

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

REPORT TO A MEETING OF GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET

Date of Meeting:	13 December 2016
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Gareth Thomas, Cabinet Member for Education
Contact Officer:	Iwan T. Jones, Corporate Director
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Title of Item:	Education Department Performance Report

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update you on what has been achieved in the field for which I, as Cabinet Member for Education, have responsibility. 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 in the Department.
- 1.2. I will remind you that all matters have already been the subject of discussions and have been scrutinised at meetings of the relevant management team, which also included a representation from the scrutiny committee.
- 1.3. On the whole, I am comfortable with the performance of the Strategic Plan projects, with good progress made on the majority of them. In addition, the performance is generally good across the key stages; however, some fields require further attention in order to ensure improvement:
 - **Primary Sector** - I have asked the Department to place a magnifying glass on performance in the Foundation Phase as results have been static over the past years. By addressing the barriers that prevent us from improving, the department is focusing on three specific fields. I have also asked for further consideration on how to raise the attendance percentage in our primary schools.
 - **Performance in specific subjects** - There is a need to reconcile performance in specific subjects such as Mathematics and English and the Authority is working with schools to offer them further support. Further work will be done with the University to target the problem of recruiting local teachers with the relevant skills and qualifications in these subjects.

2. THE DECISION SOUGHT

2.1 To accept and note the information in the report.

2.2 The Cabinet is asked to approve revised profile figures for the re-profiling of Scheme P7 Transformation of Additional Learning Needs:

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Cyfanswm
26,238	98,356	436,004	247,863	808,461

See further information in part 6.1 of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

3.1. In order to ensure effective performance management and that we respond pro-actively to the need to achieve efficiency savings as expected.

4. STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

4.1. P1 Improve and Standardise Education Standards

4.1.1 The purpose of this project is to improve and reconcile education standards across Gwynedd in order to ensure that children and young people attain the highest standards so that they may gain qualifications and skills.

4.1.2 A new procedure has been established to monitor performance and quality on all levels in Gwynedd schools through the County Quality Board (BAS). The BAS enables the Authority and GwE to obtain a full picture of the performance and quality of the schools, so that under-performing schools can be targeted.

4.1.3 The implementation of the new model of supporting schools in order to see key stage improvements is continuing. Evidence can be seen of the impact that this project has by looking at the recently published schools categorisation list for 2016-17. **(Appendix 1)**. This list highlights improvements in the secondary and primary sector. This year again, 11 out of 14 secondary schools have received the highest ruling (A or B). In the primary sector, the profile shows that 89.2% of the schools received the highest ruling. This list shows an improvement since last year.

4.2. P2 Improving Leadership and Management

4.2.1 The purpose of this project is to improve the conditions for leaders in order to raise standards. We will implement proposals to improve leadership and management with the aim of moving toward the goal of having schools with non-contact headteachers, i.e. who do not teach children.

4.2.2 Gwynedd Council Cabinet has already supported the recommendation to consult with schools and governors on the core principles upon which the system of 'Education for Purpose for Gwynedd' will be founded. Since I last reported to you, the project has concentrated on designing a new leadership structure, and the concept of 'Ysgol Gwynedd'.

4.2.3 The Council is eager to develop the principles jointly with the profession, governors and parents. Consequently, a series of drop-in sessions will be held across

Gwynedd over the coming weeks for governors, parents and the wider community. The final one will be held before Christmas. The public consultation period will continue until the Spring term 2017, and will ultimately feed into the new vision for the education system.

4.2.4 The work of developing leadership is progressing at a good pace, with work having been commenced on developing a programme to support future leaders and identify suitable individuals. In addition, an additional development programme has been introduced for middle Leaders where there is an element of concern regarding its implementation.

4.2.5 I believe that the status of the recent inspections shows that the work being done to develop leadership has taken hold and has made a difference at our schools. The inspections profile is positive - see **Appendix 2**. By now, no school is in a statutory category and only two schools are in the Estyn Monitoring category. In November 2015, 14.8% of schools were in a follow-up category. By now, in November 2016, the figure has dropped to 3.6%.

4.3. Programme for a network of viable schools for the future

4.3.1 P3 Ysgol Hafod Lon

The purpose of this project is to provide a special school for Meirionnydd and Dwyfor pupils following the decision to close the existing Ysgol Hafod Lon building.

The new school has now opened. The Residential Unit will open early in the new year.

4.3.2 P4 Ysgol Bro Idris

The purpose of this project is to establish an All-through Welsh-medium Catchment Area School for 3-16 year olds in the Gader catchment area.

The construction work is progressing in line with the timetable set. The members of the Ysgol Bro Idris shadow board is continuing to consider the appropriate staffing structure for the establishment and various arrangements associated with establishing the new school.

The Shadow Body has been considering the possibility of placing Year 5, 6, 7 and 8 pupils on the same site in order to ensure the best possible collaboration, and enable an effective follow-on from primary education to secondary education. As part of the process, the Shadow Body has been engaging with parents and teachers on how to realise the plan through recent drop-in sessions and one-to-one sessions. As a result of the feedback received from these sessions, it was decided at the previous meeting of the Body that year 5 and 6 pupils will receive their education on the primary sites when the new school opens in September 2017.

4.3.5 P5 Ysgol Glancegin

The purpose of this project is to secure an investment to provide a new building for Ysgol Glan Cegin, which is located in Maesgeirchen, Bangor.

The construction work is progressing in line with the timetable noted. We had a ministerial visit on the site on 11 November. Discussions are continuing with key partners for the possibility of establishing an Integrated Family Centre on the site.

4.3.4 P6 Y Berwyn Catchment Area

The new 3G pitch in Bala was opened on 8 October, and we will work closely with the schools of the catchment area over the coming months to ensure that we make full use of the resource. Further details are included in the report 'Bala Learning Campus'.

4.4 P7 Transforming the Provision of Additional Educational Needs and Inclusion

After receiving approval to the Additional Learning Needs Strategy submitted to the Cabinet in September 2016, the consultation process with the workforce has now formally commenced. The process of adapting the strategy and structures has commenced with the intention of reporting to the workforce on the final structure in December.

It is fair to note that the plan's timetable has slipped from what had been planned originally, due to the fact that discussions on coming together in a formal partnership with Anglesey Council to implement the strategy took longer than originally expected. This has affected the savings profile associated with this plan; however, I will expand on this in section 6 - Savings.

5. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

5.1. Education Performance Measures (including the results of Summer 2016)

Action point from the last cycle

A request was made for a report noting all of Gwynedd's A Level results (including the results of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Meirion Dwyfor Site).

The analysis of the A Level results of the County's Secondary Schools has been completed; however, the department is awaiting further information about the results of the Further Education Sector.

5.1.1 I attach a copy of the department's measures in **Appendix 3**.

5.1.2 The measures show that Gwynedd's performance is generally good across the key stages. These figures will be confirmed in their final version in December; however, the main messages are as follows:

- **Primary Sector** : As the figures suggest, performance in the **Foundation Phase** has been static over the past three years. In an attempt to respond to the situation and improve the results, the department has commissioned a Foundation Phase Challenge Advisor to address three fields, namely: **improve the quality of leadership and teaching; tracking performance and progress** in order to ensure that every school introduces challenging and attainable targets for the Foundation Phase; **and establish groups of lead practitioners for the Foundation Phase** and produce further guidance for the schools.
- **Secondary Sector**: The **Key Stage 3** percentage has once again been successful this year (92%), with the performance surpassing the National figure for the past five years. Gwynedd has performed best out of all the Welsh authorities for four years consecutively.

- The authority has also seen improvement in the performance of **Key Stage 4**, with a substantial increase in the percentage that manages to reach the Level 2+ threshold (the equivalent of five GCSE grades A - C, including Welsh or English or Mathematics).
- **Reconciling performance in specific subjects:** There is recognition that there is a need to reconcile and improve performance in the subjects of Mathematics and English. Further support and guidance is being offered to those schools that are showing a weakness in these subjects.

5.2. Attendance

5.2.1 Last time, I reported upon the excellent progress in the attendance percentage of our secondary schools with Gwynedd being the first authority to reach an attendance level higher than 95% for secondary and special schools.

5.2.2 We have now received confirmation of the attendance figures of primary schools, which has been 95.4% for Summer 2016. This is an increase from last year's figure; however, we still need to continue to ensure that we improve the performance. Every school with a percentage lower than 94% has now received an attendance challenge visit in September and has received advice and suggestions on how to improve the performance.

6. SAVINGS/FINANCIAL POSITION

6.1. Since I last reported to you, it can be seen that some progress has been made in terms of the Ffordd Gwynedd scheme - Payroll and Contracts Unit in 2016-17, with the timetable of establishing the new system to commence in April 2017 and for the saving to be implemented in full in the 2017-18 year. As I have already noted, the savings timetable attached with scheme P7 Additional Learning Needs, has slipped due to it being extended to collaborate with the Isle of Anglesey Council. This has led to the need for the Department to introduce a revised profile in terms of realising the savings, as noted below. It is important to note that these figures are continuing to develop:

Current Profile:

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Cyfanswm
26,238	445,364	336,859		808,461

Revised Profile:

2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Cyfanswm
26,238	98,356	436,004	247,863	808,461

6.2 Work is continuing to achieve the £4.3m of schools savings that were part of the financial strategy approved in February 2016. A discussion and agreement will be needed on the exact way of realising some of the savings in 2018-19.

7. OTHER MATTERS

7.1. A situation has arisen recently where Huw Foster Evans, the GwE Managing Director has accepted a post with the Welsh Government. Local Authorities in North Wales commissioned a report on the strengths weaknesses of the current

arrangement so that we take the opportunity to ensure effective and sustainable arrangements for the future.

- 7.2 Arwyn Thomas, our Head of Education was asked to undertake this piece of work, and to also carry out some of the more critical Managing Director's functions on a part time basis until the report is ready and the future direction established. It was a decision for the Chief Executive to agree to the request, and both of us are satisfied that this will not prohibit our ability to drive forward with the challenging programme we are undertaking here in Gwynedd. Arwyn Thomas has already started on this work since October half term, and we are expecting a report early in the New Year.
- 7.3 I believe that this is a sign of respect other local authorities have to the educational arrangements in Gwynedd.

8. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

- 8.1 None to note.

9. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

9.1. Views of the Statutory Officers:

i. The Chief Executive:

"The report is to be welcomed, not only because it notes good general progress but as it is also open about fields that require attention:-

- The Foundation Phase, where no improvement was seen for three years and where work is needed to analyse why this is the case and what can be done to change the situation.
- Reconcile Performance in specific subjects (Mathematics and English); a problem that has been known for some time but where it appears that steps are now being taken that could help with the situation in the short and longer term.
- A Levels, where a request was made for an analysis of the results of the entire county.

It is obvious, for the future, that there will be a key role for the new County Quality Board and the focus on quality, which was raised a while ago by the Education Quality Scrutiny Investigation, is to be welcomed. The Cabinet Member will be able to report again on the impact of that Board's work in due course."

ii. The Monitoring Officer:

"Nothing to add from a propriety perspective".

iii. The Head of Finance Department:

"Part 4.4 of the report gives an explanation of the slippage of the timetable in implementing the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Provision Transformation scheme - a slippage which is linked with discussions to join in a formal partnership with Anglesey Council. Furthermore, part 6.1 of the report sets out the amended profile for realising the £808,460 of savings and by now we will be harvesting £347,000 less savings than originally planned in 2017/18.

I assume, if the Cabinet accepts the explanation for the slippage, that I and the Cabinet Member for Resources will be required to reflect the amended savings profile in the Council's financial strategy, and this can be coped with for 2017/18.

However, members will remember that there has been significant investment (£1.38m from the Transformation Fund) in order secure these savings of £808,460; therefore, it is reasonable to expect the Cabinet Member and the Head of Education Department to keep the Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion project on the amended timetable from now on, and to consider whether the partnership with Anglesey Council should harvest more savings than the Gwynedd scheme alone offered."

9.2. Views of the Local Member:

8.2.1 Not a local matter.

9.3. Results of Any Consultation:

8.3.1 None to note.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1** Schools Categorisation List 2016
- Appendix 2** School Inspections Data
- Appendix 3** Education Department Measures

Background Documents: None