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## SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17/11/16

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**Present:**

**Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair)**  
**Councillor Eirwyn Williams (Vice-chair)**

Councillors: Alan Jones Evans, Aled Evans, E. Selwyn Griffiths, Alwyn Gruffydd, Siân Wyn Hughes, Elin Walker Jones, Siôn Wyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Dewi Owen, Gareth A. Roberts, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams, Hefin Williams.

**Officers:** Arwel Ellis Jones (Senior Corporate Support Manager - for Item 4), Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager) and Glynda O'Brien (Members' Support Officer).

**Also in attendance:**

**For Item 4 below:**

Councillor Gareth Thomas, Cabinet Member for Education  
Arwyn Thomas, Head of Education Department  
Elfyn Vaughan Jones, Senior GwE Challenge Adviser

**For Item 5 below:**

Marian Parry Hughes, Head of Children and Supporting Families Department

**For Items 6 and 7 below:**

Councillor W. Gareth Roberts  
Aled Davies, Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department  
Manon Williams, Area Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being Department  
Ffion Johnstone, Regional Director - West, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

**Apologies:** Councillors Linda Ann Wyn Jones, Peter Read and R H Wyn Williams.

### 1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Eryl Jones Williams declared a personal interest in Item 7 - Care and Health Workers and Carers Investigation however he would not withdraw from the Chamber unless there was a specific discussion regarding carers during a discussion on the item.

### 2. STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair referred to the e-mail sent directly to all members from the Chief Executive about changes at GwE, which affected the Head of Education Department and a project that he was also leading on a temporary basis in terms of GwE's work. Following messages from a number of members, the matter was discussed with the Chief Executive and the hope originally had been to discuss it at this Scrutiny Committee but the Chief Executive could not attend as he had another important meeting that he could not miss.

The Chair had discussed members' concerns with the Chief Executive and she felt that the answers did make sense and also gave assurance that these decisions had been made in the interests of the children of Gwynedd.

The Chair noted that she would not permit discussion or observations on the matter at the Committee meeting as the Chief Executive could not be present to answer any points but it would be possible to consider everything at this Scrutiny Committee's Preparatory meeting on 13 December when the Chief Executive would be present.

**Resolved:**                    **To accept and note the above.**

### 3. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 27 September 2016.

### 4. GwE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Senior GwE Challenge and Support Adviser in response to specific enquiries from members of the Services Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Education noted that the relationship between GwE and the authority was very important and he took pride in the work throughout the County and in the fact that there were no schools in Gwynedd within the Significant Improvement / Special Measures statutory category. An increase of 5% had been seen in the performance of pupils within the TL2+ threshold and since 2012 the performance had improved by 13.5% since the commencement of this Council term. It was explained that GwE had a business plan across the north Wales region and that the six authorities had their own specifications. The County Quality Board had been established where GwE officers and the education authorities discussed individual schools.

The following points were highlighted by individual Members and they were responded to as follows:

(a) How many Gwynedd schools staff members were on secondment with GwE at the moment?

It was noted that there was one head teacher and one deputy on secondment with GwE and working in Gwynedd/Anglesey. The Head of Education explained that advertising jobs at GwE was an open process and due to the language element and the requirement to be bilingual, the jobs were attractive to the staff of Gwynedd's schools. It was not possible to prohibit staff from applying for jobs, however the balance was currently quite equal. The education authority was not eager to see head teachers moving to work for GwE but at the moment it was a way of being able to share expertise and this in turn could be valuable. The problem faced by the County was attracting school leaders and it was a must to nurture leaders and secure strong standards for the future.

Reference was made to a historical example of losing a Head of Mathematics Department post and that the pupils had suffered because of this, the Head of Education explained that the lack of teachers in the core subjects was a concern and following a recent meeting with the Secondary Sector Group it had been decided:

- To joint-appoint teachers centrally above what was needed in order to fill posts in cases of sickness absence, maternity leave etc.
- That a Group of Secondary Head teachers would hold discussions with Bangor University on the type of programme they wished to see in future. Through joint discussions and nurturing the expertise of sixth form pupils it could be possible to respond to the lack of subject teachers in the long term.

(b) Was there representation of the schools on the County Quality Board?

The Committee was reminded that the national model was based on regions and set on a specific framework and governance arrangement. It was explained that six Education Cabinet Members across the north served on the GwE joint committee and set a strategic direction for GwE and that the business plan was now fairly well balanced and this had been reflected in recent results. It was noted that the County Quality Board convened every fortnight to discuss and identify the schools that needed support.

In response to claims that GwE's capacity would be reduced, the Head of Education Department was not aware of this, he was of the opinion that the staffing was secure. However, it was noted that grants were being cut constantly by Welsh Government and it was not clear what the settlement would be in terms of grants.

(c) The Committee welcomed the fact that it had been agreed that secondments would not be considered before discussing first with the authority to ascertain the implications and the impact of appointments on individual schools. However, a member felt that this should be already taking place and he referred in particular to four gifted head teachers who had been lost to GwE over recent months within his Ward. It was felt that there was a need to undertake very close scrutiny of GwE's work and to ask whether or not it offered value for money.

In terms of accountability, the Head of Education Department noted that GwE was accountable to the Cabinet Member for Education and that it was the Scrutiny Committee's work to ensure that the children of Gwynedd received the best service. It had to be borne in mind that the model was maturing and that it took time to trust any new entity. It was ensured that Gwynedd received value for money from the service provided by GwE.

It was further suggested by the Head of Education Department that it would be useful for the Scrutiny Committee if he were to hold a separate session for members on GwE as an organisation.

(d) How many people worked at GwE?

The Senior GwE Challenge Advisor noted that the core team from the business plan funded approximately 30 Challenge Advisers across the region who worked with 465 primary and secondary schools. It was noted that additional individuals who contributed to aspects of the work were funded by Welsh Government grants and these were often short term grants which led on specific priorities.

(ch) In response to a question regarding a financial contribution to GwE, the Senior GwE Challenge Advisor noted that the formula was based on the IBA i.e. the number of primary, secondary pupils and learners who were entitled to free school meals and there was a special weighting for the above mentioned groups in the different ages.

(e) What was the value of the school to school model?

The Head of Education explained that the above mentioned model was a national concept for schools to recognise their own strengths.

The Senior GwE Advisor Officer elaborated on the arrangements for the school to school model noting that the programme was based on three models:

(i) A Group of Schools in the amber/red category where the most intensive action was undertaken with a support scheme for every school with the GwE Senior

Advisor at the centre of the journey of improving school education standards. The model had led to significant improvements.

- (ii) A Group of Schools in the yellow category - where schools continued on the journey of improvement with a focus to develop better resilience to the quality of the school's leadership. The Challenge Advisor was not as present in terms of action but up to an additional 10 days of support was provided. In this category schools with common needs worked together.
- (iii) A Group of Schools in the Green Category (or strong yellow) - where schools had the freedom and independence to lead their own agenda. When the model was established originally the role of head teachers was defined in the context of the role of the Challenge Advisors and head teachers were asked to challenge character and take responsibility for the work of categorising individual schools, a process they would undertake for each other. However, head teachers felt uncomfortable with the arrangement and following a process of consultation this requirement was withdrawn, and now the model had the Challenge Advisor at the heart of it. During the year, it was seen that the schools had been set in families and a series of activities, training and joint development sessions had been held within the families which had been pioneering on many aspects and had created a self-improvement system. A higher level of maturity was seen in schools and an increase in the number of schools in this tier which was testament to the model's effectiveness. However the model was continually being evolved.

The Senior Advisor extended an invitation to the members of this Scrutiny Committee to shadow the GwE Challenge Advisors in order for members to deepen their understanding of their work and procedures.

(f) In terms of pupils who did not receive education in school due to a number of reasons such as emotional difficulties, sickness etc. the Head of Education Department explained that a specific Board had been set up locally to concentrate on these children to ensure that they received their right and entitlement to full education that led to a qualification. It must be remembered that the safety of children was crucial and the results would be monitored.

(ff) In terms of one school that had been deemed "Excellent" following an ESTYN inspection but was within the authority's monitoring category, it was explained that the school had been set in the lower half due to ESTYN's inspection procedures and framework regarding pupil attendance, and this was the reason for the monitoring.

(g) What was the nature and status of the programme of support that would identify future leaders?

The Senior GwE Challenge Advisor explained that work had begun to identify current middle tier leaders who had the potential to be effective head teachers and there was now a full development programme in place and being implemented. When opportunities arose for those individuals to take on the role of acting headteacher or head teacher in charge, it was noted that there was a programme to support them to undertake the task in the short term and that the programme could be tailored according to the needs of the individual head teacher.

(h) In response to a question whether or not schools were fully prepared for inspections, the Head of Education explained that headteachers had attended training around a year ago and they knew about school development plans, self-evaluations, pupil tracking and that the GwE Challenge Advisers had followed them up and seen that this had borne fruit.

The Head of Education Department ensured that he challenged the agenda regularly and was of the opinion that nearly every school was close to being ready for inspection.

(e) In response to a question regarding dividing his duties between the County and GwE, the Head of Education Department told the Committee that his main duty was to keep an eye on the standard of education in Gwynedd schools and in terms of the secondment to GwE he had work to do in terms of what was effective and what needed to change within the region.

**Resolved: (a) To accept, note and express gratitude for the responses to the Committee's questions.**

**(b) To approve the suggestions made, namely:**

**(i) To invite the Head of Education Department to explain the GwE governance arrangements to the Scrutiny Committee in a separate session. (ii) That the GwE Senior Challenge Advisor, in consultation with the Senior Corporate Support Manager, invites members to shadow the GwE Challenge Advisers in order to broaden their understanding of GwE's work.**

**(c) That the Head of Education Department, following his secondment to GwE, submit an assessment of his findings on the strengths and weaknesses of GwE's current arrangements to ensure viable and sustainable arrangements for the future.**

## **5. END TO END - CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES SERVICE**

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in response to specific questions raised by members at the preparatory meeting held on 18 October 2016.

Members were given an opportunity to ask further questions of the Head of Children and Supporting Families Department and she responded as follows:

**(a)** There were 15 children being looked after at residential units and this figure was significantly lower than it had been in the past. It was noted that the strategy in terms of reducing the number of children who went to out-of-county placements to receive care from residential units was relatively effective. It was emphasised that some of the cases were unavoidable.

**(b)** It was difficult to anticipate whether the above mentioned figure would increase however it was confirmed that there were no other cases from the population who were currently being looked after and looking for an out-of-county placement.

**(c)** The Respite Unit at Ysgol Hafod Lon, Penrhyndeudraeth, would offer provision for disabled children in Gwynedd and it was likely that it would significantly contribute towards increasing the Children and Supporting Families Service's capacity to support families.

**(ch)** In terms of plans to develop provision for some specific sectors such as autism, it was explained that the matter had been discussed at the regional Heads of Children's Services Group. It was acknowledged that there was certainly a cohort of children who fell

between two stools between the Council and the Health Board in terms of their needs, however, the Group did not wish to establish any regional or sub-regional provision. The priority and the intention of the Heads of Department was to seek to support children in their own homes rather than establish residential provision.

(d) In response to the enquiry regarding whether or not it would be possible for the authority to develop its own provision for looked after children, it was explained that the Service was of the opinion that it would not be possible to provide for every possible need on a county level in a residential Unit. It was explained that respite care from foster parents was being provided through the support service and additionally it was possible for the children to receive support from community activities. It was noted that Support Workers within the Service offered service to over 300 children. The strategy of the Service was to provide for children and families within their own homes. In terms of the 15 children who were placed out-of-county, apart from 3 or 4, it was noted that the children were subject to full orders to the authority meaning that they needed to be moved in order to safeguard them.

(e) In terms of arrangements for scrutinising new placements, she elaborated that there was no cost associated with the procedure as it had been established internally by the Service in the form of a Placement Scrutiny Panel that was convened on a monthly basis. The Head of Children and Supporting Families Department was the chair of the panel and the senior management team and the team managers were invited to the panel to provide detailed scrutiny of individual cases and to consider:

- Whether or not the care plan was suitable for the child
- Whether or not the child was in the correct placement
- That there was no delay in terms of planning and that the placement offered value for money
- Whether or not the placement met the needs of the child
- Care order cases where the child was placed at home with the parents, namely to consider safety
- Voluntary care where the parents asked the Service to look after the children.

It was noted that the Edge of Care Team was a crucial part of the above mentioned process and that its work was very successful. It was emphasised that it was crucial for the Service to return a child to the parents within the first eight weeks as research had shown that it was better for the child and that the outcomes for the family were better.

As the Head Children and Supporting Families Department, she was confident that the children who were being looked after, needed to be looked after.

**Resolved: To accept, note and thank the officer for the report.**

## **6. CARE AND HEALTH WORKERS AND CARERS INVESTIGATION**

Submitted – a draft brief for an investigation into the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for supporting unpaid carers, and how best to support and increase the care and nursing workforce.

The Member Support and Scrutiny Manager set out the context and drew attention to the brief and the aim of answering the question "How sustainable is the workforce and carers (including unpaid carers) in Gwynedd today and in the future?". Seven members had already expressed an interest in serving as members of the investigation.

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being welcomed the proposal but expressed some concern that the scope of the work was extensive given the timetable for the remaining Council term and there was a need to remain focussed if the investigation was to be completed within the available time frame.

The Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department noted that work was being undertaken on a regional level and that it would be possible to share the evidence gathered with the investigation in January.

During the ensuing discussion, many members expressed concern regarding the challenging timetable and that it should be decided whether or not to undertake the investigation on a strategic level or to focus on a specific work stream within the agenda. Having considered the timetable, it was suggested that the best way forward would be to hold an investigation that would focus on provision for informal carers and how the Council could help family carers. It was noted that the investigation could be extended on a more strategic level when the new Council was established should there be justification that it would add value. The need to incorporate the voice of the service user in the Investigation was emphasised.

**Resolved: (a) Resolved:**

**(i) to hold an investigation and to focus on the specific field of provision for informal carers**

**(ii) that the following members will serve on the investigation:**

**Councillors Selwyn Griffiths, Siân Wyn Hughes, Linda Ann Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Ann Williams, Eirwyn Williams and R H Wyn Williams**

**(b) To ask the Member Support and Scrutiny Manager to re-draft the brief, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Head of Adults, Health and Well-being, and to proceed without delay given the challenging timetable.**

## **7. ALLTWEN SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

Submitted - the final draft report of the Alltwen Scrutiny Investigation which outlined the work of the Investigation along with recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being for further action.

In the absence of the Chair of the Investigation, Councillor Selwyn Griffiths took the opportunity to thank the members of the Investigation for their commendable work and also in particular to thank those listed on page 51 of the report, as well as Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager) and Bethan Adams (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer). He drew the Cabinet Member's attention to the recommendations and specifically, asked him to secure the service of a receptionist to deal with calls during the integrated team's core working hours at Ysbyty Alltwen.

The Cabinet Member also thanked everyone who had participated in the Investigation and paid tribute and congratulated the staff of the Health Board and the local authority for this pioneering scheme, the outcomes of which had been very valuable. He welcomed and accepted the recommendations, especially the recommendation to extend the integrated working model across the County as he was of the opinion that this should be the method of working in future. Some of the recommendations were operational ones and a number of the work elements to deal with these matters were either already in place or in the pipeline.

During the ensuing discussion the following comments were made:

- (a) an explanation was provided of the fish bowl term, noting that it was a multi-agency meeting with a specific structure including a nurse and physiotherapist, and that it was a valuable way to consider solutions. However, it was not possible to hold one for every case as it depended on the timetable.
- (b) In order for recommendation 4.1 to succeed, the need to have a single computer system was emphasised, in order to record patient details so that staff from the Health Board and Social Services could have access to it.
- (c) It was asked whether or not it was intended to seek the opinion of the service users as an attachment to the report.
- (d) In response to the above, the Alltwen Team gathered information and noted it on the RAISE system. Also, the procedure was based on a face-to-face chat with the users and would also seek the service users' opinion when undertaking reviews with everyone.
- (e) A question was asked about the response of the Health Board and specifically were the Senior Managers supportive?
- (f) In response, it was noted that they were very supportive and the Regional Director - West, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board listed awards that had been won by staff from the West region and from approximately 50 awards it was a pleasure to note the following winners:
- Ffordd Gwynedd Team - Award for A New Way of Working
  - Ysbyty Alltwen - Award for work with Dementia
  - Ysbyty Dolgellau - Award for Implementing Good Practice
  - Ysbyty Gwynedd Pharmacy - Award for Working Bilingually
  - Chief Nursing Administrator, Children's Ward, Ysbyty Gwynedd - Leadership Award
- (g) Many nurses were seen taking notes when visiting patients and then having to feed the information into a computer afterwards - was there any movement towards changing this method of working?
- (h) In response, the Area Manager for the Adults, Health and Well-being Department noted that whilst they accepted that nurses continued to use diaries to take notes, that they were also eagerly waiting for a new system that could make an important contribution towards reducing this.
- (i) For some months now, there had been high praise for integrated working as implemented in Ysbyty Alltwen and it was asked what the Council could do in order to expand this method?
- (j) In response, the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department noted that the outcomes of the work of the Investigation was helpful to the Department and it offered the type of support needed in order to increase the momentum to expand it. When specific obstacles arose, naturally, the Area Manager for Adults, Health and Well-being Department had their responsibilities along with the Senior Manager and the Head of Department and some matters were referred to the Cabinet Member. If there were specific elements that required a political decision, it was assured that they would be brought up with Members.
- (k) The need to employ a receptionist was reiterated and emphasised and there was concern that the hard work of the Investigation and the Team would be undermined.
- (l) In response, the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department noted that he understood why the comment was being made and of course they had to be careful not to miss calls. However, from a managerial point of view, there was a need to look at the broader picture and the resources required for the new method of working, before committing to this on a permanent basis. He assured the members that he would address the matter.
- (m) In response to an enquiry regarding EMI beds, the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department noted that it was intended to undertake a piece of work on this subject. It was a must to make the best possible use of what was available and to seek to ensure that the private sector was sustainable as much of the health and social services staff's time was spent on trying to help some of the homes. It was noted that the situation was currently difficult and it would be necessary to consider what could be



done in terms of the best use of the Council's stock of homes. It was noted that the real pressures were related to nursing elements rather than residential elements. There would be a need to look objectively at changing the balance within the homes and adapting the provision across the County.

- (n) In response to an enquiry as to whether this meant dual registration, the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department explained that the Health Board and the local authority would have to collaborate to seek to provide a service that was more intensive than what was currently being provided by the homes. This would involve adapting the homes' registrations. The Regional Director - West, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board noted further that CSSIW had noted clearly that there had to be an on call nurse within the homes. Work was ongoing between the Health Board and the local authority to consider a model that was somewhat different in terms of how to gain close contact between the health provision on a local level and home care provision for intensive patients in order to avoid them having to travel long distances to receive service. Additionally, consideration had to be given to the type of carers and specifically the career path for promoting carers to become nurses.

**Resolved: To ask the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being to accept the recommendations of the Scrutiny Investigation as outlined in points 4.1 - 4.10 of the report and to submit an update on the action points and feedback from the service users of the impact of the integrated working model to a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee in six months' time.**

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and concluded at 12:35pm.

**CHAIRMAN.**