
THE CABINET TUESDAY 25 APRIL 2023

Present -

Councillors: Dyfrig Siencyn, Nia Jeffreys, Beca Brown, Berwyn Parry Jones, Menna Jones, Dafydd Meurig, Dilwyn Morgan and Ioan Thomas.

Also present -

Dafydd Gibbard (Chief Executive), Geraint Owen (Corporate Director), Huw Dylan Owen (Corporate Director), Iwan Evans (Head of Legal Services), Ffion Madog Evans (Assistant Head of Finance – Accountancy and Pensions) and Rhodri Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Item 6: Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department) and Catrin Thomas (Assistant Head of Supporting Families)

Item 7: Mirain Llwyd Roberts (Interim Coordinator of Age-friendly Gwynedd).

Item 8: Hawis Melangell Jones (Commissioning, Contracts and Projects Manager) and Alun Gwilym Williams (Senior Business Manager).

Item 9: Nia Swann Bowden (Business Support Programme Manager) and Dylan Griffiths (Economic Development Service Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Craig ab Iago and Elin Walker Jones and from Dewi Aeron Morgan (Head of Finance Department).

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2023 were accepted as a true record.

6. FLYING START, CHILDCARE AND EARLY YEARS PROGRAMMES

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan in the absence of Cllr Elin Walker Jones.

DECISION

A grant had been received to expand the Flying Start Programme in the county.

It was resolved to delegate the right to the Head of Children and Supporting Families in consultation with the Head of Finance to prepare and submit business cases to the Government for individual grants from the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme and to accept proposals on behalf of the Council.

DISCUSSION

The report was presented, confirming that Flying Start was part of the Welsh Government's Early Years Programme. It was explained that the programme provided high-quality childcare to families with children under four years old. It was reported that Flying Start was expanding this provision to all two-year-old children in Wales, by working in collaboration with Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Labour Party.

The Programme would be expanded gradually, with the ambition being to offer free childcare provision to all two-year olds in the future. It was noted that this expansion would enable the provision to be offered to approximately 150 additional children compared to the current provision.

It was confirmed that 10 areas within the county had been identified as areas where the provision should be prioritised as part of the expansion, to target the communities with the highest proportion of child poverty in the county. These areas had been identified as:

- Hendre (Bangor)
- Penygroes
- Pwllheli South
- Barmouth 2
- Hirael and Garth 2 (Bangor)
- Porthmadog – Tremadog
- Bala
- Teigl (Blaenau Ffestiniog)
- Seiont 1 (Caernarfon)
- Dewi (Bangor)

It was reported that the Welsh Government had released a capital programme as part of the collaboration agreement to assist with investing in childcare settings and ensuring that the childcare provision was of the highest quality. It was intended to request the Cabinet's approval to individual capital bids for the receipt of an additional £4 million into the field in Gwynedd in future.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- It was discussed that this expansion was a very positive development and that it would provide key support to children who had been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- A member considered that there were far-reaching benefits to the expansion because it would enable more parents to return to work as they would not have to factor in childcare costs.

- A member shared their pride that the continuing collaboration between Plaid Cymru and the Welsh Government enabled local authorities to alleviate poverty concerns in our areas through the free childcare offers, as well as the free school meals service in schools.
- Support was expressed to this expansion, and it was discussed that the ideal position would be for this expansion to remain something long-term. The Council had faced recruitment difficulties recently, and members discussed how Flying Start would cope with the need to recruit more staff to ensure that this expansion operated in the long term.
- In response to the above observation, it was acknowledged that the staffing situation was challenging at present. However, there was an additional campaign by the Welsh Government to ensure that workers could be recruited in childcare. The officer elaborated that the Government was investing in up-skilling and developing staff qualifications.
- It was further discussed that work was being undertaken to examine whether childcare posts and classroom assistant posts could be combined. It was hoped that the posts would be more attractive to applicants, as the hours would be fuller and the contracts longer. It was confirmed that Cyngor Gwynedd would consider this formally if it was found to be possible, and should the pilot be carried out successfully.

7. AGE-FRIENDLY GWYNEDD

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

To approve and support the proposal to apply for an Age Friendly Wales accreditation for Gwynedd and secure a broad ownership across the Council and its partners to the proposal to strengthen the age-friendly features in order to be accredited.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, and the member confirmed that it was National Intergenerational Week. It was reported that 15 countries world-wide were taking part in activities this week, and there was great pride in the fact that Wales was one of four countries organising the events.

It was reported that there was close collaboration with Bangor University in the hope of establishing an Intergenerational Centre in Gwynedd.

It was explained that the Cabinet's permission was required to apply for the age-friendly accreditation, and should the application be successful, it would enable the Council to have ownership of the work and to lead on it. The officer elaborated further that Gwynedd was already doing a lot of age-friendly work and the accreditation would celebrate that. However, it was believed that the work would never be completed as there would always be areas to improve.

It was confirmed that officers had identified areas of work to develop should the application be successful.

Observations arising from the discussion:

- The officers were thanked for their commitment to ensuring a better future for the County's older generations.
- It was emphasised that the work involved with Age-friendly Gwynedd was not the sole duty of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department, and they hoped to have the entire Council's commitment to adopting it as a way forward.
- It was agreed that it was very important for the Council to be awarded the accreditation. The member noted the need to ensure that work was carried out following the application for accreditation, to ensure that facilities such as suitable housing and public transport were available to everyone.
- It was explained that the accreditation was being provided by the World Health Organisation and should the Council's application be accepted, the Council would have access to a global network that would offer support from designated officers.
- It was detailed that the World Health Organisation would consider Cyngor Gwynedd's application for Age-friendly accreditation through a report that specified a baseline of what was already being carried out in Gwynedd. The report would also detail the changes that Cyngor Gwynedd had already implemented in order to be age-friendly.
- It was explained that the Council was working jointly with the office of the Older People's Commissioner for Wales and the Welsh Government, and the first step of applying for accreditation was to send the reports to the Commissioner's office in order to receive support and recommendations to ensure that the report would be accepted by the World Health Organisation. It was mentioned that initial discussions with the Commissioner's Officer suggested that the Council's application would be successful.
- Members were reminded that this project was part of a project for Prioritising Preventative Support Locally by the Adults, Health and Well-being Department.

8. GWYNEDD ADULTS POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan.

DECISION

- i. Resolved that the Cabinet will recommend to the Full Council that it adopts the recommendations in the report to be incorporated in the Council Plan.
- ii. The recommendation to submit the assessment to the Council for approval was approved.

DISCUSSION

It was noted that this assessment of the needs of the Gwynedd adult population provided a local picture of requirements in Gwynedd rather than the North Wales Population Needs Assessment that had been approved by Cyngor Gwynedd on 3 March 2022.

It was explained that the Gwynedd Adults Population Needs Assessment was not a statutory requirement, but it was a useful and important assessment to enable the Council to plan, prioritise and develop new services.

It was noted that the document stated the likely percentage of people who would suffer from Dementia between 2020 and 2040 as 34% in Graph 12. In reality the figure was 53%, and the officer apologised for this error in the document and confirmed that it would be corrected as soon as possible.

It was confirmed that the assessment addressed the following themes and groups and also took the Welsh language into consideration:

- Older People
- Physical Disabilities and Sensory Impairments
- Learning Disability
- Autism
- Mental Health
- Carers
- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

It was explained that the assessment detailed particular themes which were considered priorities in the Council Plan. These had been identified as follows:

- Improving individuals' well-being.
- Improving the support for unpaid carers.
- Ensuring quality customer care.
- A shortage of certain types of placements.
- Recruitment of staff is a huge problem across the care sector.
- Reconciling data that is kept on systems.
- Investment in preventative services.

Observations arising from the discussion

- The officers of the department were thanked for their comprehensive and hard work in preparing the assessment.
- A member queried whether we were likely to see a gap emerge between the Council's ability to provide care to adults, and the number of individuals needing our care, considering the fact that the figures for some conditions for Dementia were increasing and the figures of the general population were decreasing.
- In response to the comment above, it was confirmed that officers were working closely with the research team in order to ensure that accurate statistics were developed continuously. It was explained that this would enable the Council to plan effectively for the future. It was also emphasised that crisis situations were emerging at present through applications for care settings, the costs of salaries and the increased costs of goods.
- A member questioned how the work for the North Wales population needs assessment, a joint project with Anglesey in light of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and the individual projects by Cyngor Gwynedd would be tied together and that no duplication occurred.
- In response to the above question, members were reminded that this assessment for Gwynedd was not a statutory requirement, contrary to the North Wales Population Needs Assessment. The officer elaborated that they believed that the Gwynedd assessment was essential for receiving information about the specific challenges for the County and what differences were

emerging within different areas of the county, in order to create efficient plans for the future.

- It was confirmed that officers would keep this assessment live in order to continuously update the figures, ensuring that accurate data would be available at all times since the regional assessment was only updated every four years.
- Consideration had been given to differences in waiting times for domiciliary care since individuals who lived in Eifionydd were waiting almost three times longer than individuals in the Caernarfon area for domiciliary care. It was stated that the more rural nature of Eifionydd contributed to the statistic, but the situation had improved over the past few months.
- Further to the above observation, it was noted that the Council was currently facing difficulties in providing around 15% of domiciliary care needs. It was reported that the Council Plan stated the aim of providing support to individuals through various means, such as technological developments and robotic beds, in order to reduce the demand for domiciliary care.
- It was confirmed that the Council would need to take advantage of future technological developments, and also hold regional and national discussions to learn from successes and good practices in other areas and incorporate them in the domiciliary care provision in Gwynedd.
- It was noted that the assessment had been carried out jointly with officers from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and they were thanked for their willingness to work together.

9. DEVELOPMENT OF BUSINESS UNITS AT ERYRI BUSINESS PARK

The report was presented by Cllr Nia Jeffreys

DECISION

To authorise the development of 10 employment units to be managed by the Council at Eryri Business Park, Minffordd, in order to address the needs of local businesses.

DISCUSSION

It was reported that the Council was keen to work with commercial partners to erect business units where they were needed. There was pride in the fact that the Council had collaborated successfully with the Welsh Government on this development.

It was reported that the Council had received 37 applications for business units over the past year, and it was confirmed that 28 (76%) were for units in the area in question.

It was noted that this scheme was possible through the allocation of £2M from the Council's Asset Management Plan as well as a commitment by the Welsh Government to provide £925,000 as a boost to the local economy.

It was explained that officers were aware of the shortage of business units available across the County, and it was hoped that this scheme would be a step towards removing this problem. It was emphasised that this scheme merely started resolving the problem rather than being the complete solution.

It was confirmed that officers were working with the Cyngor Gwynedd Planning Authority and the Eryri National Park Authority teams in order to gain a full understanding of the needs and availability of land and units. The aim was to build a long-term plan based on this collaborative work.

Observations arising from the discussion

- Members supported the scheme, confirming that the need for more business units existed and that it would encourage people to stay in their communities.
- It was discussed whether there were policies in place to ensure that the units developed remained under the Council's management in future, rather than keeping them only when they generated income. It was considered whether there were policies in place to ensure this.
- In response to the above enquiry, it was confirmed that consideration was being given to several different ways in which the Council could invest in business units in the future and how it can ensure permanent ownership of the units. Nevertheless, officers emphasised that there would be a need to work jointly with the planning authorities of Cyngor Gwynedd and Eryri National Park Authority in order to gain an understanding of which areas would benefit from having business units and what would be the best approach with investment.
- Members were reminded that the Council's buildings stock had been sold around 10 years ago because they were ageing and not having enough use. It was elaborated that the Council's plan at the time was to reinvest that money in new, fit-for-purpose units, in locations where there was demand for them. It was confirmed that this scheme carried on with that initial work that had been determined by the Council when it disposed of those former units.
- Consideration had been given to prioritising areas where the Council owned land or empty buildings in order to develop business units there. In response to the observation, it was acknowledged that some assets had been withheld in order to assess their suitability as housing sites within the Council's Housing Action Plan. It was emphasised that these sites were being considered as business premises if they were not suitable as housing sites for the people of Gwynedd.
- Officers shared their pride in the fact that the business units within this scheme would be net zero Carbon according to their use, and consideration had been given to the developments' carbon footprint.
- In response to the enquiry, it was confirmed that there were plans to install solar panels on the units as well as air-source heat pumps, and they hoped to use this scheme as a template for other units and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint in the future.

The meeting commenced at 1:00pm and concluded at 1:55pm.

CHAIR