

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

REPORT TO A MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Date of Meeting:	4 October, 2016
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Mair Rowlands Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Leisure
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Title of Item:	Performance Report of Children, Young People and Leisure

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the fields within my remit as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Leisure. This will include outlining the latest with the pledges in the Strategic Plan; where the performance measures have reached; and the latest in terms of the savings and cuts schemes.
- 1.2. We wish to remind you that all matters have already been the subject of the discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the Management as well as the Leadership Team.
- 1.3. On the whole, I am comfortable with the performance which suggests we are on the right tracks. However, I would like to draw your attention to the following matter:
 - **5.3.1 Figures for looked after children have increased 15% compared with this time last year** – This increase is a trend which is reflected on a regional and national level. I strongly believe that the numbers of looked-after children would be higher if it wasn't for the packages of projects/preventative services such as the Edge of Care Team and the Gyda'n Gilydd Team that are in place.

2. THE DECISION SOUGHT

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

3. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 3.1. In order to ensure effective performance management.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

4.1. P8 Early Intervention for groups of vulnerable children and young people in Gwynedd - Set a direction and establish priorities for the preventative agenda in Gwynedd

- 4.1.1 Since I last reported to you, the Children and Supporting Families Department has formed a Task Group to lead on the work and the first meeting will take place in September. This group will be responsible for giving the work a direction and for drawing up an action plan.

4.2. Youth Engagement and Development Framework

- 4.2.1 To remind you, the aim of this framework is to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training. The framework focuses on noting the young people who are more likely to become disengaged; provide better brokerage and co-ordination for the support for them, and better tracking and moving of people through the system. The Gwynedd NEET (not in education, employment or training) young people figure at aged 16 is 1.8% according to the latest figures (June 2016) compared with 5% in 2012. This shows a reduction in the figure over the last four years. It is fair to say that several European projects such as *Potensial* have played a large part in getting this figure down over the years. As *Potensial* has now ended, we hope that the TRAC and AdTrac programme and the work undertaken by the Engagement Framework will ensure that this figure remains low.

- 4.2.2 In simple terms, the figure of 1.8% means 24 young people - this figure compares favourably with the Wales figure, which is 4.5%. The challenge over the course of the year will be to continue to try to reduce the figure, and ensure that the figure does not increase.

- 4.2.3 Since I last reported to you, this element of the project has concentrated on establishing a learners' profile toolkit, namely a toolkit which is used to identify young people who are likely to become disengaged. Though the Gwynedd NEET figure appears fairly low at present, the toolkit has identified 430 young people (Years 7-11) who are in the high risk category. The toolkit uses hard indicators such as attendance, behaviour and achievement to carry out the assessment, then bands young people according to the score 'Immediate Action, Close Watch, No Watch'. The majority of pupils in Gwynedd are in the 'no watch' category. In terms of the 430 who have been identified as high risk at present, a percentage have been referred to the TRAC project and specific interventions are being drawn up in order to remove them from this category.

5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

- 5.1. An overview of all performance measures for Youth, Leisure and Children and Supporting Families can be seen in Appendix 1.

5.2. On the whole, the measures are performing well, with some fields performing very well, which suggests that we are on the right tracks. However, further work needs to be carried out to analyse some of the measures and by doing so improving the service offered to the people of Gwynedd.

5.3. Children and Supporting Families Department

5.3.1 To set out the context for the work of the Children Families Department, I am eager to note the number of looked-after children, and the increase in the figure over the course of the year. At the end of June 2016 there were 214 children being looked after by the Council. This is an increase of 15% compared with the number of looked-after children this time last year.

Looked-after Children	2016/17 (June)	2015/16 (June)	2014/15 (June)
Number of looked-after children at the end of the period	214	186	188
Number of new placements	22	9	17
Number of children leaving care	15	16	-
Number of adopted children	0	5	-

5.3.2 This increase is a trend which is reflected on a regional and national level. Having analysed the increase, 87% (19/22) are cases where an application was made to the family court following a period where no change had been seen in the parents' behaviour. Several of these cases have stayed at home with a parent under court conditions whilst further parenting work takes place under the court's instructions. It cannot be anticipated how many children will remain in their parent's care at the end of the court proceedings. Over the course of a year, the number of children placed with their parents under a Care Order has increased from 27 to 56. The other types of looked-after children placements have remained stable over the same period. I strongly believe that the number of looked-after children would be higher if it wasn't for the packages of projects/preventative services such as the Edge of Care Team and the Gyda'n Gilydd Team that are in place.

5.3.3 I am also eager to draw attention to some of the other measures in the Children and Families Department, where performance shows room for improvement:

- **The percentage of statutory visits to looked-after children held during the year (SCC/025).** It is seen that the percentage has dropped slightly in recent years from 87.7% in 2014/15 to 86.9% in 2015/16. This figure is lower than the National figure which is 88.1% and the Rural Family figure which is 87.98%. The figure to date for the year 2016/17 is 83.4%. I have asked the Department about the figures, and what becomes apparent is that the visits take place, but the workers do not record this on the relevant form on the RAISE system. I have already asked whether it is possible to look at an alternative way of recording i.e. that the workers carry an iPad or other equipment with them in order to record the information immediately after the visit. This raises a question regarding all the documents that need to be completed and it would be beneficial to have a further discussion on this matter.

- I'm pleased to see a vast improvement in the **percentage of looked-after children that have a Personal Education Plan within 20 days (SCC/024)**. At the end of 2015/16, the performance was very poor at 37.9%. I'm pleased to say that the figure has increased to 72.7% (July 2016). This means that only one child had not received a Personal Education Plan within the timescale, but I can confirm that they have now received it.
- The work of developing measures which reflect the purpose of the services within the Department is ongoing, with a session held in June with managers and senior managers. It is scheduled to complete the process by September. Work has also been carried out to adapt the National measures which we are required to collect from April 2016 as a result of the Social Services Act. You will see some of these new measures in **Appendix 1**.

5.4. Youth Service

- 5.4.1 In terms of the Youth Service measures, I am pleased to note that the **Number of accreditations that young people receive through the Youth Service** has increased to 2807 during 2015/16, which is an increase of 758 since 2014/15. These accreditations are a combination of the Duke of Edinburgh, the Wales Open Award and Bangor University accreditations.

5.5. Leisure Service

- 5.5.1 With Leisure measures, it is seen that the **number of leisure centre visits per head of the population** has reduced for the year 2015/16, compared with previous years. The simple reason for this is that one centre has been closed for six months for work to upgrade it. Though the figure shows a reduction, the Gwynedd performance is particularly good compared with the rest of Wales, with Gwynedd remaining in the highest quartile in Wales, with only Blaenau Gwent and Wrexham higher. In addition, information which has been collected on the number of visits from April 2016 to date suggests that the figures are consistent with previous years, but, a reduction is anticipated during the summer months due to the fine weather.
- 5.5.2 There was a reduction in the figure for the **percentage of 11 year old children who have attained the National Curriculum Standard** to 78% in 2015/16, compared with 82% in 2014/15. There was a change in the swimming test across Wales recently and, consequently, the Leisure Service anticipated that the figure would reduce as the test is more challenging. The main obstacles for improving the performance is a lack of funding in schools in order to send children to lessons regularly during the school year, and a reduction in the free swimming grant which means that fewer teachers are trained in order to teach swimming to the required standard. I have requested for the Service to consider the above and to see whether it is possible to overcome the obstacles, and increase the figures by the end of the financial year.

6. FINANCIAL SITUATION / SAVINGS

6.1. Children and Supporting Families Department

6.1.1 Several 2016/17 schemes, including the cuts, have been realised. The First Quarter Review of the revenue budget for 2016/17 submitted to the Cabinet on 12 July referred to the placements/fostering fields and showed a potential overspend, with an element of the overspend due to a possible failure to achieve the savings target in full. Following a discussion with the Department, I am confident that the work programme to realise the savings is in place, and that these will be delivered in full. The overspend has come about as a result of the significant pressure on the demand for the service, and the increase in the number of looked-after children, as I have already mentioned under the heading 'measuring performance'. There are a few high risk cases, and consequently expensive care plans, together with the higher number than usual for the quarter who have come into care for the first time (22 cases, with 19 being court cases). The expenditure concentration for the rest of the year therefore includes these factors as well as assumptions regarding additional cases. I am confident that arrangements are in place to review as part of the delivery plan.

6.2. Economy and Community Department (Leisure and Youth)

6.2.1 The Economy and Community Department has also made acceptable progress, with the forecast very promising for savings and cuts during 2016/17, and to an extent, 2017/18, with the exception of Scheme HAM4, namely running facilities more effectively. Though a work programme is in the pipeline, the current forecasts suggest that it will not be possible to realise this scheme in full within the timeframe originally anticipated. I have asked the Department to consider solutions for this as soon as possible.

7. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

7.1. None to note.

8. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

8.1. Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. The Chief Executive:

"As I have noted in other performance reports submitted to the Cabinet, it is important to recognise the good work being undertaken to deliver the Council's public promises even at a time when resources are dwindling. In this field specifically, developing the preventative agenda is more important than ever. Clearly, there are areas where there is room for improvement and these are identified. Finally, implementing the agreed savings, though extremely unpleasant, is crucial and we must persevere to deliver our commitments in this field."

ii. The Monitoring Officer:

"Nothing to add from a propriety perspective."

iii. The Head of Finance Department:

"In part 6.1 of the report, I note that there is an overspend in the Children's Department (as reported to the Cabinet in the first quarter review of the 2016/17 budget in July). I will attempt to assist the Children's Department to manage the placements/fostering budget, whilst noting that the higher expenditure has been unavoidably incurred due to a higher number of cases, in particular high risk cases."

8.2. Views of the Local Member:

8.2.1 Not a local matter.

8.3. Results of Any Consultation:

8.3.1 None to note.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Performance Measures

Background Documents:

None.