

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

## Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	11 July 2023
<b>Title of Item:</b>	Performance Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Elin Walker-Jones
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Marian Parry Hughes, Head of Children and Supporting Families Service.

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### THE DECISION SOUGHT

To accept and note the information in the report.

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### THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED

In order to ensure effective performance management

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update my fellow members on developments in the fields within my remit as Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families. This includes outlining the latest developments to date in 2023-24 against the pledges within the Gwynedd Council Plan; issues and the progress of performance measures; and the latest on the savings and efficiency schemes.
- 1.2 I look forward to working with the department and members of the Scrutiny Committee during the coming year, to ensure that we do the best we can to put the people of Gwynedd at the heart of our children's and family support services.
- 1.3 The priority projects featured in the Council Plan are progressing well, which are the Autism Plan and the Developing Small Groups Home.

## 2 GWYNEDD COUNCIL PLAN'S PROJECTS

- 2.1 Below, I outline the progress that has been made to date against the Department's priority projects. These priorities address the department's main risks. In general, I feel that both

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priority projects are currently moving in the right direction against the pledges that we have made in the Council Plan.

## 2.2 Small Group Homes

We want to improve the experiences of children with complex needs that are in our but who currently have to leave the county or Wales in order to receive suitable places to live and be cared for. We will develop registered residential homes for small groups of children which will allow them to receive care in Gwynedd, attend local schools, and participate fully in the life of their communities. So far we have collaborated with the Property Department to identify suitable buildings for consideration, appoint a Project Manager through “Cynllun Yfory” and have started to work on the business case for securing the financial investment needed to buy and adapt the building to be a suitable and safe home.

## 2.3 Autism Plan

Autistic children, young people and adults find it difficult to get the specialist support they need. We will therefore improve our provision and make it easier for individuals and their families to transfer between different services. The plan is now in its second year, and we have now developed a comprehensive training programme for staff from varying services who come into contact with autistic individuals. We have also collaborated with the North Wales Autism Service to ensure that there is a series of information events and activities for families in various locations across the county. We have also created new jobs specifically to focus on autism and have been successful in recruiting a Practitioner and Social Worker.

## **3. PERFORMANCE AND MEASURES**

- 3.1 I wish to draw your attention to the following matters, which are unrelated to the Priority Projects, but are being addressed by the department because they are affecting the performance of services and/or causing us concern.
- 3.2 Workforce Capacity – The workforce situation remains a matter of serious concern. Through the Workforce Planning Priority Project and the support of We Care Wales we have started to undertake targeted recruitment campaigns.
- 3.3 Level and type of support - The department continues to see that the nature of the cases being supported shows that children's needs are complex, intensifying, and that they require a very comprehensive and specialist package of support and care.
- 3.4 The numbers coming into contact with us for Information, Advice or Assistance continue to be much higher than prior to the pandemic. 1102 contacted us during April and May 2023. We believe that this demand continues to be driven by the impacts of the pandemic, but also is partly driven by the impact of the ongoing cost of living crisis, putting unmanageable stresses on families.
- 3.5 We have been participating and supporting the national fostering campaign Maethu Cymru to attract people to think about fostering. These campaigns are one of the ways we

are trying to address and ensure enough care placements locally for children, should they need to come to care.

- 3.6 In terms of the department's measures, I am generally happy with their performance. None of the measures are currently a matter of concern but I will continue to work with the Head of Department via our monthly performance meetings to review and scrutinise their performance.

#### **4 FINANCIAL POSITION / SAVINGS**

- 4.1 The department has a £44,010 Savings Targets for 2023-24. These savings have been achieved.
- 4.3 For 2023/24, as part of the bidding process, the Department has received £130,000 as a one-off bid to continue to employ 3 social care practitioners. Further work on job evaluations and staffing structure needs to be completed during the year relating to these posts.

#### **5 Views of the Statutory Officers:**

##### **i. The Monitoring Officer:**

No observations to add in relation to propriety

##### **ii. Head of Finance:**

I am satisfied that the report presents a fair reflection of the financial position of the Children and Supporting Families Department.

##### **a. Views of the Local Member:**

- i. Not a local matter.

##### **b. Results of Any Consultation:**

- i. None to note.

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## **Appendices**