

THE CABINET 8/09/20

Present-

Councillors: Dafydd Meurig, Craig ab Iago, Gareth Wyn Griffith, Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Dilwyn Morgan, Gareth Thomas, Ioan Thomas and Cemlyn Rees Williams

Also present: Dilwyn Williams (Chief Executive), Morwena Edwards (Corporate Director), Rhun ap Iareth (Deputy Head of Legal Services), Dafydd Edwards (Head of Finance Department) and Annes Sion (Democratic Team Leader).

Item 6: Garem Jackson (Head of Education Department), Gwern ap Rhisiart (Dwyfor/Meirion Area Education Officer) and Huw Ynyr (Assistant Head, Information Technology).

1. APOLOGIES

The Cabinet Members and Officers were welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Dyfrig Siencyn, Cllr Catrin Wager and Iwan Evans (Monitoring Officer).

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were no matters arising from overview and scrutiny.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4TH AUGUST 2020

The Chair accepted the minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2020 as a true record.

6. GWYNEDD SCHOOLS DIGITAL STRATEGY

Submitted by Garem Jackson.

DECISION

To approve accepting the Welsh Government grant to invest in equipment for Gwynedd's schools and to support the financial sustainability to renew the equipment in future years, by asking for a further comprehensive report to the Cabinet on adopting the final Strategy as soon as possible.

DISCUSSION

The report was submitted, and the Cabinet member's disappointment was noted that he was unable to submit the item at the previous meeting as it was a request to invest in the future of Gwynedd's children and young people. It was highlighted that this scheme was in keeping with the priorities that were included in the Council Plan.

It was emphasised that the recent lockdown had drawn attention to the importance of using digital equipment within the field of education, and had emphasised inequality in terms of pupils' digital equipment. It was expressed that this scheme was innovative, which gave the opportunity to provide the best provision for all Gwynedd pupils.

The Head of Education Department added that during lockdown, schools had overcome many problems, and it had highlighted the need for a digital strategy. It was noted that the lockdown had shown the way forward, and that it was a long-term strategy which provided support to children and young people.

Observations arising from the discussion

- It was noted that the scheme was innovative, which highlighted the importance of equality for children who had no computer equipment at home and who had had to use mobile phones or old equipment during lockdown. It was expressed that this was a special application that had been put forward for the education of Gwynedd, and there was pride in the fact an investment could be made to provide effective tools for teachers to be able to support the pupils.
- It was asked whether an equality assessment had been carried out for the report in order to ensure that the children and young people with sight difficulties, for example, received the equipment they needed. It was noted that an assessment had not been carried out with this report as we were not adopting the strategy today, but rather approving the placement of an order. However, an assessment would be carried out at the time of submitting the strategy for its final adoption. It was emphasised that consultations would be carried out with the schools to ensure that the equipment met the needs of each child.
- It was noted that the investment was substantial, and that the scheme's sustainability needed to be ensured. A need for schools to provide a financial commitment was highlighted.
- Support was expressed for the scheme, and that it was a step in the fight against digital poverty, which was seen across the county.
- It was expressed that the last six months had been difficult, but it was noted that it was good to see something positive and provide an opportunity for the children of the county.
- It was noted that the decision needed to be implemented immediately in order to ensure that it adhered to the timescale.

The meeting commenced at 1.10 pm and concluded at 1.40 pm

CHAIRMAN