

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Corporate Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>26 March, 2015</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>DEMAND MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>Responding to a request by the Scrutiny Committee for a progress report</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Councillor Dyfed Edwards, Council Leader Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive</b>

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The Council's Strategic Plan for 2014/15 includes a specific priority, namely, "Reducing the Demand for Services through Prevention and Early Intervention". The Plan notes that this had been identified as the Council cannot cope with the increasing demand for services unless it implements cuts to services. It is clear that there is a need to identify new and innovative methods of providing services, if we are to reduce the number of services to be cut. It was noted that this would increase the Council's investment and focus on preventive and early intervention work in key fields.
2. In terms of specific commitments, the plan notes the following two points for implementation in 2014/15:-
  - There will be clarity regarding the direction and ambition of the demand management thematic projects (namely; Children, Young People and Families, Older People, Health, General Services and Transferring Responsibility) with enablement projects in place to support the success of those projects.
  - The residents of Gwynedd will gain financial/non-financial benefits from the *Cyngor Ni* project schemes.

## **UPDATE**

3. The committee has already received reports on the *Cyngor Ni* project and, specifically, has received a report on the project to Procure Cheaper Energy (*Cyd-Cymru*) at its last meeting. In addition, communities were prepared to face the challenges related to snow through the *Eryrod Eira* (Snow Eagles) scheme.
4. In terms of the more thematic work, some large specific projects have been identified in the fields noted above and work has been underway behind the scenes with project leaders to support the work of trying to reduce the demand in the way that they plan their services for the future.
5. For example, this was given specific attention in the Adults Service field by working on the End to End Project in the Adults Service which gives direction to all work within the service. A scheme was also created in order to reduce dependency in

Children's Services. In addition, demand management work is integral to the work which is about to end on the review of how the Council deals with special education needs in the future.

6. One key element of demand management is to move to more self-service provision, which is more convenient for citizens and saves money for the Council as a provider. Very useful work has been undertaken to support the case for developing more services such as these and it is expected that the outcome of this work will be seen over the coming years with more choice and less cost for the Council. A business case to this end will be submitted to Cabinet over the next two months.
7. As a final example, demand management was a key part of the change undertaken to refuse collection arrangements where an investment by the Council in terms of engaging and discussion has resulted in a situation where the residents of Dwyfor, the first area to be given the new arrangements, have shown that behaviour can change successfully through collaboration and discussion.
8. The above mentioned examples highlight that the principle of demand management is key as the Council addresses the financial challenge that it faces over the coming years. However, it has also become apparent that this type of approach needs to be mainstreamed through all Council services in order to try to ensure that our services are sustainable. The work of *Ffordd Gwynedd* encourages staff on all levels to think about improvements and to challenge how things have been done in order to maintain services in the interests of residents and save on costs.

## QUESTIONS

9. To respond specifically to the Scrutiny Committee's questions:-

*I. Does the Council have the necessary skills and capacity to ensure the success of Demand Management?*

The Council has been developing its skills in the fields of demand management, engagement and co-production in recent years and we have pockets of expertise within the Council. The challenge will be to extend those skills across the Council; however, this will be a longer term task. Therefore, over the coming year, attention and support for large change projects will need to be prioritised.

*II. What formal/informal engagement has there been with partners and residents of Gwynedd regarding demand management? What was the outcome of this?*

The discussion with the public and with partners has been happening through "Gwynedd Challenge" where we have been trying to increase awareness about the challenge that the Council faces and inviting ideas to reduce the demand in the first

instance and then to find creative and different ways of delivering the remaining demand. To date, partners, including social enterprises and community councils, have shown great eagerness; however, it is early days in terms of showing a difference. Specifically, the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Services Board has been looking at key fields in which demand management will be crucial over the coming years, including Older People and difficult families.

*III. How is the Council managing to strike a balance between demand management and responding to the genuine needs of the residents of Gwynedd?*

The *Ffordd Gwynedd* agenda forces us to place the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do. The principle of demand management is getting to the core of the genuine demand rather than responding to expectations which could be unreasonable in light of the dwindling resources. Without managing demand and looking for alternative ways of providing services, it is almost certain that we will not be able to meet the genuine needs of the people of Gwynedd.

*IV. How certain is the Council that it will realise financial savings as a result of Demand Management? Are those savings likely to be at the expense of the most vulnerable residents of society?*

Demand Management in all our work is likely to result in either realising savings or at least reducing costs as the demand increases. Proposals will have to be weighed up in the context of the individual projects. The test of a mature Council is protecting those residents who are most vulnerable in society but it is important to note that this does not mean not implementing changes even in those situations.

*V. Are there definite promises in the field of Demand Management to be included in the Council's Strategic Plan for 2015/16 onwards?*

No and certainly no corporate "project" will not drive this; it is crucial that all the principles of *Ffordd Gwynedd* are mainstreamed through all the Council's work and not the subject of a specialist project that sits in one place. It is expected for demand management principles to be integral to any Strategic Plan project and any savings scheme which will be realised in 2015/16 and beyond.

However, there will be corporate arrangements in place to ensure that we maximise every available opportunity in order to reduce the need for cuts and, should a situation arise where we can identify an opportunity that services have not exploited, we will draw the service's attention to that.