards. It was felt that the cut would therefore undermine the principles and this Scrutiny Committee should have an opportunity to consider the seriousness of the impact of the cuts on schools before the decision was adopted by the Cabinet.

The Senior Manager, Democracy and Delivery, explained that when adopting the Financial Strategy at the full Council in March 2015, the Council resolved to adopt the Financial Strategy that included 'Placing a target of £4.3m for the schools' budget'. It was understood that what the Schools' Budget Forum decision did was to determine how to achieve an element of this. Therefore, the Schools' Budget Forum was acting on a decision already taken by the Council.

The Head of Education explained that schools faced a target of £4.3m cuts and had found approximately £2m in savings and there was a difference of opinion on how to achieve the remaining £2.3m. The Committee was reminded that the Council faced a shortfall of £50m with £9m of this being achieved via Council tax. It was noted that the Council funded schools very generously compared with other Welsh authorities and it had to be borne in mind that 8 of the 15 secondary schools were the smallest in Wales.

There had been a compromise at the Schools' Budget Forum to share the remaining savings target of £2,320,000 in accordance with the B option for cuts submitted to the Forum i.e. £1,642,151 to the primary sector and £680,363 to the

secondary sector, subject to the following conditions:

- To retain the savings of £4.3m fixed for the next 3 years until 2018
- That the schools organisation savings are recycled to the savings target of £2,320,00 to alleviate the schools cuts in 2018/19.

In response, Councillor Alwyn Gruffydd referred to a recent ESTYN report on a primary school with 28 pupils stating that the School gave value for money and it was felt that the Council did not give sufficient consideration to this. He stressed the need to know what the feelings were at a grassroots level regarding the proposed cuts, and therefore this was an important matter for scrutiny.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were highlighted by individual members:

- It seemed that in some areas teachers retired but were re-employed as supply teachers and this deprived young people leaving Colleges from getting work
- It was asked how many schools were safeguarded
- The size of school balances in some schools was questioned and should this not be taken into consideration
- Would cuts have an impact on the quality of education

In order to have a way forward, it was suggested that the matter be considered further at the preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 15 December.

Resolved: To request that the Head of Education submits the reports presented to the Education Budget Forum to the preparatory meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 15 December, and to ensure that an appropriate officer is in attendance, to respond to Members' queries regarding the budget. In addition, it would be useful to receive examples of what impact the option B cut would have on small, medium and large sized schools.

4. MINUTES

The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee that took place on 22 September 2015.

5. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT 2014/15 (CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE – CSSIW)

Submitted - a performance evaluation report on the Social Services for the year 2014/15 by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate.

(a) Members were guided through the contents of the report by Mr Marc Roberts, CSSIW, stating the main areas where there had been progress and the areas that need to improve within Gwynedd Social Services. Attention was drawn to the following:

- progress made in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act

- increased alignment between the wider Council and departments
- efforts to work more cost effectively and efficiently and contributing to enabling the Council to halve its financial shortfall with further efficiency savings to be achieved over the next few years
- good outcomes for Looked After Children
- changes in the appointments of Cabinet Members who support Social Services and their new responsibilities
- changes in practice and culture within the Adults Service

The report noted:

- that the Council gave support to a number of people in care homes
- that it was necessary to encourage improvements in the corporate safeguarding systems and these are achieved in a timely manner
- that the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) were challenging for the service and this was an area requiring attention.
- that CSSIW proposed to consult with mental health service users during the year
- it was identified that direct payments continued to be very low
- the need to support carers further was identified
- in terms of children and young people, it was noted that the performance was improving annually with good educational achievements by looked after children

In terms of supporting Social Services, the challenges faced by the Adults Service were identified as well as the capacity and professional leadership in this field. The need to ensure that sufficient time was given to new systems was identified.

(b) In response, the Corporate Director stated that on the whole the report was positive and she was glad that Managers had identified where improvements were required. She added that there was a good relationship between the Health Board and Social Services and the appointment of Ffion Johnstone as Locality Director had certainly been of assistance to take steps forward. It was confirmed that it was proposed to submit a work programme stemming from the recommendations of CSSIW to the preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 15 December and to ensure that this interweaves with other action plans already in place.

Members were given an opportunity to scrutinise the report and they highlighted the following points:

- (i) Concern was expressed regarding the backlog in processing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Arrangements assessments.

In response, whilst accepting the comment, it was explained that a bid for a temporary resource had been submitted to try to reduce and deal with the backlog. It was further noted that only workers with a specific qualification could deal with this work.

It was emphasised that it was not the Council's practice that had caused the

increase, but changes stemming from legal cases in other areas.

(ii) In response to a query regarding processing complaints from individuals, Mr Marc Roberts explained that CSSIW were interested in hearing about the experiences of individuals and if a person submitted a complaint then naturally the matter would be considered.

(iii) The report was welcomed and the Alltwen scheme procedures should have been implemented years ago as it appeared that people were satisfied with the person centred service. In the Member's opinion more publicity should be given to the positive issues.

(iv) It was stated that Social Services had been through a difficult period as a result of staffing changes etc., and staff commitment had to be appreciated during a very serious and challenging period for every field. The opinion was that, as a monitoring service, there was a real need for the CSSIW as a national institution to ensure that concerns should be raised with the Government regarding the future funding of Social Services. The importance of maintaining the service was noted especially where there was a real need to invest more in areas such as mental health.

(vi) It was asked if arrangements were in place to withstand the cuts and how vulnerable was the service, especially in terms of staff absence due to illness and additional work pressure on staff in specialist work.

In response, Mr Marc Roberts explained that in the past there was a high turnover of staff in terms of social workers, however, from what he had seen recently the workforce in Gwynedd was established and experienced. It was recognised that the Management Team was under pressure and sought to identify the main elements of risk in terms of pressure. Compared to other authorities it was noted that Gwynedd Council was in a comparatively good position.

However, he was aware of the Gwynedd Challenge process and the proposed cuts and evidently there might be risks in terms of cuts that could have a detrimental impact on services.

(vii) It was asked if CSSIW considered the quality of the service against the cuts?

In response, it was explained that CSSIW looked at the outcomes to individuals together with considering performance by comparing expenditure. It was noted further that expenditure was a consideration but was not vital in terms of the outcomes.

(vii) Concern was expressed that there were risk associated with the cuts and it was asked if CSSIW were satisfied with the work and procedures to deal with the risks?

In response, Mr Marc Roberts noted that the savings achieved thus far appeared to be meaningful and took advantage of the opportunities that had arisen.

However, it was stated that cuts to services was quite different from what had already been achieved and there was no sign that this had been undertaken in a meaningless way.

(x) It was noted that direct payments were a good way to support and promote independence. It was asked how a direct payments system could be implemented effectively?

In response, the Corporate Director explained her disappointment that the direct payments level was low although the service had tried to promote this and it may be that families did not wish to take responsibility. It was trusted that the new arrangements would give stability to individuals and it was hoped that this would improve.

The Head of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department added that efforts needed to be made to ensure correct support for families to manage money effectively and to procure care services. It was trusted that more families would take control for their own care arrangements via the direct payments system and assurance was given that they would monitor expenditure, based on a sample of families. The importance of establishing a network to enable them to make effective use of direct payments was noted.

(xi) Reference was made within the report to scrutiny weaknesses and Mr Marc Roberts noted the following important areas for those undertaking scrutiny.

- Modernisation arrangements
- Alltwen Scheme
- Safeguarding field

The Corporate Director noted that the Act would be in effect in April and it was obvious that a great deal of work needed to be achieved and a code of practice was awaited for a great deal of the work. A report would be submitted to the Cabinet and it was promised that information would be shared also with this Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: (a) To accept, note and thank the officer for the report.

(b) To request that the Corporate Director submits the action plan to the next preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 15 December 2015.

6. REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PANEL

A report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young people outlining what had been achieved by the Panel between April 2014 and March 2015, in addition to external inspections received during the period and future proposals.

It was noted that the report focused on the corporate arrangements of safeguarding rather than specific cases in the field. It was stressed that other

statutory regional arrangements existed for children and vulnerable adults. The above Panel sought to ensure that the arrangements were robust and the real success was to prove that the service made a difference to individuals.

Members were afforded an opportunity to scrutinize the report and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and the officers responded appropriately as follows:

- (i) In terms of how many cases of whistleblowing there had been, the Corporate Director gave an undertaking to send the figures to Scrutiny Committee Members.
- (ii) Councillor Annwen Daniels had been appointed as champion for Children and Young People – Corporate Parenting
- (iii) a promise was given that the assessments of persons with disability when leaving College would be discussed with a Member and would not be referred to day care service
- (iv) cyber-bullying issues would be added to the relevant policies and an assurance was given that this was not a huge problem in Gwynedd.
- (v) that schools were key to safeguarding arrangements for children and young people and the importance of communication was stressed. It was confirmed that a high number of referrals were submitted from schools and they received an invitation to a meeting that took place once a referral had been received. It was further recognised that schools were vital to contribute to the discussions. Whilst accepting that school staff found it difficult to attend meetings, it was assured that they received the written reports and there was no concern regarding working together.
- (vi) In terms of how children could gain confidence to whistle blow, it was explained that whistleblowing and encouraging confidence were two different things. Only a few children self-refer, referrals were submitted via other relevant agencies. In the context of pre-school arrangements, it was noted that midwives were vitally important. It was ensured that there were effective systems in Gwynedd and a good relationship at grassroots level.
- (vii) That only a very few referrals were received from parents regarding bullying and the process they could follow was explained by telephoning Galw Gwynedd, designated telephone numbers for the Team based in Pwllheli and also a telephone number for outside working hours.
- (viii) Children spent a great deal of their time in school and part of the Panel's work was to ensure that every Department, including elected Members played a role in the arrangements.
- (ix) Regarding inspecting how schools deal with bullying, it was explained that the Corporate Director had met recently with the Head of Education and assurance was given that arrangements were in place to:
 - Appoint a safeguarding children officer
 - Look at the policies and procedures including the bullying element
- (x) That every governing body had a champion to deal with safeguarding children
- (xi) Teachers had a responsibility to refer any known case of abuse at home and it was assured that no concern had been highlighted to the Panel or by the Head of Education regarding the capacity of schools to undertake this.
- (xii) Concerns were noted regarding the CSSIW report on the private

- residential home at Plas y Bryn, Bontnewydd. It was explained that arrangements were in place for inspectors to inspect residential care homes and discussions were on-going to adopt the best arrangements but it was recognised that it was not an easy field to resolve. A report would be submitted to the next preparatory meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 15 December regarding arrangements and specifically to discuss the implications stemming from the CSSIW report on the specific home above.
- (xiii) An update was expected on the arrangements and procedures to safeguard vulnerable adults as a result of the recommendations of the Winterbourne Review and an assurance was given that this information would be shared with Members.
 - (xiv) Disappointment was expressed that there was no reference in the work programme to individuals with learning disabilities.
 - (xv) Assurance was given that a copy of the project report to ensure the whole Council's ownership of the safeguarding field would be given to Members.
 - (xvi) It was confirmed that there was a process in place to ensure DBS checks every 3 years and this was monitored by the Corporate Support Department.
 - (xvii) An assurance was given that a meeting in Meirion/Dwyfor would be re-arranged with the parents of young people with learning disabilities and an apology was given for cancelling the meeting in May and there were various reasons for this.

Resolved: (a) To accept and note the contents of the report;

(b) To request that the relevant officers submit further information on the following to the Scrutiny Committee's preparatory meeting on 15 December 2015:

- **Figures for the number of whistleblowing cases**
- **The implications stemming from the CSSIW report on the private residential care home at Plas y Bryn, Bontnewydd**

7. REPORT ON ENABLEMENT WITHIN NEW WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The report of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health was submitted outlining the new enablement arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health set the context by stating that the enablement scheme was a way of providing intense response to an individual's problems for a short period, in order to recover the individual's living skills as soon as possible and to avoid creating dependency. Evidence indicated that too many individuals received intervention when they did not really need it. Therefore it was resolved to review the arrangements by using the 'Ffordd Gwynedd' principles and to totally change the culture and thinking and offer opportunities to be person focused.

A presentation was received from Manon Williams (Area Manager) and Alwena Leadbitter (Senior Practitioner, Adults, Health and Well-being Department) outlining the work of the Alltwen team and how the work incorporated the

enablement schemes more naturally and more specifically for the individual. In accordance with the new system, arrangements were made with the person at the correct time and place.

Members were asked to take part in an exercise and they noted the following observations:

- That some persons required more care from therapists etc.
- It was important that the plan lightened the load on families
- If the service users feel better then they should be able to tell the carers
- That the scheme needed to be targeted to the persons in real need of it
- The scheme was welcomed, however, it was vitally important that there were specific measures to gauge what difference the scheme made to individuals
- They had to be clear regarding when individuals reached the objectives
- The need to extend the scheme to the areas of Meirionnydd/Dwyfor and to be available 7 days a week as they were concerned about some persons discharged from hospital over the weekend with no arrangements in place for them
- That it was necessary to immerse staff such as nurses on the wards to work jointly on the principles in order to place the needs of the person first

In response to some of the above comments, the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being explained that the relationship with the Health Board was vital in order to roll-out the Alltwen scheme to other locations. In addition, it was noted that the workforce's role including Social Workers, Therapists, Nurses etc. was key. However, there was a great deal of work to be undertaken again as it was a significant change for the staff, members and service users and it was trusted that gradually the new arrangements could be expanded across the County.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health supported the above and added that this was a pilot scheme but it was trusted that there would be joint working between the Health Board and Social Services and this was central to the work and it was agreed that the scheme needed to be extended out to other locations and areas.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted by individual Members:

- (i) That the scheme was similar to what was implemented at Awel y Coleg, Bala where persons were encouraged to live independently in a close enabling society and there were several examples of individuals living more independently than they did in their own homes. It was asked how much attention was given to family carers?

In response, it was explained that the family network was important and was part of the central arrangements.

- (ii) It was asked why the process had taken so long to implement?

In response, it was explained that the scheme had been in operation for approximately 10 months and they continued to experiment and to learn lessons. It was difficult to speed up and extend too quickly as it was a

significant change to all. It was recognised that it was a slow process, however, it was hoped that the momentum could be raised in order to roll-out the scheme over the next few months. It was noted that staff would firstly have to be immersed in the new thinking.

- (iii) In response to a comment made regarding implementing the pooled budget, that it was important to operate the scheme via one budget.
- (iv) Members were reminded that an invitation had been extended for them to visit Ysbyty Alltwen on 21 January 2016 and they were encouraged to do so.

Resolved: To accept, note and thank the officer for the report and the presentation on the implementation of the enablement service.

The morning session commenced at 10:15am and concluded at 12:45pm.

8. PROGRESS REPORT - EDUCATION QUALITY PROJECT

(a) An action plan was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Education stating the progress and what had been achieved stemming from the recommendations of the Education Quality Investigation in the following subjects:

- Leadership within Schools
- Mathematics
- Understanding Performance and Data
- Raising and Conveying Expectations
- Polarization in terms of Quality
- The Local Authority's Role
- The Role of Governors
- Links with Pupils

(b) The Head of Education and the Education Quality Improvement Officer responded to the comments made by individual Members, as follows:

- (i) That the 'Moelwyn Scheme' was a pioneering pilot scheme where the Heads of the catchment area were invited to meet regularly to share expertise across the primary and secondary sectors. It was noted that the scheme was successful and had led to intentional joint working with every school in the catchment area benefiting from sharing expertise in terms of leadership and the curriculum. In terms of extending the scheme to other schools in the County, it was noted that the scheme had worked extremely well in the Moelwyn catchment area and the challenge was to offer a model for each area especially considering the reduction in budgets and it would be necessary to consider different ways of working.
- (ii) That there was an increase in the attainment of vulnerable learners this year compared to last year, but it was stressed that it was difficult to measure and the pupils were different from one year to the next. Members were reminded that the Government funded schools for pupils who entitled to free school meals and it had to be ensured that they had

- opportunities to do their best at school.
- (iii) Concern regarding Mathematics – it was noted that a regional advertisement for a Mathematics Challenge Adviser had been released by GwE with the closing date at the end of last week and it was recognised that Departmental Heads required specific leadership.
 - (iv) In terms of teachers having to be more flexible to teach different subjects, it was asked if this was reflected in the Colleges to prepare students for the field of work. It was explained that in terms of secondary schools teachers usually chose a specialist subject to teach and at primary they taught a range of subjects. It was noted that it was a requirement for the Education Service to consider an alternative format with teachers teaching across subjects up to 14 years old and teachers with expertise in a subject teaching the older ages and this was a challenge due to the number of pupils and the reduction in the budget. It appeared that ESTYN had been very critical recently of what was seen in Mid and North Wales when preparing prospective teachers for the world of work. Perhaps it was necessary to have a discussion on what is offered by the Colleges and if this was suitable for market needs.
 - (v) What arrangements had been made by the Service across-departments to ensure that pupils who are eligible to receive free school meals receive them? It was ensured that schools targeted pupils in order for families to get what was due to them and in addition it was an indicator for school funding and a measure that was compared with other schools. It was further explained that Gwynedd had lost out on a substantial sum of money compared to schools in South Wales that were part of the Government's Challenge Wales programme where they invest to retain education standards. The Head of Education gave an assurance that he would follow-up the cross-departmental arrangements to target pupils who are entitled to free school meals.
 - (vi) Did it continue to be difficult to appoint Governors and in which areas? It was recognised that this varied from area to area and the mandatory courses referred to in the action plan were for new governors, Chairs and Clerks. It was further noted that a new programme was in place that offered training at the end of the afternoon and in the evening in order to facilitate those governors who work to attend as well as regional courses. Regarding completion of training on the web, it was felt that face to face training was more beneficial but of course it was possible to complete some modules on the web.
 - (vii) That the problem of recruiting governors was an issue in several authorities, especially in rural areas.

Resolved: To accept and note the contents of the action plan and to note that the Scrutiny Committee would challenge the follow-up and the result of this work when looking at the Annual Report of the Education Service to be presented to this Scrutiny Committee in March 2016.

9. CHANGES TO THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND INCLUSION SERVICE

- (a) The report of the Cabinet Member for Education was submitted outlining the draft strategy for changes to the additional learning needs and inclusion

service.

(b) It was reported on a letter received from the Isle of Anglesey County Council expressing disappointment and discontent that there had not been sufficient consultation and discussion with Anglesey officers and they had not been convinced of the need to decommission the Additional Learning Needs Joint Committee structure in order to achieve the proposed outcomes within the revised ALN strategy.

(c) In response, the Head of Education stressed that there was no intention not to collaborate with Anglesey and it was proposed to consult fully with Anglesey Council once the Council's formal opinion had been scrutinized and the Cabinet had come to a conclusion on this. It was explained that the project had initially focused on the needs of the Gwynedd residents. The Senior Manager for Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion explained that discussions had taken place with approximately 400 stakeholders during September/October. It was recognised that the shortcomings with the existing arrangements that came to light were not a shock for the officers, namely:

- Inconsistency within the system
- Traditional and complicated system
- Quality of performance
- Relationship with other services
- Growth in specific needs
- Lack of communication

(c) Attention was drawn to the clear aim of the strategy namely "Ensure that children and young people (aged between 0 – 25) with additional learning needs take advantage of the opportunities and gain experiences that are effectively planned for them, to enable them to progress according to their ability".

(ch) Members were guided through the action plan that would achieve the following outcomes:

- Introduce the use of Person-centred Planning
- Develop the use of criteria in order to present guidance and clarity regarding appropriate provision for every disorder
- Establishing ALN Area Forums and the ALN County Panel
- Establish a new Integrated ALN Team
- Establish new arrangements for the Inclusion/Behaviour Support Provision
- Reviewing the provision of specialist centres
- Special Schools
- Training Programme
- Developing a Charter / Agreement between Schools and Local Authorities
- Establishing a Data Unit within the Education Department
- Measure the satisfaction of children and young people with additional learning needs and their families
- School ALN Planning Forums

- Provision in the Early Years
- Post- 16 provision
- Opportunities to collaborate with the Children's Team and other agencies
- Working together with Health
- The business case that would show a saving of £808,466 by combining the central workforce. The saving would be based on the new provision but also a change in the working pattern of the workforce and offer permanent opportunities but for a fewer number of individuals.

(d) Members were given an opportunity to scrutinize the draft strategy before them and the following observations were highlighted by individual Members:

- (i) It was asked if the attainments of additional learning needs pupils contributed to the performance targets of secondary schools or would different indicators be presented.

In response, it was explained that every pupil should be part of the key society of schools and that a national taskforce was considering an alternative way of measuring the attainments of pupils with vulnerable behaviour – namely the children who may make more progress but the targets were not recognised. It was further noted that the system was based on attainments rather than achievements.

- (ii) That the range of users was wide from 0 to 25 years and often a great deal of children that fail fell into trouble and it was asked how much collaboration was there with the Gwynedd and Anglesey Youth Justice Service as it was vital that there was an awareness of this service to assist individuals.

In response, it was explained that funding the group of young people between 19-25 was not clear in the new act and the discussion regarding this would be quite a challenge.

It was ensured that initial discussions had taken place with the Youth Justice Service regarding the person centred focus method that meant that one plan would be available for the individual and therefore it would be a more effective service.

- (iii) Concern that the system would take the place of the 3* system and would dispose of statements that had statutory legal requirements and gave assurance to individuals and their families. Whilst accepting that the system was available the view was that there was no assurance available and the existing system was accountable by law.

In response, it was explained that there was a national change in legislation and statements had been abolished with the Welsh Government seeking to present the same system for additional learning needs with an effort to make the system

easy to understand. Whilst accepting the need to be clearer in terms of the responsibilities of schools and the authority, they were trying to present a structure to respond to this. The challenge was to create a central multi-disciplinary Team that would give families confidence. In terms of the new model, it was ensured that support would not be withdrawn from children who were already statemented.

It was added that it would be necessary to be clear in terms of local criteria by looking at individual plans, the wording of the plan etc.

- (iv) Concern regarding how much assurance there was that schools would pay for the additional support from their budgets considering the climate of cuts that existed and that they would decide to maintain the support themselves.

In response to the above, it was explained that in terms of the model, finance had not been devolved to schools with the intention of establishing a central service. The intention was to devolve classroom assistants to the largest schools and at a catchment-area level to slightly smaller schools.

- (v) Whilst accepting that the most profound children in the primary sector would be identified in accordance with the previous system, concern was expressed regarding children with less obvious needs such as the pupils assisted by the literacy supporters. It was asked how these children would be monitored and their needs identified.

In response, it was confirmed that the new system would identify the needs of children earlier in numeracy and literacy skills and it was assured that it would be possible to continue with the expertise.

Regarding monitoring, perhaps there was a role for Coordinators at a catchment area level for the ages of 0 to 25 and to be a regular point of contact for schools with a specific role to monitor progress or the lack of progress.

- (vi) Reference and concern was made to the risks with the workforce and it was asked how confident was the project team of ensuring the workforce's ownership over the proposed changes.

In response, it was recognised that there was a risk but part of the work was to try and get better knowledge of the workforce in terms of improving the system. From the discussion held with the workforce, opinion was divided with half recognising that there was a need to improve provision and the other half stating that no need was required. Whilst accepting that less workforce would be required, it was confirmed that the contracts would be permanent and offer a better career path for individuals.

- (vii) The importance that the authority communicated with the schools and

stakeholders.

Resolved: (i) To convey to the Cabinet the Scrutiny Committee's approval of the draft strategy subject to seeking to address the following matters:-

- To offer the same level of assurance to pupils and parents as that under the existing system
- The need to address less profound needs and to undertake this soon
- The danger that schools would not be able to cope sufficiently with additional pressure as a result of the strategy's emphasis on schools doing more
- The risk that the comparatively lower attainments of some pupils with additional learning needs would lead to an unwillingness by schools to include them
- Financial concerns as a result of the likely cost to extend the provision up to 25 years old.

(ii) To request that the Project Team conducts a full discussion soon with the Isle of Anglesey County Council, once the strategy has been adopted.

The meeting commenced at 1.15 pm and concluded at 3.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN